Public Speaking

Public Speaking

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Foreword

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Chapter 1: Foundations of Public Speaking

What are examples of public speaking in real life?

You may not think you will use public speaking very much, but the top two richest men in the world think you will. Do you know who these men are?

When college students like you asked these two richest men what the number-one skill they felt was important for employees in their company, guess what they answered? Read and find out.

Warren Buffett: Developing this skill can make 'a major difference in your future earning power'

So, this class is going to teach you a skill that will last you a lifetime.

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. Every day people across the United States and around the world present to an audience and speak. In fact, a monthly publication called Vital Speeches of the Day reproduces some of the top speeches from around the United States.

Personal Benefits of Public Speaking

Oral communication skills are the number-one skill that college graduates found useful in business, according to a study by sociologist Andrew Zekeri (Zekeri, 2004). Some benefits include the following:

- Developing critical thinking skills.
- Fine-tuning verbal and nonverbal skills.
- Overcoming fear of public speaking. Developing Critical Thinking Skills

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

One critical thinking skill you will hone during this course is problem solving. 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 your solution's positive and negative consequences and then communicate your ideas to others. At first, it may seem easy to find solutions for a campus problem. For example, for few parking spaces, just build more spaces. But after thinking and researching further, you may find that building costs, environmental impact from losing green space, maintenance needs, or limited locations for additional spaces make this solution impractical. Thinking through problems and analyzing your solution's potential costs and benefits is essential to critical thinking and persuasive public speaking. And these skills will help you not only in public speaking contexts but throughout your life as well.

Fine-Tuning Verbal and Nonverbal Skills

Whether you've competed in high school public speaking 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 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. Many United States presenters often pay speech coaches over one hundred dollars per hour to help them enhance their speaking skills. You have a built-in speech coach right in your classroom, so use this opportunity to your advantage to improve your verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

Overcoming Fear of Public Speaking

Whether they've spoken in public often or are just getting started, most people experience some anxiety when publicly speaking. Professors Heidi Rose and Andrew Rancer evaluated students' public speaking anxiety levels during their public speaking classes' first and last weeks and found that anxiety levels decreased over the semester (Rose & Rancer, 1993). One explanation is that people often have little exposure to public speaking. By taking a public speaking course, you become better acquainted with the public speaking process, making you more confident and less apprehensive. In addition, you will learn specific strategies for overcoming speech-anxiety challenges.

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 like you fare influencing the world in real ways through powerful 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, people speak out against "fracking" for natural gas—a process in which chemicals are injected into rocks to open them up for fast natural gas or oil flow—or to favor retaining a popular local sheriff. One of the amazing gifts a citizen in a democracy can exercise is the right to stand up and speak out, which is a luxury many people in the world do not have. So, if you don't like something, be the force of change you seek 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 essential. Hackman and Johnson assert that effective public speaking skills are a necessity for all leaders (Hackman & Johnson, 2004). If you want to lead, you have to communicate to followers effectively and clearly. According to Bender, "Powerful leadership comes from knowing what matters to you. Powerful presentations come from expressing this effectively. It's important to develop both" (Bender, 1998). One of the most important skills for leaders to develop is their public speaking skills, which is why executives spend millions of dollars every year going to public speaking workshops, hiring public speaking coaches, and buying public speaking books, CDs, and DVDs.

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 business world. According to business consultant Ken Lizotte, "when your colleagues, prospects, and customers view you as one very smart guy or gal to know, then you're a thought leader" (Lizotte, 2008). Typically, thought leaders' behaviors include enacting and conducting business practices research. To achieve thought leader status, individuals must communicate their ideas to others through both writing and public speaking. Lizotte demonstrates how becoming a thought leader can be both personally and financially rewarding: "when others look to you as a thought leader, you will be more desired and make more money as a result." Business gurus often refer to a person's "intellectual capital"—the combination knowledge and your ability to communicate that knowledge to others (Lizotte, 2008).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=25#h5p-20

What are the steps of the speechmaking process?

Now that we know that public speaking is an important part of life, how do we do it? What are speech-building foundations?

All speeches fall within three basic categories: informative, persuasive, and entertaining. You will be giving an informative and persuasive speech later in the semester.

Informative Speaking

The primary purpose of **informative** presentations is to share one's knowledge of a subject with an audience.

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.
- 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 has become an essential skill in today's world.

Persuasive Speaking

We are often called on to convince, motivate, or otherwise **persuade** others to change their beliefs, take an action, or reconsider a decision.

- Advocating for music education in your local school district.
- Convincing clients to purchase your company's products.
- 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.

If you develop the skill to persuade effectively, it can be personally and professionally rewarding.

Entertaining Speaking

Entertaining speaking involves an array of speaking occasions. Not all require a speaker to be funny as you will see in the list.

- Introductions.
- wedding toasts.
- presenting and accepting awards.
- delivering eulogies at funerals and memorial services.
- after-dinner speeches.
- motivational 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.

What are the rhetorical traditions and canons that make up the foundations of public speaking?

One of the first things you will want to know in order to prepare or make a speech is what makes an effective speech. The measurement of what makes a speech effective has ancient roots in the five canons of rhetoric.

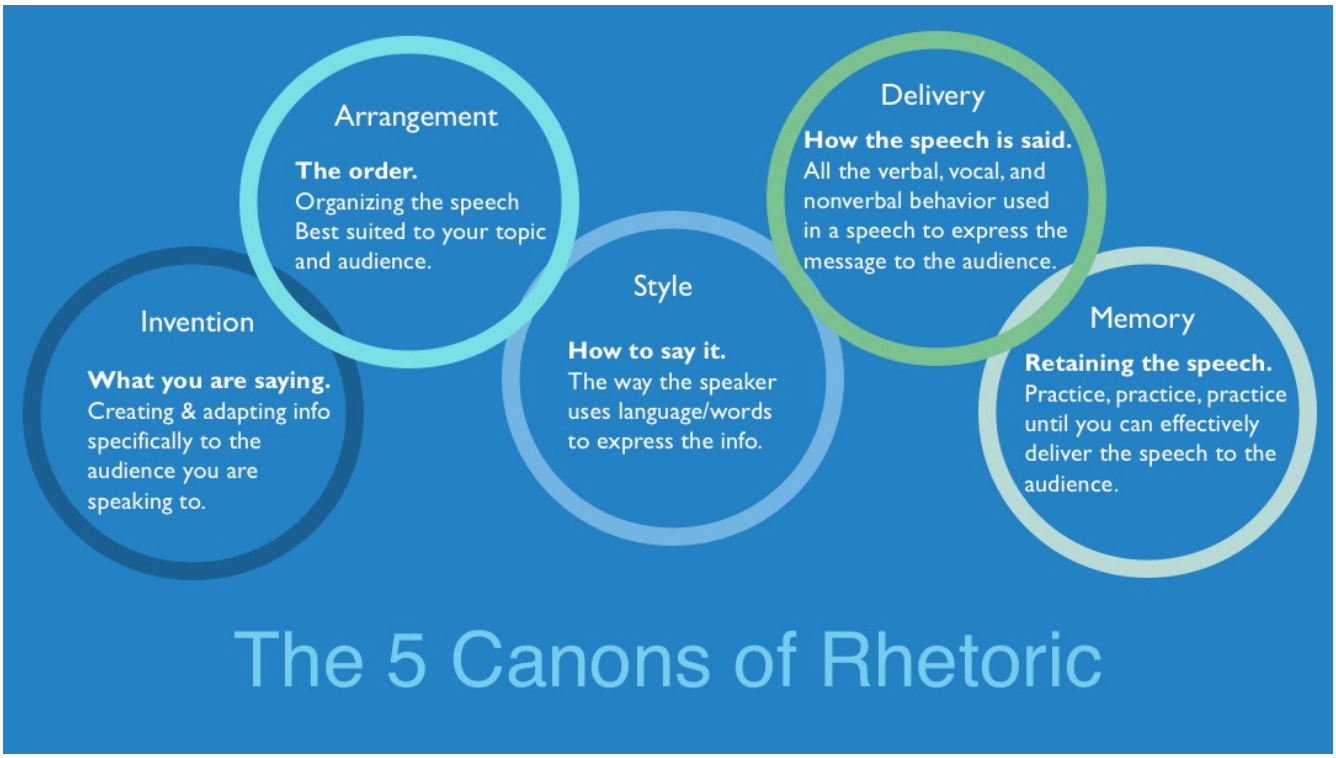
After the Ancient Greeks won back their land, regular citizens had to go to court to plead their case that their stolen land really belonged to them. Cicero, a lawyer, created a five part process, the Five Canons of Rhetoric, to help everyday citizens arrange what they were going to say before the court so they could persuade the judge that it was their land.

These Canons were so effective that we still use them today.

What does the phrase "Five Canons of Rhetoric" mean?

- 5 = number of canons.
- canons = parts.
- rhetoric = discourse or public speaking.

You need to know the 5 canons of rhetoric as the foundation for how you produce your speeches.



Read through each circle. In later speeches these will be put to use.

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How do the elements of the communication model impact effective presentations?

Just like a medical student learns the parts of the body and how they work together to become an effective doctor, we need to learn the parts of communication to become an effective speakers.

What are the parts of the communication model? As you watch this video keep these questions in mind.

- How can understanding this idea help you to connect with your audience?

- Why do you think it's important to understand that communication is transactional and not just one sided or one way?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wR6csABRGk

The Communication Process Source, by Communication 1020 Videso, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wR6csABRGk

Notice there are several elements in the process and anything can go wrong with an element that prevents our message as speaker from reaching our audience in the way we want it to. This is important to know so we can avoid the problems. Let's list those communication model elements here.

Sender (sometimes called Source) – source of the message, the speaker.

Receiver – the one who hears the speaker.

Encode – the speaker creates a message.

Decode – the receiver interprets the message.

Message – the information the sender wants the receiver to interpret.

Channel – the vehicle the message is sent on, i.e, sound wave, newspaper, light waves, tv, email, text, etc.

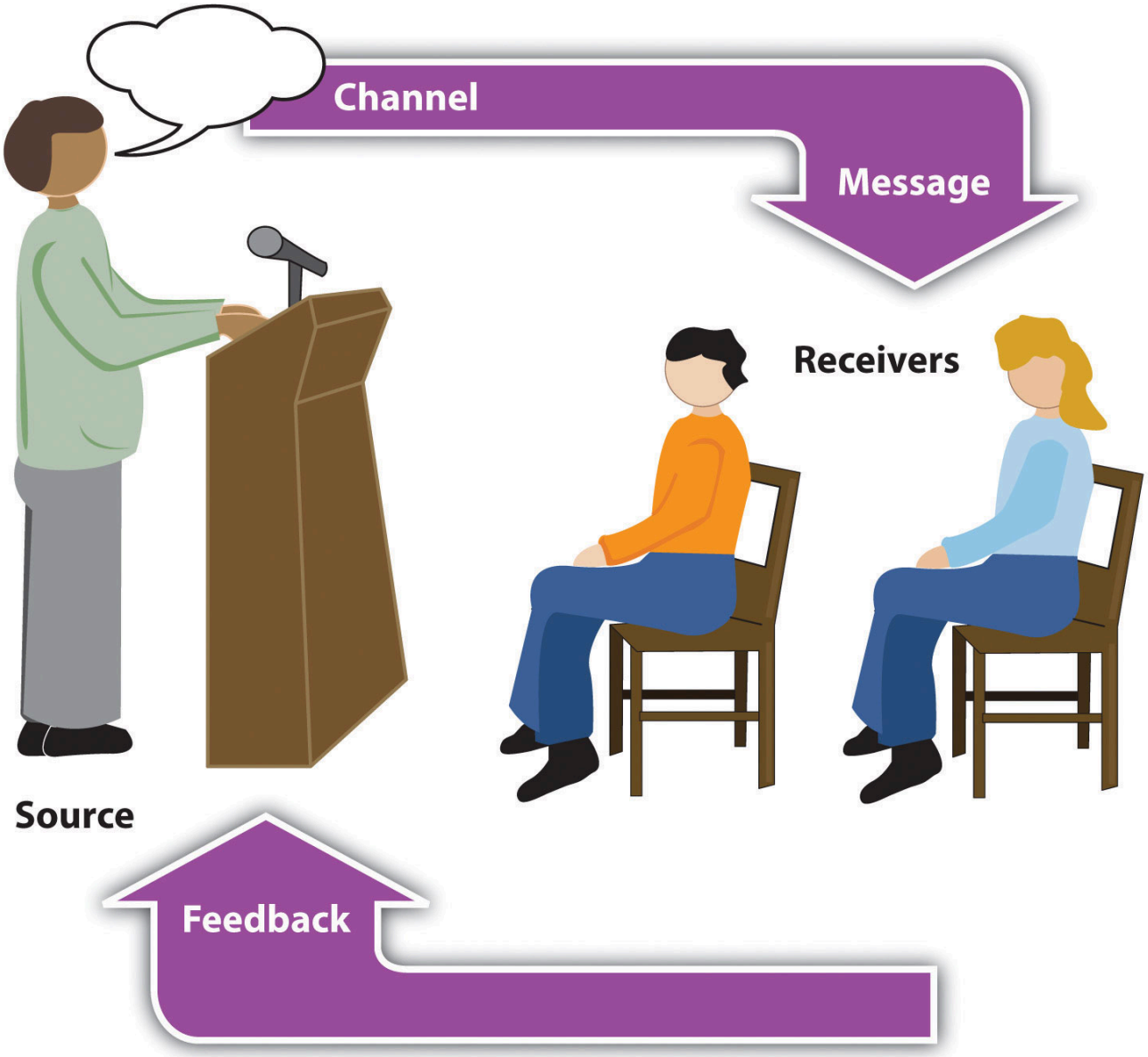
Feedback – the message the receiver sends back in response to the sender's message, i.e. a nod, eye contact, a frown.

Noise – anything that interferes with the message getting from the sender to the receiver intact. This could be physical noise like loud music playing, chairs that are uncomfortable to sit on, or the receiver is physically sick. It could be psychological or emotional noise. The receiver may have just lost their mother, broken up with their girlfriend, worried about homework, information overload like too many large vocabulary words.

Fields of Experience – add a big circle around the sender and one around the receiver. These represent the experiences, skills, abilities and culture each person brings with them to the communication event. If these circles do not overlap, meaning these two people have nothing in common, it will be difficult for them to communicate. For example, what if they speak different languages? You may have been in a country where you did not speak the language and tried to find a restroom. Not easy when you don't know the word for "restroom." Your field of experience (language) did not overlap with your audience's and so it was difficult to make your message understood.

Context – imagine a flat line drawn under all the elements of the model. This represents the situation the sender and receiver are communicating in. It could be a classroom, a ballpark, funeral or over the internet. Changing the context can change the meaning of a message For example. If we were at a ballpark and I said, "Be quiet." You may be irritated with me because you liked to cheer your team to victory in a loud voice. If we change context and we are now at a funeral chapel and I said, "Be quiet." You may realize you are talking too loud, which is disrespectful at a funeral, and quickly go quiet.

You as a speaker want to make it easy for the audience to interpret your message the way you intend. Understanding how each element of the communication model is working will help you do that effectively. Take a look at a simplified version of the model below with you as the speaker. You can already see some of the elements we talked about.



Transactional Model of Public Speaking, is from Stand up, Speak out by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

The basic premise of the transactional model is that individuals are sending and receiving messages at the same time.

The idea that meanings are co created between people is based on a concept called the "field of experience." According to West and Turner, a field of experience involves "how a person's culture, experiences, and heredity influence his or her ability to communicate with another" (West & Turner, 2010). Our education, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, personality, beliefs, actions, attitudes, languages, social status, past experiences, and customs are all aspects of our field of experience, which we bring to every interaction. For meaning to occur, we must have some shared experiences with our audience; this makes it challenging to speak effectively to audiences with very different experiences from our own. Our goal as public speakers is to build upon shared fields of experience so that we can help audience members interpret our message.

What is the Dialogic Theory of Public Speaking?

People talking men male, by Pixabay user 27707, licensed under Pixabay License.

Most people think of public speaking as engaging in a monologue where the speaker stands and delivers information and the audience passively listens. Based on the work of numerous philosophers, however, Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson proposed that all communication, even public speaking, could be viewed as a dialogue (Arnett & Arneson, 1999).

The dialogic theory is based on three overarching principles:

1. Dialogue is more natural than monologue.
2. Meanings are in people not words.
3. Contexts and social situations impact perceived meanings (Bakhtin, 2001a; Bakhtin, 2001b).

Let's look at each of these in turn.

Dialogue vs. Monologue

Even nonverbal behavior (e.g., nodding one's head in agreement or scowling) functions as feedback for speakers and contributes to a dialogue (Yakubinsky, 1997). Overall, if you approach your public speaking experience as a dialogue, you'll be more actively engaged as a speaker and more attentive to how your audience is responding, which will, in turn, lead to more actively engaged audience members.

Meanings Are in People, Not Words

Part of the dialogic process in public speaking is realizing that you and your audience may differ in how you see your speech. Hellmut Geissner and Edith Slembeck (1986) discussed Geissner's idea of responsibility, or the notion that the meanings of words must be mutually agreed upon by people interacting with each other (Geissner & Slembek, 1986).

If you say the word "dog" and think of a soft, furry pet and your audience member thinks of the animal that attacked him as a child, the two of you perceive the word from very different vantage points. As speakers, we must do our best to craft messages that take our audience into account and use audience feedback to determine whether the meaning we intend is the one that is received. To be successful at conveying our desired meaning, we must know quite a bit about our audience so we can make language choices that will be the most appropriate for the context. Although we cannot predict how all our audience members will interpret specific words, we do know that—for example—using teenage slang when speaking to the audience at a senior center would most likely hurt our ability to convey our meaning clearly.

Contexts and Social Situations

Russian scholar Mikhail Bahktin notes that human interactions take place according to cultural norms and rules (Bakhtin, 2001a; Bakhtin, 2001b). How we approach people, the words we choose, and how we deliver speeches are all dependent on different speaking contexts and social situations. On September 8, 2009, President Barack Obama addressed school children with a televised speech. If you look at the speech he delivered to kids around the country and then at his speeches targeted toward adults, you'll see lots of differences. These dissimilar speeches are necessary because the audiences (speaking to kids vs. speaking to adults) have different experiences and levels of knowledge. Ultimately, good public speaking is a matter of taking into account the cultural background of your audience and attempting to engage your audience in a dialogue from their own vantage point.

President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama greet 106-Year-Old Virginia McLaurin, by National Archives, Public Domain

President Barack Obama visits a pre-kindergarten classroom, by National Archives, Public Domain

Considering the context of a public speech involves thinking about four dimensions: physical, temporal, social-psychological, and cultural (DeVito, 2009).

Physical Dimension – is the room too hot, needs a microphone, dimly lit, distracting poster

Temporal Dimension – is it after lunch when people are sleepy, right before lunch when people are hungry, after a social even-shooting on campus when people are worried.

Social-Psychological Dimension – what are the social status among participants, friendliness, formality?

Cultural Dimension – what are different norms, beliefs, practices, what happens if there are misunderstandings?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=25#h5p-22

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Chapter 2: Ethics in Public Speaking

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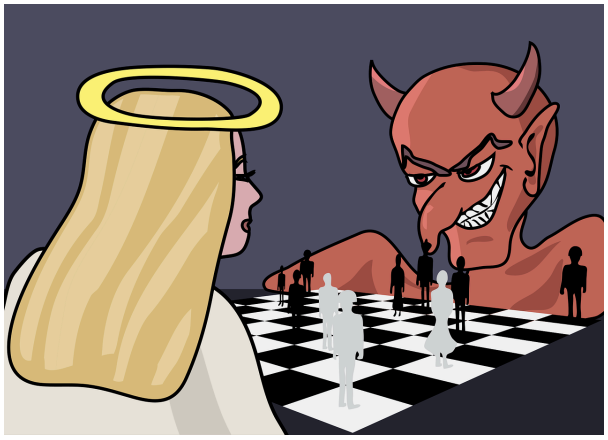
What are the objectives of ethical speaking?

Now that you've learned the foundations of public speaking, you know that creating a speech involves more than just slapping some facts together and hoping your audience listens. In this module, we move on to explore a core element of public speaking: the importance of ethical communication. We've all heard advertisers, received a sales pitch, and listened to politicians who try and persuade us to take some action. But how do we know these are ethical communications? Speechmakers may manipulate facts, present one-sided arguments, and even lie to persuade their audience. And the audience may be fooled if they are not listening critically. None of these actions involve ethical communication. When speakers do not speak ethically, they taken advantage of their audience. When an audience does not listen critically, they disrespect the speaker.

In this module, we will explore what it means to be both an ethical speaker and an ethical listener. You can ethically and effectively persuade. And you can take responsibility to be ethically informed. We will show you how.

Ethical Speaking



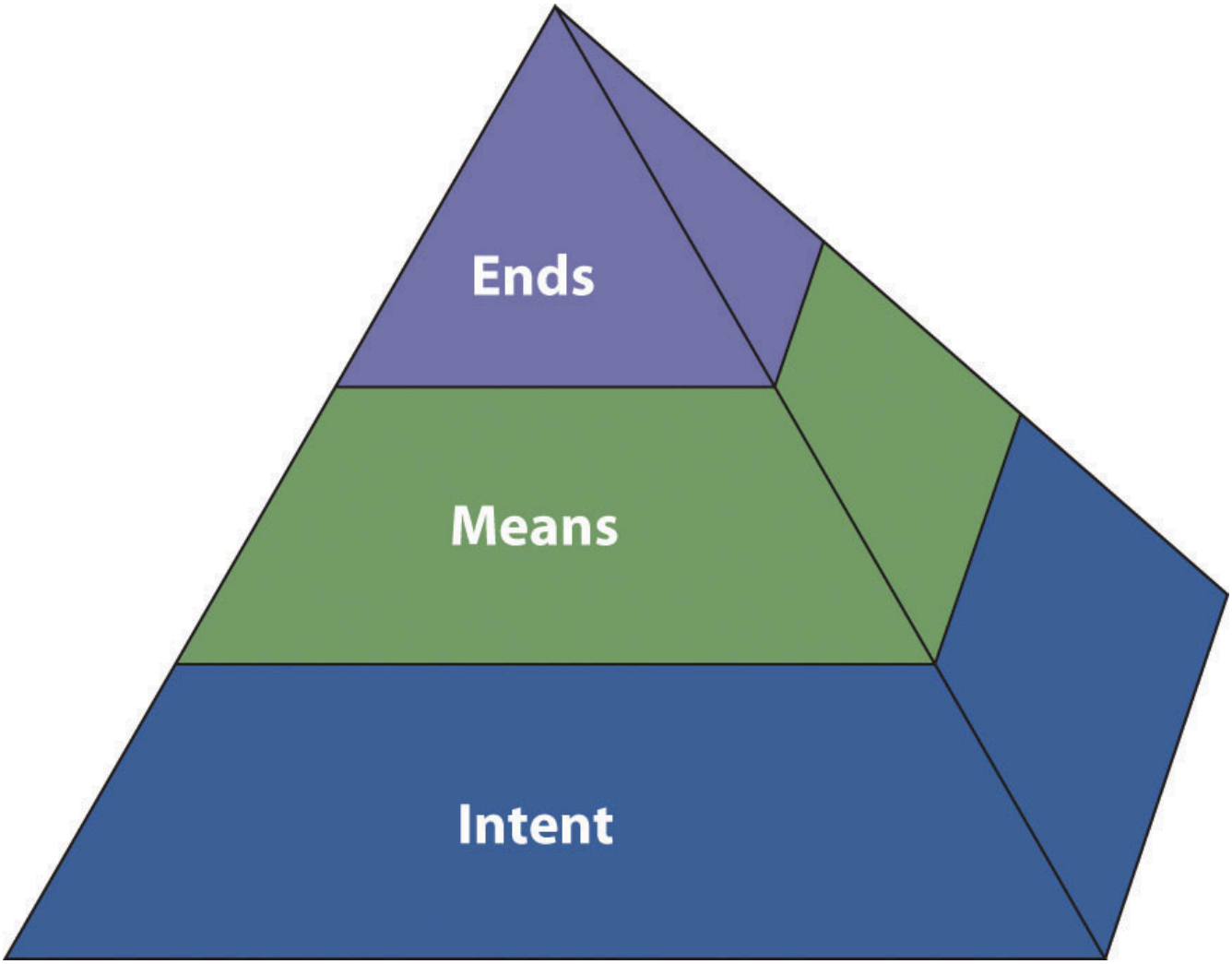
Angel Chess Demon, by OpenClipart-Vectors, licensed under Pixabay License

Every day, people around the world make ethical decisions regarding public speech, for example, is it ever appropriate to lie if it's in a group's best interest? Should you use evidence to support your speech's core argument when you are not sure if the evidence is correct? Should you refuse to listen to a speaker with whom you fundamentally disagree? These three examples represent ethical choices that speakers and listeners face in the public speaking context. To help you understand the issues involved with thinking about ethics, we begin

this module by presenting an ethical communications model, known as the ethics pyramid. We will then show how you can apply the National Communication Association's (NCA) Credo for Ethical Communication to public speaking. We will conclude with a general free speech discussion.

The Ethics Pyramid

One way to talk about ethics is to use the ethics pyramid. What is the ethics pyramid?



Tilley, E. (2005). The ethics pyramid: Making ethics unavoidable in the public relations process. Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 20, 305–320.

Elspeth Tilley, a public communication ethics expert from Massey University, proposes a structured approach to thinking about ethics (Tilley, 2005). Her ethics pyramid involves three basic concepts: intent, means, and ends.

Intent

According to Tilley, intent is the first major concept to consider when examining an issue's ethicality. To be an ethical speaker or listener, it is important to begin with ethical intentions. For example, if we agree that honesty is ethical, it follows that ethical speakers will prepare their remarks with the intent to tell the truth to their audiences. Similarly, if we agree that it is ethical to listen with an open mind, it follows that ethical listeners will intend to hear a speaker's case before forming judgments.

Coca cola ejemplo logo, by Sulogocreativocom, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Many professional organizations, including the Independent Computer Consultants Association, American Counseling Association, and American Society of Home Inspectors, have codes of conduct or ethical guidelines for their members. Individual corporations such as Monsanto, Coca-Cola, Intel, and ConocoPhillips also have ethical guidelines for how their employees should interact with suppliers or clients.

It is important to be aware that people can unintentionally engage in unethical behavior. For example, suppose we agree that it is unethical to take someone else's words and pass them off as your own—a behavior known as plagiarism. What happens if a speaker makes a statement that he believes he thought of on his own, but the statement is actually quoted from a radio commentator whom he heard without clearly remembering doing so? The plagiarism is unintentional, but does that make it ethical?

Means

Tilley describes the means you use to communicate with others as the ethics pyramid's second concept. According to McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond, "means are the tools or behaviors we employ to achieve a desired outcome" (McCroskey, Wrench, & Richmond, 2003). Some means are good and some bad.

For example, suppose you want your friend Marty to spend an hour reviewing your speech. What means might you use to persuade Marty to do you this favor? You might explain to Marty's that you value his opinion and will gladly return the favor when Marty prepares his speech (good means), or you might inform Marty that you'll tell his professor that he cheated on a test (bad means). While both of these means may lead to the same end—Marty agrees to review your speech—one is clearly more ethical than the other.

Ends

Ends is the ethics pyramid s third concept. According to McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond (McCroskey, Wrench, & Richmond, 2003), "ends are those outcomes that you desire to achieve." Ends might include the following:

- Persuading your audience to make a financial contribution for you to participate in Relay for Life.
- Persuading a group of homeowners that your real estate agency would best meet their needs.
- Informing your fellow students about newly required university fees.

Whereas the means are the behavioral choices we make, the ends are the results of those choices.

Like intent and means, ends can be good or bad. For example, suppose a city council wants to balance the city's annual budget. Balancing the budget may be a good end, assuming that the city has adequate tax revenues and some discretionary spending for city services. However, voters might argue that balancing the budget is a bad end if the city lacks the tax revenue and must raise taxes or cut essential city services, or both, to do so.

Ballroom dance, by Caragiuss, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=27#h5p-23

What are the guidelines for ethical speaking?

Steven Lucas, a well-known speech instructor, put together five helpful guidelines to ensure ethical speechmaking (Lucas, 2012, pp. 31-35).

1. **Make sure your goals are ethically sound.** Are you asking your audience to do something you yourself do not believe in, do not think is good for the audience, or would not do yourself?
2. **Be fully prepared for each speech.** Don't cheat the audience by just winging it. If you calculate the money each person in your audience makes during the time you speak, do you want to waste that much of their

time and money? As speakers we have a solemn responsibility to make that time worthwhile.

3. **Be honest in what you say.** Speechmaking rests on the assumption that words can be trusted and that people will be truthful. Without this assumption, there is no basis for communication and no reason for one person to believe anything that another person says.
4. **Avoid name-calling and other forms of abusive language.** Names leave psychological scars that last for years. Name-calling defames, demeans, or degrades. These words dehumanize people, all of whom should be treated with dignity and respect.
5. **Put ethical principles into practice.** Being ethical means behaving ethically all the time—not only when it's convenient (Lucas, 2012, pp.34-35).

Your audience is watching you even when you are not speechmaking. If you try to be honest in your speeches, yet an audience member observes you lying to a classmate, what does that do to your credibility as an ethical speaker? Something to consider.

A Speaker's Ethical Obligation

According to Lucas, "Name-calling and abusive language pose ethical problems in public speaking when they are used to silence opposing voices. A democratic society depends upon open expression of ideas. In the United States, all citizens have the right to join in democracy's never-ending dialogue. As a public speaker, you have an ethical obligation to help preserve that right by avoiding tactics such as name-calling, which inherently impugn the accuracy or respectability of public statements made by groups or individual who voice opinions different from yours.

"The obligation is the same whether you are black or white, Christian or Muslim, male or female, gay or straight, liberal or conservative. A pro-union public employee who castigated everyone opposed to her ideas as an "enemy of the middle class" is unethical. A politician who labels all his adversaries "tax-and-spend liberals" is unethical. Although name-calling can be hazardous to free speech, it is still protected under the Bill of Right's free-speech clause.

Nevertheless, it will not alter the ethical responsibility of public speakers on or off campus to avoid name-calling and other kinds of abusive language" (Lucas, 2012, pp.34-35).

Important Ethical Principles

The largest communication organization in the United States and second largest in the world created an ethical credo outlining important principles to follow if we want to be ethical communicators. Notice how they indicate that ethical speaking takes courage.

National Communication Association Credo for Ethical Communication

Questions of right and wrong arise whenever people communicate. Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others. We believe that unethical communication threatens the quality of all communication and consequently the well-being of individuals and the society in which we live. Therefore we, the members of the National Communication Association, endorse and are committed to practicing the following principles of ethical communication:

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

Source: National Communication Association

Promise?, by Carmella Fernando, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Applying Ethical Principles

Use reason and logical arguments. While there are cases where speakers have blatantly lied to an audience, it is more common for speakers to prove a point by exaggerating, omitting facts that weigh against their message, or distorting information. We believe that speakers build a relationship with their audiences, and that lying, exaggerating, or distorting information violates this relationship. Ultimately, a speaker will be more persuasive by using reason and logical arguments.

Choose objective sources. It is also important to be honest about where you get your information. As speakers, examine your sources and research and determine whether they are biased or have hidden agendas. For example, you are not likely to get accurate information about nonwhite individuals from a neo-Nazi website. While you may not know all your sources firsthand, you should attempt to find objective sources that do not have an overt or covert agenda that skews the argument you are making.

Don't plagiarize. Using someone else's words or ideas without giving credit is called plagiarism. The word "plagiarism" stems from the Latin word plagiaries, or kidnapper. The consequences for failing to cite sources during public speeches can be substantial. When Senator Joseph Biden was running for president of the United States in 1988, reporters found that he had plagiarized portions of his stump speech from British politician Neil Kinnock. Biden was forced to drop out of the race as a result. More recently, the student newspaper at Malone University in Ohio alleged that university president, Gary W. Streit, had plagiarized material in a public speech. Streit retired abruptly as a result.

Cite your sources. Even if you are not running for president of the United States or serving as a college president, citing sources is important to you as a student. Many universities have policies that include dismissing students from the institution for plagiarizing academic work, including public speeches. Failing to cite your sources might result, at best, in lowering your credibility with your audience and, at worst, in a failing course grade or school expulsion.

Speakers tend to fall into one of three major traps regarding plagiarism.

- The **first trap** is failing to tell the audience the source of a direct quotation.

- The **second trap** is paraphrasing what someone else said or wrote without giving credit to the speaker or author. For example, you may have read a book and learned that there are three types of schoolyard bullying. In the middle of your speech, you talk about those three types of bullying. If you do not tell your audience where you found that information, you are plagiarizing.
- The **third trap** that speakers fall into is re-citing someone else's sources within a speech. To explain this problem, let's look at a brief segment from a research paper written by Wrench, DiMartino, Ramirez, Oviedio, and Tesfamariam:

> "The main character on the hit Fox television show *House*, Dr. Gregory House, has one basic mantra, "It's a basic truth of the human condition that everybody lies. The only variable is about what" (Shore & Barclay, 2005). This notion that "everybody lies" is so persistent in the series that t-shirts have been printed with the slogan. Surprisingly, research has shown that most people do lie during interpersonal interactions to some degree. In a study conducted by Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead (1975), the researchers had 130 participants record their own conversations with others. After recording these conversations, the participants then examined the truthfulness of the statements within the interactions. Only 38.5% of the statements made during these interactions were labeled as "completely honest."

In this example, we see that the authors of this paragraph cited information from two external sources: Shore and Barclay and Tummer, Edgley, and Olmstead. These two groups of authors are given credit for their ideas. The authors make it clear that they did not produce the television show *House* or conduct the study that found that only 38.5 percent of statements were completely honest. Instead, these authors cited information found in two other locations. This type of citation is appropriate.

However, if a speaker read the paragraph and said the following during a speech, it would be plagiarism:

"According to Wrench DiMartino, Ramirez, Oviedio, and Tesfamariam, in a study of 130 participants, only 38.5 percent of the responses were completely honest."

In this case, the speaker is attributing the information cited to the authors of the paragraph, which is not accurate. If you want to cite the information within your speech, you need to read the original article by Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead and cite that information yourself.

There are two main reasons we do this.

1. First, Wrench, DiMartino, Ramirez, Oviedio, and Tesfamariam may have mistyped the information. Suppose the study by Turner, Edgley, and Olstead really actually found that 58.5 percent of the responses were completely honest. If you cited the revised number (38.5 percent) from the paragraph, you would be further spreading incorrect information.
2. The second reason we do not re-cite someone else's sources within our speeches is because it's intellectually dishonest. You owe your listeners an honest description of where the facts you are relating came from, not just the name of an author who cited those facts. It is more work to trace the original source of a fact or statistic, but by doing that extra work you can avoid this plagiarism trap.

The Difference Between Global, Patchwork, and Incremental Plagiarism

This section is adapted from *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E Lucas.

Global plagiarism: Stealing speech entirely from a single source and passing it off as your own. Maybe you go online and find a speech, or you use the speech your spouse created for her speech class. These are both examples of global plagiarism.

Patchwork plagiarism: Stealing ideas from two or more sources and passing them off as your own. You cut and paste information from one source, then another, then another and patch them together to make your speech, but you don't cite each source within your speech.

Incremental plagiarism: Failing to give credit for particular parts of a speech that are borrowed from other people. In global and patchwork plagiarism, the entire speech is cribbed more or less verbatim from a single source or a few sources. But incremental plagiarism occurs when you borrow particular parts or increments from other people, quotes, or phrases to make your speech, and you don't give credit. For example:

Whenever you quote someone directly, you must attribute the words to that person.

> *Scientist Roberts said, "Rocks also contain remnants of their electromagnetic information."*

Whenever you summarize or paraphrase someone else's words or ideas you must attribute it to that person.

> *According to historian Belford, we are on the brink of a new era.*

Now you have clearly identified Roberts and Belford and given them credit for their words, rather than presenting them as your own.

Ethically, we need to talk about your captive audience.

Picketers, Exam Schools, by A K M Adam, licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Captive Audiences

"Captive audience doctrine posits a situation in which the listener has no choice but to hear the undesired speech. This lack of choice has a strong spatial component to it: indeed, the classic example of a captive audience is being the target of residential picketing" (William, 2003, p. 400). For example, if picketers come to your neighborhood to picket the coming of a large store chain in a residential area, their speeches, yelling and propaganda can be heard in your home. They have entered your space and it doesn't matter that you need quiet to put your little one down for a nap or you don't agree with the picketer's message, your are forced to listen because they are in your space.

"Defenders of sexual harassment law argue that employees' need to earn a living makes the workplace a context where an employee should not be forced to listen to undesired speech" (William, 2003, p.404).

"In the case of the internet, it could be argued that the inability to filter out undesirable speech creates an unacceptable dilemma for a would-be user: use the internet and subject yourself to the risk of encountering such speech, or abstain altogether from using the medium (William, 2003, p. 404).

If we take this captive audience idea to our classroom, how does it apply? We are asking you to listen to at least two of your fellow students' speeches as part of your grade. You don't know if you will hear something offensive or something you don't want to hear.

Woman Thinking Photo, by Bruce Mars, licensed under CC0

Knowing that others are required to hear your speech, implies that you are responsible for creating a speech that takes your "captive audience" into account and that you do not abuse the privilege. What does this mean to you when preparing a speech?

Topic Choice

Does this mean you cannot choose a controversial topic? You may choose a controversial topic. We will walk you through how to do that and still respect your audience.

Word Choice

Does this mean you can choose any words you want? Gone are the days when "sticks and stone could break our bones but words could never hurt us." Words carry meaning and the ability to harm and alienate our audience. We will walk you through how to compose your speech to draw your audience in so they will want to hear more.

Visual Aids

Does this mean you can choose any visual aids you want? Visual images can be powerful ways to communicate your meaning if chosen well. They can also be damaging if not chosen well. We will walk you through how to choose your visual aids.

Gestures and Non-Verbal Delivery

Does this mean you can use any non-verbal delivery you want? More than 75 percent of our communication is non-verbal. It has a powerful effect on our audience. We will help you choose your non-verbal delivery so it will enhance your speech.

DLIFLC students compete in 39th Annual Mandarin Speech Contest in San Francisco, by Presidio of Monterey, licensed under CC0

Captive Audience Outside of Class

Does this mean that you can speak to a captive audience any way you want outside of class? Outside of class, speakers still have a responsibility to respect their captive-audience privilege and to speak and use it ethically. We'll talk about how.

The First Amendment and Free Speech

Some speakers feel that they can talk about anything they want, to anyone they want, in anyway they want because their speech is protected under the First Amendment, allowing them to behave in the following ways:

- Be foul mouthed.
- Use destructive topics.
- Use naked visual aids.
- Tell their audience how much they should despise their neighbors.

yell, shout..., DMCA

These speakers feel the First Amendment gives them the freedom of any kind of speech. Do you know if this is true?

Speech Covered Under the First Amendment

This section is adapted from *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E Lucas.

Disputes over the meaning and scope of the First Amendment arise almost daily in connection with issues such as terrorism, pornography, and hate speech.

There are some kinds of speech that are not protected under the First Amendment, including the following:

- Defamatory falsehoods that destroy a person's reputation.
- Threats against the life of the President.
- Inciting an audience to illegal action in circumstances where the audience is likely to carry out the action.

Otherwise, the Supreme Court has held—and most ethics communication experts have agreed—that public speakers have an almost unlimited right of free expression.

While free speech allows for much individual expression, you have learned that there are ethical guidelines for public speaking. But did you know there are ethical guidelines for listening as well?

It is surprising to see that adults, in a sedate context, set a poor example and forget their ethical listening manners. See if you can hear them in the video, GOP Rep. to Obama: "You lie!"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sipHTEARyYo

GOP Rep to Obama You Lie!, by Communication 1020 Videso, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sipHTEARyYo

There is a time for debate, disagreement, and protest. However, ethical listening takes into account the following:

- What is appropriate for the context.
- The implications of an outburst.

Lucas gives us clear information about ethical listening in his list.

Guidelines for Ethical Listening

1. **Be courteous and attentive.** The speaker has put a lot of work into the speech. It is surprising how often student audience members think it is ok to look at their phones, newspapers, work on homework, or even leave the room during a speech. These are all unethical listening behaviors and should be avoided.
2. **Avoid prejudging the speaker.** It is easy to see what a speaker is wearing, their accent, or even word choice and to prejudge their message. This doesn't mean you need to agree with everything a speaker has to say, but you might be surprised what you will learn if you attentively listen to the full speech with an open mind.
3. **Maintain the free and open expression of ideas.** Just as the speaker needs to avoid name-calling and tactics that shut down free speech, listeners have an obligation to maintain the speaker's right to be heard. You don't need to agree with the speaker.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=27#h5p-24

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Chapter 3: Managing Speech Anxiety

This chapter, except where otherwise noted, is adapted from Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

How do I manage my speech anxiety?

Now that you have an understanding of how important it is for you to use ethical principles in creating an effective speech, let's move to the topic you have all been either dreading or can't wait to learn about: how to manage speech anxiety.

Take a look at this scene from the *Albert Meets Hitch* video and see if you can relate to how nervous these people are.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=29#oembed-1

Hitch: Albert meets Hitch HD CLIP, by Binge Society – The Greatest Movie Scenes, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIBzVc3kJAM

You can imagine how much better this interaction would have gone had the participants not been so anxious. The question is, is it possible to manage your speech anxiety during a conversation, a job interview, or a speech?

Speech Anxiety/Communication Apprehension

Many different social situations can make us feel uncomfortable if we anticipate that we will be evaluated and judged by others. The process of revealing ourselves and knowing that others are evaluating us 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, **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" (McCroskey, 2001). 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 are 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, kicking in the "flight or fight" response (Sapolsky, 2004). Yet instead of running away or fighting, all we need to do is stand and talk.

The excess energy our body creates 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 body's responses to stress, we can better develop mechanisms for managing the body's misguided attempts to help us cope with social judgment fears.

Physiological Symptoms of Communication Apprehension

Physiological Symptoms of Communication Apprehension, by Cherise King, licensed under CCO

There are various physical sensations associated with communication apprehension. We might notice our heart pounding or our hands feeling clammy. We may break out in a sweat, 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. Communication anxiety is

profoundly disconcerting because we feel powerless to control our bodies. 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.

The physiological changes our bodies produce at critical moments are designed to contribute to ensure our muscles work efficiently 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 public speaking stress, we can better cope with these reactions and channel them in constructive directions.

Watch this Ted Ed video, *The Science of Stage Fright* by Mikael Cho. In it, Cho shares what physically happens when we become anxious. It is now called the "fight, flight, or freeze" response because sometimes we hold very still when frightened.

The video can make you feel scared just watching it, but try and notice that there is an actual science to stage fright or speech anxiety, and you are not alone in feeling nervous or scared.

Pay particular attention near the end when Cho gives you one option to help manage your anxiety.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=29#oembed-2

The science of stage fright (and how to overcome it) – Mikael Cho, by TED-Ed, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K93fMnFKwfI

After watching the video, did you realize that anxiety is a normal human reaction? We can help reduce the anxiety, but not totally eliminate it. As you continue with this module you will learn strategies to reduce anxiety.

- Any conscious emotional state, such as anxiety or excitement consists of two components:
- A primary reaction of the central nervous system.
- An intellectual interpretation of these physiological responses.

The physiological state we label as communication anxiety does not differ from those that we label rage or excitement. Even seasoned 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, using the energy released by these physiological reactions to create animation and stage presence.

It has been documented that famous speakers throughout history such as Cicero, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Gloria Steinem conquered significant public speaking fears. Celebrities who experience performance anxiety include actor Harrison Ford, Beyonce, Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Rihanna, Matt Damon, and George Clooney (Hickson, 2016).

Myths about Communication Apprehension

Speaker at Podium, by www.audio-luci-store.it, licensed under CC BY 2.0

Before we look at how to manage our speech anxiety, let's dispel some myths.

1. **People who suffer from speaking anxiety are neurotic.** As we have explained, speaking anxiety is a normal reaction. ***Good speakers can get nervous, too,*** just as poor speakers do.
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.
4. **Any mistake means that you have "blown it."** We all make mistakes. ***What matters is how well we recover,*** not whether we make a mistake. 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. **Audiences are out to get you.** An audience's natural state 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.
6. **You will look 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 your anxiety level. 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 that you're nervous if you do not point it out to them.
7. **TRUE. A little nervousness helps you give a better speech.** This myth is true! Professional speakers, actors, and other performers consistently rely on their nervous heightened arousal 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 public speaking. ***The goal is to control those nerves and channel them into your presentation.***

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Nervous?, by Freddie Peña, licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Common yet unexpected difficulties can increase speech anxiety: how do we cope?

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Speech Content Issues

Nearly every experienced speaker has gotten to the middle of a presentation and realized that a key notecard is missing or that he or she skipped important information from the speech's beginning. 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 public speaking aid, 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 can and does break down. Web servers go offline, files will not download in a timely manner, and media are incompatible with the presentation room's computer. It is important ***to always have a backup plan, developed in advance, in case of technical difficulties.*** As you develop your speech, visual aids, and other presentation materials, 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, you're still likely to experience an audience member walking in late, a cell phone ringing, or even a car alarm blaring outside your room. 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, ***as the speaker, your most important job is to maintain your composure.*** It is important not to get upset or angry because of these glitches—and, once again, the key is to be 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.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=29#h5p-26

man, portrait..., DMCA

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Anticipate Your Body's Reactions

There are various steps you can take to counteract stress' negative physiological effects on the body. You can place words and symbols in your notes that remind you to pause and breathe during points in your speech, such as "slow down" or ☺.

It is also a good idea before you get started to pause a moment 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 anxiety-induced energy that your body produces. If at all possible, move around the front of the room rather than remaining imprisoned behind the lectern or gripping it for dear life; however, avoid pacing nervously from side to side. 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 to do 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, 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 your neck and shoulder muscles by gently rolling your head from side to side.

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.

The Magic of Science

Now for some scientific managing-speech-anxiety magic. You are welcome to use what you hear in your own plan if you choose. Take a listen to Harvard Professor Amy Cuddy and a surprising two-minute strategy that many students find very effective. It is worth watching the full twenty-minute video, *Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are*.

Yes, two minutes, two minutes, two minutes. Remember the audience is more interested in learning about what you have to say than in judging you. So, forget yourself and be there for the audience.

Note: Are you a good people watcher? I hope you are because it will aid your progress as a speaker. You will be viewing video clips of speakers throughout the course. Pay attention to what went well in a speech and what you would recommend a speaker change to make their speech better.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=29

For example, In Amy Cuddy's speech, her data visual aids helped in better understanding the speech. Did you notice where her hair was? Would you recommend she do something different with it? Notice, notice, notice. It will help you know what you *want to do* and *not do* in your own speeches.

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Chapter 4: Getting the Audience to Listen

This chapter is adapted from Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

How do I effectively imbed stories in a speech?

Once you have learned to tell a story well, you can imbed them in your speeches. Using stories along with your research and data are a powerful combination to inform and persuade audiences.

You may think you won't have enough time to share a story when you present your speech in this class. However, a story can often be told in a sentence or two.

In this speech by funny Harvard professor Shawn Achor, you may be surprised by how many stories he packs into his twelve-minute Ted Talk, *The Happy Secret to Better Work*. He also includes data and research. Near the speech's end, don't miss how Achor shares five surprising ways to improve your speech skills.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=31

Shawn Achor: The happy secret to better work, by TED, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Isn't it interesting to hear how happiness creates success? Did you identify any of the five practices Achor indicated will improve happiness, which then improves success? If you missed them, you can always watch the video again. Also, you can use these strategies to reduce anxiety.

Can you guess how many stories Achor told? The answer is below the following bullets.

Remember, you are also a people watcher.

- Did you notice how different Achor's storytelling style is from Donald Davis' storytelling style?
- Did you notice if Achor also used the four Ps?
- What did you like about Achor's storytelling?
- What would you suggest Achor do to improve? Did you notice how fast he talked?

Shawn Achor told ten stories in twelve minutes.

How do I get my audience to listen?

The Importance of Listening, by Zach Graves, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

How do you get your audience to listen? This question is key in preparing to give any speech and requires that, as speakers, we are good listeners as well. Here is how it works.

"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 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, the *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 make people listen, but the article contains a surprise ending. The final piece of advice is this: "You can't go wrong by showing an interest in what other people say and by making them feel important. In other words, the better you listen, the more you'll be listened to" (Jarvis, 2009).

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 are most likely to spend many hours in a classroom doing much focused listening, yet sometimes it is difficult to apply those efforts to communication in other areas of your life. 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.

What is the difference between listening and hearing?

Megaphone, by Kimba Howard, licensed under CC BY 2.0

Listening or Hearing

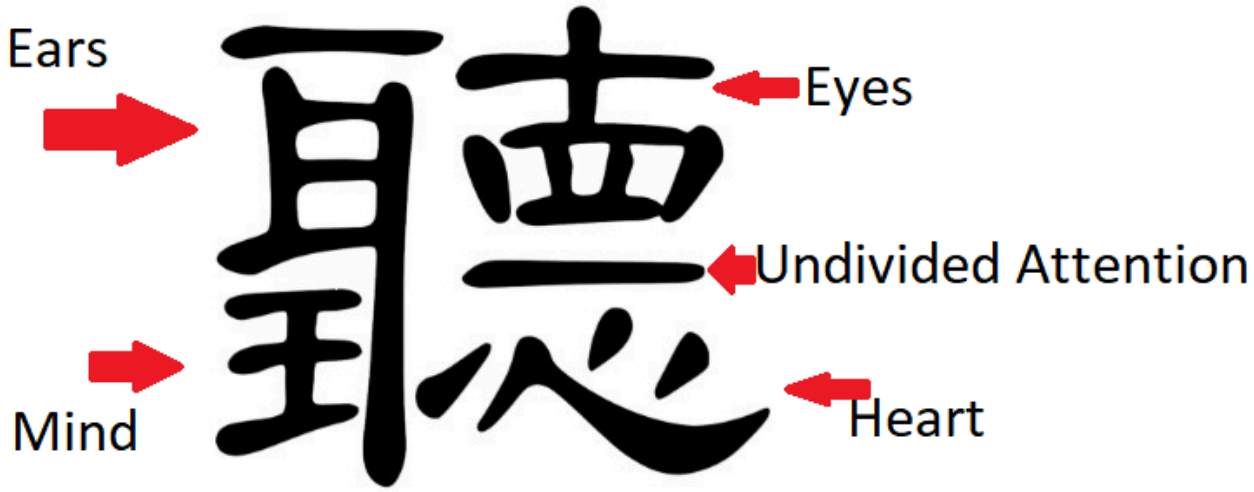
Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds, and 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.

Hearing vs. Listening, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding a speaker's expressed meaning. We do not always listen at our best, however. Later in this chapter, we will examine some of the reasons why and provide some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

The Chinese character for listen illustrates just how much of ourselves involves listening well. The cross over the symbol for "eyes" is the number ten. Consider why it takes ten eyes to listen.



Chinese Character for Listen, by Cherise King, licensed under CCO

Benefits of Listening

Listening should not be taken for granted. Before writing was invented, people conveyed virtually all knowledge through some combination of showing and telling. Elders recited tribal histories to attentive audiences. Listeners received religious teachings enthusiastically. Entertaining myths, legends, folktales, and stories survived because audiences were eager to listen. Today, however, we are informed and entertained by reading, watching, and listening to electronic recordings rather than through real-time listening. If you become distracted and let your attention wander, you can go back and replay a recording. So why learn listening skills? Here are four compelling benefits to becoming a more active and competent real-time listener.

You Become a Better Student

When you focus on the material presented in a classroom, you will be able to identify not only the words used in a lecture but their emphasis and their more complex meanings. You will take better notes, and you 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.

You Become a Better Friend

When you give your best attention to people expressing thoughts and experiences that are important to them, those individuals are likely to see you as someone who cares about their well-being. This fact is especially true when you give only your attention and refrain from interjecting opinions, judgments, and advice.

People Will Perceive You as Intelligent and Perceptive

When you listen well to others, you reveal yourself as being curious and interested in people and events. In addition, your ability to understand the meaning of what you hear will make you a more knowledgeable and thoughtful person.

Good Listening Can Help Your Public Speaking

When you listen well to others, you can pick up on the stylistic components related to how people form arguments and present information. As a result, you have the ability to analyze what you think works and doesn't work in others' speeches, which can help you transform your speeches in the process. For example, really paying attention to how others cite sources orally during their speeches may give you ideas about how to more effectively cite sources in your presentation.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=31#h5p-27

What are the different listening styles?

seven, people, meeting, office, by Amanda Mills, licensed under CC0

You and your audience will have various listening styles. Creating a speech that appeals to each listening style will help you keep your audience's attention.

If listening were easy and if all people went about it in the same way, a public speaker's task would be much easier. Even as long ago as 325 BC, Aristotle recognized that his listeners had varied listening styles.

Aristotle classified his listeners into three categories: those who would 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 exclusively all prosperous property-owning males from one city-state.

Our audiences today are likely to be much more heterogeneous. During this course, think about your audience: your classmates come from many religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some may speak English as a second language. Some might be survivors of war-torn parts of the world such as Bosnia, Darfur, or northwest China. Being mindful of such differences will help you prepare a speech in which you minimize the potential for misunderstanding.

Part of the potential for misunderstanding is the difference in listening styles. In the *International Journal*

of Listening, Watson, Barker, and Weaver (Watson, et al., 1995) identified four listening styles: **people, action, content, and time.**

People

People-oriented listeners are interested in the speaker. People-oriented listeners listen to the message to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message. For instance, when people-oriented listeners listen to a famous rap artist's interview, 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 you are a people-oriented listener, you might have certain questions you hope will be answered, such as:

- Does the artist feel successful?
- What's it like to be famous?
- What kind of educational background does the artist have?

In the same way, if we're listening to a doctor who responded to an earthquake crisis in Haiti, we might be more interested in the doctor as a person than in the Haitians' state of affairs. You might have certain questions you hope will be answered, such as:

- Why did the doctor go to Haiti?
- How did the doctor get time away from a normal practice and patients?
- How many lives did the doctor save?

As people-oriented listeners, 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. If you tend to be such a listener, 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 wants. Does the speaker want votes, donations, volunteers, or something else? It's sometimes difficult for an action-oriented listener to give their full attention through the descriptions, evidence, and explanations with which a speaker builds his or her 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 you're a passenger on an airplane, a flight attendant delivers a brief speech called the preflight safety briefing. The flight attendant does not read a seat-belt safety study or regulations findings. The flight attendant doesn't explain that the speech's content is actually mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration. Instead, the attendant says only to buckle up so the plane can leave the gate. 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, what it means, whether it makes sense, and whether it's accurate. When you give a speech, many classroom audience members will be content-oriented listeners who will be interested in learning from you. Therefore, you have an obligation to represent the truth in the fullest way you can. You can emphasize an idea, but if you exaggerate, you could lose credibility in the minds of your content-oriented audience. You can advocate ideas that are important to you, but if you omit important limitations, you are withholding part of the truth and could leave your audience with an inaccurate view.

Imagine you're delivering a speech on the plight of African orphans. If you just talk about the fact that there are over forty-five million orphans in Africa but don't explain why, you'll sound like an infomercial. In such an instance, your audience's response is likely to be less enthusiastic than you might want. Instead, content-oriented listeners want to listen to well-developed information with solid explanations.

Time

Time-oriented listeners prefer a message that gets to the point quickly. Time-oriented listeners become impatient with slow deliveries or lengthy explanations. This listener may be receptive for only a short time and may become rude or even hostile if the speaker expects them to focus their attention for long. Time-oriented listeners convey their impatience through eye rolling, shifting about in their seats, checking their cell phones, and other inappropriate behaviors. For example, if you've been asked to speak to middle-school students, be aware that their attention spans are simply not as long as college students. This is an important reason why speeches given to young audiences must be shorter or broken up by more variety than speeches given to adults.

In your professional future, some of your audience members will have real time constraints, not merely perceived ones. Imagine that you've been asked to deliver a speech on a new project to a local corporation's board of directors. Chances are, the board members are all pressed for time. If your speech is long and filled with overly detailed information, time-oriented listeners will simply start to tune you out as you're speaking. Obviously, if time-oriented listeners start tuning you out, they will not be listening to your message. This type of time-oriented listener may indeed be interested in the message, but truly does not have the time.

> Interesting Fact
>
> Most people speak at a rate of 125 words per minute, but we listen at a rate between 500–800 words per minute! Because of this gap, we lose concentration, and our mind wanders when we try to listen to others.

There are also three other elements that influence listening styles.

Auditory listeners learn best when they *hear* the information. This seems like the easiest element for a speaker to accommodate because we speak our information. However, speaking with effective vocal variety is the key.

Tactile listeners learn best when they can *touch or experience* the information. This may be the most difficult element because we don't often find a way for audiences to participate experientially. However, it can be done. A person speaking on relaxation techniques can invite the audience to do a breathing exercise. A

person speaking about how friction works can ask the audience to rub their hands together briskly to feel how quickly friction warms their hands.

Visual listeners learn best when they can *see* the information. This learner enjoys visual aids, posters, PowerPoints, or models of the speech's concepts to help digest the information.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=31#h5p-28

Why is listening difficult?

Listen, by Ian T. McFarland, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

At times, everyone has difficulty staying completely focused during a lengthy presentation. Sometimes, we have difficulty listening to even relatively brief messages. Some 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.

Noise

Noise is one of the biggest factors that interferes with listening; it can be defined as anything that interferes with your ability to attend to and understand a message. There are many kinds of noise, but we will focus on only the four you are most likely to encounter in public speaking situations: **physical psychological, physiological, and semantic.**

Physical Noise

Physical noise consists of various environmental sounds that interfere with an audience's ability to hear. Construction noise right outside a window, planes flying directly overhead, or loud music in the next room can make it difficult to hear a speaker's message even when he or she is using a microphone. It is sometimes possible to manage or reduce the noise. For example, closing a window or asking the people in the next room to possibly turn down their music might help. Changing to a new location is more difficult, as it involves finding a new location and getting everyone there.

Psychological Noise

Psychological noise consists of a listener's own internal thoughts or distractions that draw their attention away from the message. For example, if you are preoccupied with personal problems, it is difficult to give your full attention to understanding the message's meaning. Also, the presence of a person to whom you feel attracted or perhaps to whom you dislike intensely can also create psychological noise.

Physiological Noise

Physiological noise consists of distractions caused by a listener's own body. For example, maybe you're listening to a speech in class around noon, and you haven't eaten anything. Your stomach may be growling, and your desk is starting to look tasty. Maybe the room is cold, and you're thinking more about how to keep warm than about what the speaker is saying. In either case, your body can distract you from attending to the information being presented.

Semantic Noise

Semantic noise occurs when a listener experiences confusion over the speaker's meaning or word choice. While you are attempting to understand a particular word or phrase, the speaker continues to present the message. While you are struggling with a word interpretation, you are distracted from listening to the rest of the message. For example, imagine a speaker using the word sweeper to refer to a carpet cleaning device. The listener thinks a sweeper is a broom and does not imagine how effective it would be in cleaning carpeting. Even if the listener found out later that the speaker was using the word sweeper to refer to a vacuum cleaner, her listening was hurt by her inability to understand what the speaker meant. Another example of semantic noise is euphemism. Euphemism is diplomatic language used for delivering unpleasant information. For instance, if someone is said

to be “flexible with the truth,” it might take us a moment to understand that the speaker means this person sometimes lies.

Physical Noise

- Construction activity
- Barking dogs
- Loud music
- Air conditioners
- Airplanes
- Noisy conflict nearby

Psychological Noise

- Worries about money
- Crushing deadlines
- The presence of specific other people in the room
- Tight daily schedule
- Biases related to the speaker or the content

Physiological Noise

- Feeling ill
- Having a headache
- Growling stomach
- Room is too cold or too hot

Semantic Noise

- Special jargon
- Unique word usage
- Mispronunciation
- Euphemism
- Phrases from foreign languages

Many distractions are neither the listener nor the speaker's fault. However, when you are the speaker, being aware of these noise sources can help you reduce some noise that may interfere with your audience's ability to understand you.

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 our **attention span** (Carr, 2010). Whether or not these concerns are well founded, you have probably noticed that even when your attention is "glued" to something in which you are deeply interested, every now and then you pause to do something else, such as get a drink of water, stretch, or look out the window.

Humans' attention-span limits 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 pacing breaks (Middendorf & Kalish, 1996). For example, a fifty- to seventy-five-minute class 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.

If you have instructors who do a good job of keeping your attention, they are positive role models by showing strategies you can use to accommodate your audience's attention-span limitations.

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 are noise. Everyone has biases, but good listeners have learned to hold them in check while listening.

The first type of listener bias is related to the speaker. For example, a speaker stands up, and a listener simply doesn't like the speaker, so that person may not listen to the speaker's message. Maybe you have a classmate who gets under your skin for some reason, or maybe you question a classmate's topic competence. 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 listener bias is related to the speaker's topic or content. Maybe the speech topic is one you've heard a thousand times, so you just tune it out. Or maybe the speaker is presenting a topic or position you 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, 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 viewpoints or information. We live in a world where everyone can benefit from clear thinking and open-minded listening.

Listener or Receiver Apprehension

Listener or **receiver apprehension** is the fear that you might not understand the message, process the information correctly, or adapt your thinking to include new information coherently (Wheeless, 1975). In some situations, you might worry that the information presented will be over your head—too complex, technical, or advanced for you to understand adequately.

For example, many students actually avoid taking courses in which they feel certain they will do poorly. Or, they only take challenging courses if it's required. This avoidance might be understandable, but it is not a good success strategy. To become educated people, students are advised to take a few courses that can enlighten their limited knowledge.

As a speaker, you can reduce listener apprehension by defining terms clearly and by using simple visual aids to hold the audience's attention. Don't underestimate or overestimate your audience's subject knowledge—good audience analysis is always important. If you know your audience doesn't have special topic knowledge, start your speech by defining important terms. Research has shown that when listeners do not feel they understand a speaker's message, their apprehension about receiving the message escalates. Imagine that you are listening to a chemistry speech, and the speaker begins talking about "colligative properties." You may start questioning whether you're 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, you 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. You could also give an example that they might readily understand, such as saying that it doesn't matter what kind of salt you use in the winter to melt driveway ice, what is important is how much salt you use.

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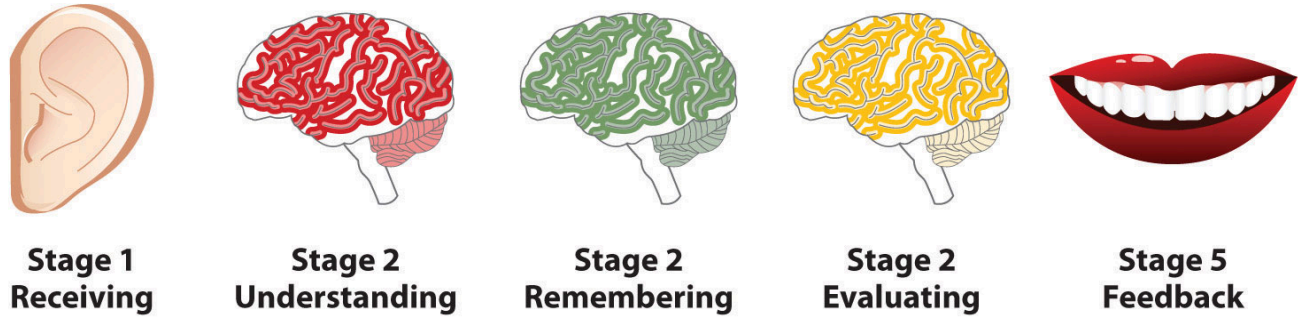
What are the stages of listening?



Stages of Feedback, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

As you read earlier, many factors can interfere with listening, so you need to manage several mental tasks at the same time to be a successful listener. Author Joseph DeVito has divided the listening process into five stages: **receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding** (DeVito, 2000).

Receiving

Receiving is focusing intentionally on hearing a speaker's message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. At this stage, we are still only hearing the message. Notice in the stages of feedback image that this stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this listening-process stage.

Understanding

In the **understanding** stage, we attempt to learn the message's meaning, which is not always easy. For example, 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 again in the image that stages two, three, and four are represented by the brain because it is the primary tool involved with these listening-process stages.

Even when we have understood a message's words, because of our different backgrounds and experiences, we sometimes make the mistake of attaching our own meanings to the speakers' words. 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 learn that your friends are at a different theater 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 your professor advises you to get an early start on your speech, he or she probably hopes that you will begin your research right away and move on to developing a thesis statement and speech outline as soon as possible. However, other students in your class might misunderstand the instructor's meaning in several ways. One student might interpret the advice to mean that as long as she gets started, the rest of the assignment will have time to develop itself.

Another student might think that to start early means to start on Friday night instead of Sunday night before the Monday due date.

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

Remembering

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

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

Finally, if your understanding is inaccurate, recalling the message's meaning will be inaccurate too.

Evaluating

The fourth stage in the listening process is **evaluating** or judging the message's value. We might be thinking, "This makes sense" or, conversely, "This is very odd." Because everyone embodies biases and perspectives learned from widely diverse life experiences, evaluating 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 they evaluate the message. 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 cause prejudiced evaluations. Imagine you're listening to a speech given by someone from another country, and this person has an accent that is hard to understand. You may have a hard time simply making out the speaker's message. Some people find a foreign accent to be interesting or even exotic, while others find it annoying or even take it as a sign of ignorance. If a listener has a strong bias against foreign accents, the listener may not even attempt to attend to the message. If you mistrust a speaker because of an accent, you could be rejecting important or personally enriching information. Good listeners have learned to refrain from making these judgments and instead have learned to focus on the speaker's meanings.

Responding

Responding—sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final listening-process stage. It's the stage at which you indicate your involvement. Almost anything you do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback. For example, you are giving positive feedback to your instructor if, at the end of class, you stay behind to finish a

sentence in your notes or you 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 once more in the stages of feedback image that this stage is represented by the lips because we often give feedback in the form of verbal feedback; however, you can just as easily respond nonverbally.

Formative Feedback

Not all response occurs at the end of the message. **Formative feedback** is a natural part of the ongoing transaction between a speaker and a listener. As the speaker delivers the message, a listener signals his or her involvement with focused attention, note-taking, nodding, and other behaviors that indicate whether they understand or fail to understand the message. These signals are important to the speaker. The speaker is interested in whether the message is clear and accepted or whether the listener is resisting the message's content due to preconceived ideas. Speakers can use this feedback to decide whether they need additional examples, support materials, or explanations.

Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given at the end of the communication. When you attend a political rally, a presentation given by a speaker you admire, or even a class, there are verbal and nonverbal ways to indicate that you appreciate or disagree with the message or with the speakers. At the end of the message, maybe you'll stand up and applaud a speaker with whom you agree or just sit staring in silence after listening to a speaker who you didn't like. In other cases, a speaker may be attempting to persuade you to donate to a charity, so if the speaker passes a bucket, and you make a donation, you are providing feedback on the speaker's effectiveness. At the same time, we do not always listen carefully to speakers who we admire. Sometimes we simply enjoy being in their presence, and our summative feedback is not about the message but about our attitudes towards the speaker. If your feedback is limited to something like, "I just love your voice," you might be indicating that you did not listen carefully to the message's content.

There is little doubt that by now, you are beginning to understand the complexity of listening and the great potential for errors. By becoming aware of what is involved with active listening and where difficulties might lie, you can prepare yourself both as a listener and as a speaker to minimize listening errors with your own public speeches.

There is little doubt that by now you understand how complex active listening can be. But by being aware of the listening stages, recognizing the great potential for errors, and preparing ahead for difficulties, you can become respectful active listeners and deliver compelling, engaging speeches.

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How do we listen critically?

Good Listener, by Kizzzbeth, license under CC BY-SA 2.0

As a student, you are exposed to various messages. You receive messages conveying academic information, institutional rules, instructions, and warnings; you also receive messages through political discourse, advertisements, gossip, jokes, song lyrics, text messages, invitations, web links, and more. You know the messages are not all the same—their meaning varies depending on the author's purpose and audience. But it isn't always clear which messages are serving the listener and which ones are serving the speaker. Nor is it always clear how to separate truthful messages from the misleading or even blatantly false ones. Part of being a good listener is to learn how to critically evaluate the messages we hear.

Critical listening in this context means using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to determine whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. Critical listening can be learned with practice but, it 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 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 makes it difficult for listeners to understand the proposed budget and to ask probing questions.

Six Ways to Improve Your Critical Listening Skills

Critical listening is first and foremost a skill that can be learned and improved upon. In this section, we explore six different techniques that you can use to become a skilled critical listener.

Recognizing the Difference between Facts and 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). Critical listening requires that you learn to separate opinions from facts. This works two ways: critical listeners are aware of whether a speaker is delivering a factual message or an opinion-based message, and they are also aware of the interplay between their own opinions and the facts they hear.

For example, in American politics, health care reform is heavily laden with both opinions and facts, and it is extremely difficult to sort them out. On September 9, 2010, during President Obama's nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress outlining his health care reform plan, the President responded to several rumors about the plan, including the claim "that our reform effort will insure illegal immigrants. This, too, is false—the reforms I'm proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally." At this point, one congressman yelled out, "You lie!" Clearly, this congressman did not have a very high opinion of either the health care reform plan or the president. However, when the nonpartisan watch group Factcheck.org examined the proposed bill's language, they found that it had a section titled "No Federal Payment for Undocumented Aliens" (Factcheck.org, 2009).

Often when people have a negative opinion about a topic, they are unwilling to accept facts. Instead, they question all the speech's aspects and develop a negative predisposition toward both the speech and the speaker.

This is not to say that speakers should not express their opinions. Many of history's greatest speeches 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 American society's future. 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.

Uncovering Assumptions

If something is factual, supporting evidence exists. However, we still need to be careful about the evidence's meaning. 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, you may find yourself being asked to assume something is a fact when, in reality, many people question that fact. For example, suppose you're listening to a speech on weight loss. The speaker talks about how overweight people are simply not motivated or lack the self-discipline to lose weight. The speaker has built the speech on the assumption that lack of motivation and self-discipline are the only reasons why people can't lose weight. You may think to yourself, what about genetics? By listening critically, you will be more likely to notice unwarranted assumptions in a speech, which may prompt you to question the speaker, if questions are encouraged, or to do further research to examine the validity of the speaker's assumptions. If, however, you sit passively by and let the speaker's assumptions go unchallenged, you may find yourself persuaded by information that is not factual.

When you listen critically to a speech, you might hear information that appears unsupported by evidence. You

shouldn't accept that information unconditionally. You would accept it under the condition that the speaker offers credible evidence that directly supports it.

Table 4.1 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.

Be Open to New Ideas

Sometimes, people are so fully invested in their world perceptions that they are unable to listen receptively to messages that make sense and that would benefit them greatly. Historically, humans as a whole are a creative, curious, innovative, and discerning race who continue to steadily progress new ideas and push unprecedented boundaries, sometimes against great odds. For example, in the late 1700s when the vaccination technique to prevent smallpox was introduced, the protocol 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 today, much opposition continues.

In the public speaking world, 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 Copernicus's death, the Roman Catholic Church admitted its error and reburied his remains with the full Catholic burial rites (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 is presented to you in life; rather, we are suggesting that you at least listen to and then evaluate the message.

Rely on Reason and Common Sense

If you are listening to a speech and your common sense tells you that the message is illogical, you very well might be right. Think about whether the speech seems credible and coherent. In this way, your common sense can act as a warning system for you.

For example, consider a speech on the environmental hazards of fireworks. The speaker argues that fireworks—the public kind, not the personal kind people buy and set off in their backyards, were environmentally hazardous because of the after litter. Although there is certainly some unburned paper that makes it to the ground, the litter created by fireworks displays is relatively small compared to other litter sources, including the trash that spectators leave behind after watching the 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 the message is inconsistent with what you already know, if the argument is illogical, or if the language is exaggerated, investigate the issues before accepting or rejecting the message. Often, you will not be able to investigate facts during the presentation; it may take longer to collect enough verifiable, clear, and unambiguous evidence to make that decision for yourself.

However, when you are the speaker, do not substitute common sense for evidence. During a speech, it's necessary to cite the scholarly authorities 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 your case. We will discuss these fallacies in more detail in Chapter 17. 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.

In Chapter 2, we pointed out that what is common sense for people of one generation or culture may be quite the opposite for people of a different generation or culture. Thus, it is important not to assume that your audience shares the beliefs that are, for you, common sense. Likewise, if your speech's message is complex or controversial, consider your audience's needs and do your best to explain the complexities factually and logically, not intuitively.

Relate New Ideas to Old Ones

As both a speaker and a listener, one of the most important things you can do to understand a message is to relate new ideas to previously held ideas. Imagine you're giving a speech about biological systems, and you need to use the term homeostasis, which refers to an organism's ability to maintain stability by making constant adjustments. To help your audience understand homeostasis, you could show how homeostasis is similar to adjustments made by the thermostats that keep our homes at a more or less even temperature. If you set your thermostat for seventy degrees, and it gets hotter, the central cooling will kick in and cool your house. If your house cools to below seventy degrees, your heater will kick in and heat your house. Notice that in both cases, your thermostat is 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 your listeners and will likely help them both understand and remember the idea because it links to something they have already experienced.

Making effective comparisons while you are listening to a message will deepen your understanding. As the speaker, if you provide comparisons for your listeners, you make it easier for them to consider your ideas.

Take Notes

Note-taking is a skill that improves with practice. You already know that it's nearly impossible to write down

everything a speaker says. In fact, in your attempt to record everything, you might fall behind and wish you had divided your attention differently between writing and listening.

Careful, selective note-taking is important because we want an accurate record that reflects the message's meanings. However much you might concentrate on the notes, you could inadvertently leave out an important word, such as *not*, and undermine the reliability of your otherwise carefully written notes. Instead, if you give the same care and attention to listening, you are less likely to make those mistakes.

It's important to find a balance between listening well and note-taking well. Many people constantly struggle with this balance. For example, if you try to write down only key phrases instead of full sentences, you might find that you can't remember how two ideas were related. In that case, too few notes were taken. Conversely, extensive note-taking can cause you to lose the most important idea's emphasis.

To increase your critical listening skills, continue developing your ability to identify a message's central issues so that you can take accurate notes that represent the speaker's intended meaning.

Listening Ethically

One and Other-Plinth Telephone System & Guitar Playing, by Feggy Art, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Ethical listening rests heavily on honest intentions. Extend to speakers the same respect you want to receive when it's your turn to speak. Face the speaker with open eyes. Don't constantly check your cell phone. Avoid any behavior that belittles the speaker or the message.

Scholars Stephanie Coopman and James Lull emphasize creating a climate of caring and mutual

understanding, observing that "respecting others' perspectives is one hallmark of the effective listener" (Coopman & Lull, 2008). Respect, or unconditional positive regard for others, means that you treat others with consideration and decency whether you agree with them or not. Professors Sprague, Stuart, and Bodary (Sprague, et al., 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) (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 well.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=31#h5p-31

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Chapter 5: Using Language

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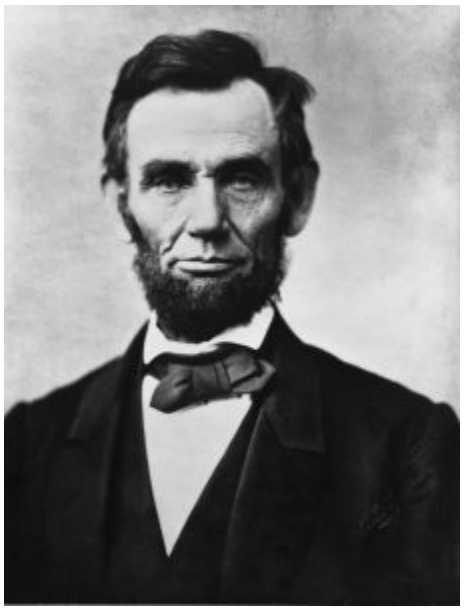
What is the importance of language in my speech?

Now that you have a good grasp of how you can help your audience to listen to your speech, let's see how your language choice influences their listening skills as well.

The words we choose are symbols for the meanings we wish to convey. I wish I could open your head and pour in my meanings. It would be so much easier and more accurate than trying to find a word that delivers the exact same meaning I have in my mind. Check out this PowerPoint to see what I'm talking about. It is foundational to helping you choose your words for your speeches.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEgLswzKs5w

Perception Lecture Source, by Communication 1020 Videso, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEgLswzKs5w



Abraham Lincoln head on shoulders photo portrait, by Alexander Garner, Public Domain

Ask any professional speaker or speech writer, and they will tell you that language matters. For example, below are some of the most important and memorable lines in American history from speeches given by American presidents:

> It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time– Abraham Lincoln (McClure, 1904).
>
> Speak softly and carry a big stick–Theodore Roosevelt (Roosevelt, 1901).

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself–Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Roosevelt, 1933).

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country–John F. Kennedy (Kennedy, 1961).

We lose ourselves when we compromise the very ideals that we fight to defend. And we honor those ideals by upholding them not when it's easy, but when it is hard–Barack Obama (Obama, 2009).

You don't have to be a president or a famous speaker to use language effectively. So, in this chapter, we're going to explore the importance of language. First, we will discuss the difference between oral and written language, then we will talk about some basic guidelines for using language, and lastly, we'll look at six key language elements.

What is the difference between oral and written language?

Group meeting, by Clemson University Library, licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

When we use the word language, we are referring to the words you choose to use in your speech—so by definition, our focus is on spoken language. Spoken language has always existed prior to written language. Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond suggest that if you think about humans' language history as a twelve-inch ruler, written language or recorded language has only existed for the "last quarter of an inch" (Wrench, et al., 2008). Furthermore, of the more than six thousand languages that are spoken around the world today, only a minority actually use a written alphabet (Lewis, 2009). To help us understand the importance of language,

we will first look at language's basic functions and then delve into the differences between oral and written language.

Basic Functions of Language

Language is any formal system of gestures, signs, sounds, and symbols used or conceived as a means of communicating thought. As mentioned above, there are over six thousand language schemes currently used around the world. Mandarin is the language spoken by the most people on the planet; other widely spoken languages are English, Spanish, and Arabic (Lewis, 2009). Language is ultimately important because it is the primary means through which humans have the ability to communicate and interact with one another. Some linguists go so far as to suggest that acquiring language skills is the primary advancement that enabled our prehistoric ancestors to flourish and succeed over other hominid species (Mayell, 2003).

In today's world, effective language use helps us in our interpersonal relationships at home and at work and will improve your ability to be an effective public speaker. Because language is an important aspect of public speaking that many students don't spend enough time developing, we encourage you to take advantage of this chapter.

One of the first components necessary for understanding language is to understand how we assign meaning to words. Words consist of oral sounds and written shapes that have agreed-upon meanings based in concepts, ideas, and memories. When we write the word blue, we may be referring to a portion of the visual spectrum dominated by energy with a wavelength of roughly 440–490 nanometers. You could also say that the color in question is an equal mixture of both red and green light. While both are technically correct, we're pretty sure that neither of these definitions is how you thought about the word. When hearing the word blue, you may have thought of your favorite color, the color of the sky on a spring day, or the color of a really ugly car you saw in the parking lot. When you think about language, be aware that there are two different meaning types to consider: denotative and connotative.

Denotative Meaning

Denotative meaning is the *specific* meaning associated with a word—sometimes referred to as the dictionary definition. The definitions provided above for the word blue are examples that might be found in a dictionary. The first dictionary was written by Robert Cawdry in 1604 and was called *Table Alphabeticall*. This English language dictionary consisted of three thousand commonly spoken English words. Today, the *Oxford English Dictionary* contains more than 200,000 words (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Connotative Meaning

Connotative meaning is the *idea* suggested by or associated with a word. In addition to the examples above, the word blue can evoke many other ideas:

- State of depression—feeling blue.
- Indicates winning—a blue ribbon.
- Side during the Civil War—blues vs. grays.
- Sudden event—out of the blue.

We also associate the color blue with the sky and the ocean. Maybe your school colors or your archrival's colors include blue. There are also various forms of blue: aquamarine, baby blue, navy blue, royal blue, and so on.

Some miscommunication can occur over denotative meanings. For example, imagine receiving a flyer for a tennis center open house. The center's expressed goal is to introduce children to the game of tennis. At the bottom of the flyer, the language used encourages people "to bring their own racquets if they have them," but "a limited number of racquets will be available." The final phrase's denotative meaning could be interpreted in multiple ways: some parents attending the event may perceive it to mean that loaner racquets will be available *to use* during the open house event, when really the tennis court people intended it to mean that parents could *purchase* racquets onsite. The confusion over the denotative meaning could hurt the tennis center, as some parents could feel they had been misled by the flyer and may leave the event!

Although denotatively based misunderstandings such as in the example indeed happen, most communication misunderstandings occur because of differing connotative meanings. For example, you may be trying to persuade your audience to support public funding for a new professional football stadium in your city, but if mentioning the team or owner's name creates negative connotations for the audience, you will not be very persuasive. The potential for misunderstanding connotative meaning is an additional reason why audience analysis, discussed earlier in this book, is critically important. By conducting effective audience analysis, you know in advance how your audience might respond to your words and ideas' connotations. Connotative meanings can not only differ between individuals interacting at the same time but also differ greatly across time periods and cultures. Ultimately, speakers should attempt to have a working knowledge of how their audiences could potentially interpret words and ideas to minimize the chance of miscommunication.

Twelve Ways Oral and Written Language Differ

A second important aspect to understand about language is that oral language used in public speaking and written language used for texts do not function the same way. Try a brief experiment. Take a textbook, maybe even this one, and read it out loud. When the text is read aloud, does it sound conversational? Probably not. Written language uses larger vocabulary and is more formal. Public speaking, on the other hand, should sound like a conversation. McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond highlight the following twelve characteristics that oral language uses:

1. A smaller variety of words.
2. Words with fewer syllables.
3. Shorter sentences.
4. More self-reference words: *I, me, mine*.
5. Fewer quantifying terms or precise numerical words.
6. More pseudo-quantifying terms: *many, few, some*.
7. More extreme and superlative words: *none, all, every, always, never*.
8. More qualifying statements: clauses beginning with *unless* and *except*.
9. More repetition of words and syllables.
10. More contractions.
11. More interjections: "Wow!," "Really?," "No!," "You're kidding!".
12. More colloquial and nonstandard words (McCroskey, et al., 2003).

The differences between oral and written communication exist primarily because people listen to and read information differently. First, when you read information, if you don't grasp content the first time, you have the ability to reread a section. When we are listening to information, we do not have the ability to "rewind" life and relisten to the information. Second, when you read information, if you do not understand a concept, you

can look up the concept in a dictionary or online and gain the knowledge easily. However, we do not always have easy access to the Internet to look up concepts that we don't understand. Therefore, **oral communication should be simple enough to be easily understood in the moment, by a specific audience, without additional study or information.**

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=33#h5p-32

How can I use language effectively in my speech?

Megaphone, by Kimba Howard, licensed under CC BY 2.0

When considering how to use language effectively in your speech, consider the degree to which the language is appropriate, vivid, inclusive, and familiar. The next section defines each of these language aspects and discusses why each is important in public speaking.

Use Appropriate Language

In life, we behave in ways appropriate for the circumstances. The same applies to the language we use. Appropriateness is one of the first concepts a speechmaker needs to think about when considering what language to use. By appropriate, we mean whether the language is suitable or fitting for the speaker, the audience, the speaking context, and the topic.

Appropriate for the Speaker

One of the first questions to ask yourself is whether your speech's language fits with your own speaking pattern. Not all language choices are appropriate for all speakers. The language you select should be suitable for you, not someone else. If you're a first-year college student, there's no need to force yourself to sound like an astrophysicist even if you are giving a speech on new planets. One of the biggest mistakes novice speakers make is thinking that they have to use million-dollar words because it makes them sound smarter. Actually, million-dollar words don't tend to function well in oral communication to begin with, so using them will probably make you uncomfortable. Also, it may be difficult for the audience to understand your words' nuances and can increase the risk of denotative or connotative misunderstandings.

Appropriate for the Audience

The second question to ask is whether the language you choose is appropriate for your specific audience. Let's say that you're an engineering student. If you're giving a presentation to an engineering class, you can use language that other engineering students will know. On the other hand, if you use engineering vocabulary in a public speaking class, many audience members will not understand you. As another example, if you are speaking about the Great Depression to a young-adult audience, you can't assume they will know the meaning of terms like "New Deal" and "WPA," which would be familiar to a senior-citizen audience. In this text's other chapters, we explain the importance of audience analysis—once again, audience analysis is a key factor to consider when choosing your speech's language.

Appropriate for the Context

The third question to ask about appropriateness is whether the language you use is suitable or fitting for the context itself. The language you employ if you're addressing an auditorium full of high school students will differ from the language you employ addressing a hotel ballroom full of business people. If you're giving a speech at an outdoor rally, you cannot use the same language you would use in a classroom. Recall that the speaking context includes the occasion, the time of day, the audiences' mood, physical location, and other factors. Take the entire speaking context into consideration when you make language choices for your speech.

Appropriate for the Topic

The fourth and final question to ask is whether the language is appropriate for your specific topic. If you are speaking about The Walt Disney Company's early years, would you refer to Walt Disney as a "thaumaturgic"

individual, i.e., one who works wonders or miracles? While the word thaumaturgic may be accurate, is it the most appropriate for the topic at hand? As another example, if your speech topic is about the dual residence model of string theory, it makes sense to expect that you will use more sophisticated language than if your topic is about a basic introduction to the physics of, say, sound or light waves.

Use Vivid Language

After appropriateness, the second main guideline for language choice is to use vivid language. Vivid language helps your listeners create strong, distinct, clear, and memorable mental images. Good vivid language helps your audience truly understand and imagine what you are saying. Two common ways to create a more vivid speech is by using imagery and rhythm.

Imagery

Imagery is using language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The goal of imagery is to help an audience member create a mental picture of what a speaker is saying. A speaker who uses imagery successfully will tap into one or more of the audience's five basic senses: hearing, taste, touch, smell, and sight. Three common tools of imagery are concreteness, simile, and metaphor.

Concreteness

When we use language that is concrete, we help our audience see specific realities or actual instances instead of abstract theories and ideas. The goal of concreteness is to help you, as a speaker, show your audience something instead of just telling them. Imagine you've decided to give a speech on the importance of freedom. You could easily stand up and talk about the philosophical work of Rudolf Steiner, who divided the ideas of freedom into freedom of thought and freedom of action. If you're like us, even reading that sentence can make you want to go to sleep. Instead of defining what those terms mean and discussing Steiner's philosophical merits, you could use real examples in which people's freedom to think or freedom to behave has been stifled. For example, you could talk about how Afghani women under Taliban rule have been denied access to education, and how those seeking education have risked public flogging and even execution (Iacopino & Rasekh, 1998). You could further illustrate how Afghani women under the Taliban are forced to adhere to rigid interpretations of Islamic law that functionally limit their behavior. These examples illustrate Steiner's philosophy, make your language more concrete, and are easier to remember. Ultimately, the goal of concreteness is to show an audience something instead of talking about it abstractly.

Simile

The second form of imagery is simile. As you probably learned in English courses, a simile is a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared. Both aspects being compared remain separate within the comparison. The following are some examples:

- The thunderous applause was *like* a party among the gods.
- After the revelation, she was as angry *as* a raccoon caught in a cage.

- Love is *like* a battlefield.

When we look at these two examples, you'll see that two words have been italicized: *like* and *as*. All similes contain either like or as within the comparison. Speakers use similes to help an audience understand a specific characteristic being described within the speech. In the first example, we are connecting the type of applause being heard to something supernatural, so we can imagine that the applause was huge and enormous. Now, think how you would envision the event if the simile likened the applause to a mime convention—your mental picture changes dramatically, doesn't it?

To effectively use similes within your speech, first look for instances where you find yourself using the words like or as—for example, "His breath smelled *like* a fishing boat on a hot summer day." Second, when you find situations where you are comparing two things using like or as, examine what it is that you are actually comparing. For example, maybe you're comparing someone's breath to the odor of a fishing vessel. Lastly, once you see what two ideas you are comparing, check the mental picture for yourself. Are you getting the mental image you desire? Is the image too strong? Is the image too weak? You can always alter the image to make it stronger or weaker depending on what your aim is.

Metaphor

The other commonly used form of imagery is the metaphor or a figure of speech. Metaphor is when a term or phrase is applied to something in a nonliteral way to suggest a resemblance. One of the comparison items is said to *be* the other, even though this is realistically not possible. Let's look at a few examples:

- Love is a *battlefield*.
- Upon hearing the charges, the accused *clammed up* and refused to speak without a lawyer.
- Every year, a new *crop* of activists is *born*.

In these examples, the comparison word has been italicized. Let's think through each example. In the first one, the comparison is the same as one of our simile examples except that the word *like* is omitted—instead of being *like* a battlefield, the metaphor states that love *is* a battlefield, and it is understood that the speaker does not mean the comparison literally. In the second example, the accused *clams up*, which means that the accused refused to talk in the same way a clam shell is closed. In the third example, we refer to activists as *crops* that arise anew with each growing season, and we use *born* figuratively to indicate that they come into being—even though it is understood that they are not newborn infants at the time when they become activists.

To use a metaphor effectively, first determine what you are trying to describe. For example, maybe you are talking about a college catalog that offers various courses. Second, identify what it is that you want to say about the object you are trying to describe. Depending on whether you want your audience to think of the catalog as good or bad, you'll use different words to describe it. Lastly, identify the other object you want to compare the first one to, which should mirror the intentions in the second step. Let's look at two possible metaphors:

1. Students *groped* their way through the catalog's *maze* of courses.
2. Students *feasted* on the catalog's *abundant* courses.

While both of these examples evoke comparisons with the course catalog, the first example is clearly more negative and the second is more positive.

One mistake people make in using metaphors is to make two incompatible comparisons in the same sentence or line of thought. Here is an example:

- "That's awfully thin gruel for the right wing to hang their hats on" (Nordquist, 2009).

This is known as a mixed metaphor, and it often has an incongruous or even hilarious effect. Unless you are aiming to entertain your audience with language's fractured use, be careful to avoid mixed metaphors.

Rhythm

Our second guideline for effective speech language is to use rhythm, which makes most people think about music. What they may not realize is that language is inherently musical—at least it can be. Rhythm refers to the patterned, recurring movement of sound or speech. Whether someone is striking a drum with a stick or speaking in front of a group, both are creating rhythm. Think about your favorite public speaker. If you analyze his or her speaking pattern, you'll notice that there is a certain cadence to the speech. While much of this cadence is a result of the nonverbal components of speaking, some of the cadence comes from the chosen language as well. Rhythm is an important aspect of human communication. Let's examine four types of rhythmic language: parallelism, repetition, alliteration, and assonance.

Parallelism

When listing items in a sequence, audiences will respond more strongly when those ideas are presented in a grammatically parallel fashion, which is called parallelism. For example, look at the following two examples and determine which one sounds better to you:

1. Give me liberty, or I'd rather die.
2. Give me liberty, or give me death.

Technically, you're saying the same thing in both, but the second sentence has rhythm due to the parallel construction of the phrase, give me. The lack of parallelism in the first example makes the sentence sound disjointed and ineffective.

Repetition

As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, repeating words and syllables is one of the major differences between oral and written language. For example, in persuasive speechmaking, speakers need to repeat the core message consistently. Repetition as a linguistic device is designed to help audiences become familiar with a short piece of the speech, as they hear it over and over again. By repeating a phrase during a speech, you create a specific rhythm. Probably the most famous and memorable use of repetition is Martin Luther King Jr.'s use of "I have a dream" in his speech at the Lincoln Memorial, August, 1963, during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In that speech, King repeated the phrase "I have a dream" eight times, to great effect.

Alliteration

Another type of rhythmic language is alliteration, or repeating two or more words in a series that begin with the same consonant. In the *Harry Potter* novels, the author uses alliteration to name the four wizards who founded Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry: Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin. There are two basic types of alliteration: immediate juxtaposition and nonimmediate juxtaposition. *Immediate juxtaposition* occurs when the consonants clearly follow one after the other—as we

see in the *Harry Potter* example. *Nonimmediate juxtaposition* occurs when the consonants are repeated in nonadjacent words, for example, "It is the **p**oison that we must **p**urge from our **p**olitics, the wall that we must tear down before the hour grows too late." (Obama, 2008). Sometimes you can actually use examples of both immediate and nonimmediate juxtaposition within a single speech. The following example is from Bill Clinton's acceptance speech at the 1992 Democratic National Convention: "Somewhere at this very moment, a child is **b**eing **b**orn in America. Let it **b**e our cause to give that child a **h**appy **h**ome, a **h**ealthy family, and a **h**opeful future" (Clinton, 2005).

Assonance

Assonance is similar to alliteration, but instead of relying on consonants, assonance gets its rhythm from repeating the same vowel sounds with different consonants in the stressed syllables. The phrase "how now brown cow," which elocution students traditionally use to learn to pronounce rounded vowel sounds, is an example of assonance. While rhymes like "free as a breeze," "mad as a hatter," and "no pain, no gain" are examples of assonance, speakers should be wary of relying on assonance because when it is overused it can quickly turn into bad poetry.

Use Inclusive Language

Language can either inspire your listeners or turn them off very quickly. One of the fastest ways to alienate an audience is by using exclusive language. Instead, use inclusive language, which is language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below another group or groups. Let's look at some common problem areas related to language regarding gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disabilities.

Gender-Specific Language

The first common form of exclusive language is that which privileges one of the sexes over the other and includes three common issues: using *he* as generic, using *man* to mean all humans, and gender-typing jobs.

*Generic **He***

The generic *he* happens when a speaker labels all people within a group as *he*, when in reality there is a mixed-sex group involved. Consider the statement, "Every morning, when an officer of the law puts on his badge, he risks his life to serve and protect his fellow citizens." In this case, we have a police officer who is labeled as male four different times in one sentence. Obviously, both male and female police officers risk their lives when they put on their badges. A better way to word the sentence would be, "Every morning, when law officers put on their badges, they risk their lives to serve and protect their fellow citizens." Notice that in the nongeneric-he sentence, we made the subject plural—officers, and used the neutral pronouns *they* and *their* to avoid the generic he.

*Use of **Man***

Traditionally, English speakers have used terms like *man*, *mankind*, and in casual contexts, *guys* when referring

to both females and males. In the twentieth century's second half, as society became more aware of language gender bias, organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English developed guidelines for nonsexist language (National Council of Teachers of English, 2002). For example, instead of using the word man, you could refer to the human race. Instead of saying, "hey, guys," you could say, "OK, everyone." By using gender-fair language you convey your meaning just as well, and you won't risk alienating half your audience.

Gender-Typed Jobs

Another way that speakers alienate an audience is by using exclusive language that gender-types job titles. It is not unusual for people to assume, for example, that doctors are male and nurses are female. As a result, they may say, "She is a woman doctor," or "He is a male nurse" when mentioning someone's occupation, perhaps not realizing that the statements "she is a doctor" and "he is a nurse" already informs the listener of that person's sex. Also, speakers sometimes use a gender-specific pronoun to refer to an occupation that has both males and females. See the Gender-Type Jobs list for some common, exclusive gender-specific job titles and more inclusive job titles.

Gender-Type Jobs

Exclusive Language	Inclusive Language
Policeman	Police officer
Businessman	Businessperson
Fireman	Firefighter
Stewardess	Flight attendant
Waiters	Wait staff / servers
Mailman	Letter carrier / postal worker
Barmaid	Bartender

Ethnic Identity

Another type of exclusive language relates to categories used to highlight an individual's ethnic identity. Ethnic identity refers to a group that an individual identifies with based on a common culture. For example, within the United States, we have numerous ethnic groups, including Italian American, Irish American, Japanese American, Vietnamese American, Cuban American, and Mexican American. Avoid statements that refer to a person's ethnicity, such as "The committee is made up of four women and a Vietnamese man." Instead say, "The committee is made up of four women and a man" or, if race and ethnicity are central to the discussion, you could say, "The committee is made up of three European American women, an Israeli American woman, a Brazilian American woman, and a Vietnamese American man." In recent years, the trend is to avoid broad terms like Asians and Hispanics because these terms are not considered precise labels for the groups they actually represent. If you want to be safe, the best thing you can do is ask a couple of people who belong to an ethnic group how they prefer to label themselves.

Sexual Orientation

Another type of exclusive language is referred to as heterosexism. Heterosexism occurs when a speaker presumes that everyone in an audience is heterosexual or that opposite-sex relationships are the only norm. For example, a speaker might begin a speech by saying, "I am going to talk about the legal obligations you will have with your future husband or wife." While this speech starts with the notion that everyone plans on getting married, which isn't the case, it also assumes that everyone will label their significant others as either husbands or wives. Although, some members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender/transexual community will use these terms, others prefer more gender-neutral terms like spouse and partner. Moreover, legal obligations for same-sex couples may be very different from those for heterosexual couples. Notice also that we have used the phrase, members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender/transexual community, instead of the more clinical-sounding term, homosexual.

Disability

The last category of exclusive versus inclusive language that causes problems for some speakers relates to individuals with physical or mental disabilities. See how the Inclusive Language for Disabilities list provides some other examples of exclusive versus inclusive language.

Inclusive Language for Disabilities

Exclusive Language	Inclusive Language
Handicapped people	People with disabilities
Insane person	Person with a psychiatric disability; or label the psychiatric diagnosis, e.g., person with schizophrenia
Person in a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair
Crippled	Person with a physical disability
Special needs program	Accessible needs program
Mentally retarded	Person with an intellectual disability

Use Familiar Language

The last category related to using appropriate language simply asks you to use language that is familiar both to yourself and to your audience. If you are not comfortable with the language you are using, then you are going to be more nervous speaking, which will definitely have an impact on how your audience receives your speech. You may have a hard time speaking genuinely and sincerely if you use unfamiliar language, and this can impair your credibility. Furthermore, you want to make sure that the language you are using is familiar to your audience. If your audience cannot understand what you are saying, you will not deliver an effective speech.

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What are the six important language elements for public speakers?

Language variety on cadbury's choc, by nofrills, licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Language choice is one of the most important aspects of anyone's public speaking performance and will determine how an audience experiences the speech. To help you think through your language choices, we are going to talk about six important language elements and how they affect audiences' perceptions.

Clarity

The first important language element is clarity, which means to make sure the audience understands a speaker's ideas in the way the speaker intended. While language, or verbal communication, is only one channel we use to transmit information, it can lend itself to numerous problems. For example, as discussed earlier, if people have different connotative definitions for words, the audience can miss the spearer's intended meaning.

Imagine you're listening to a speaker talking, and he or she uses the phrase, "older female relative who

became aerodynamic venison road kill," or "obese personification fabricated of compressed mounds of minute crystals." If you're like most people, these two phrases just went right over your head. We'll give you a hint, these are two common Christmas songs. The first phrase refers to "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer," and the second one is "Frosty the Snowman." Notice that in both cases, the made-up title with all the polysyllabic words is far less clear than the commonly known one. While you are probably unlikely to deliberately distort your speech's clarity by choosing such outlandish words to express simple thoughts, the point we are illustrating is that clear language makes a big difference in how well a message is understood.

Economy

The next important language element is economy, which means that less is best. Another common mistake among new public speakers is thinking that more words are more impressive. In fact, the opposite is true. When people ramble on and on without actually making a point, audiences become bored and distracted. To avoid this problem, we recommend word economy: use only those words necessary to accurately express your idea. If the fundamental idea you are trying to say is, "that stinks," but you actually say "while the overall outcome may be undesirable and definitely not recommended," that is overkill. We do have one caveat here: you want to make sure that your language isn't so basic that it turns off your audience. If you are speaking to adults and use vocabulary appropriate for school children, you'll end up offending your audience. So, while economy is definitely important, you don't want to become so overly basic that you are perceived as "talking down" to your audience.

Obscenity

The third important language element is obscenity, or indecent language, which consists of curse words or pornographic references. While it may be fun to use obscene language in casual conversations with your friends, we cannot recommend using obscene language while delivering a speech. Even if you're giving a speech related to an obscene word, you must be careful how you use the word itself. Whether we agree with societal perceptions of obscenity, going out of our way to use obscenity will end up focusing the audience on the obscenity and not on our message.

Obscure Language/Jargon

The fourth language element relates to using obscure language or jargon, which refers to special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand. If you must use jargon or obscure language, define the words upon first mention, which allows you to subsequently use the jargon or words in your speech because you can be certain the audience now understands the term.

Obscure language and jargon are two terms that closely relate to each other. Obscure language refers to language choices that are not typically understood or known by most of your audience. Imagine you're listening to a speech and the speaker says, "Today, I've given you a plethora of ideas for greening your workplace." While you may think the word plethora is commonly known, we can assure you that many people have no idea that plethora means many or an abundance of something. Similarly, you may think most people know what it means to "green" a workplace, but in fact many people do not know that it means to make the workplace more environmentally friendly or to reduce its environmental impact. In this example, plethora simply means the

speaker has given many ideas for greening the workplace. You can still use the word plethora, but you should include a definition so that you're sure your audience will understand.

Jargon, on the other hand, refers to language that is commonly used by a highly specialized group, trade, or profession. For example, legal jargon is used by lawyers and medical jargon is used by health care practitioners. The problem is that many speakers do not realize that jargon is group, trade, or profession specific and not used universally.

One common form of jargon is the acronym, a word formed by taking the first letters or groups of letters of words, such as NASDAQ—National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations, PET—positron emission tomography scan, or IHOP—International House of Pancakes. Another form of jargon is initialism, formed by pronouncing the initials rather than the name of an organization or other entity. For example, CDC—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fMRI—Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and B of A—Bank of America. In political discussions, you may come across various CFRs, or Codes of Federal Regulations. If you are going to use a specific acronym or initialism within your speech, you need to explain it the first time you use it. For example, you could say, "According to the United States Code of Federal Regulations, or CFR, employment discrimination in the Department of Homeland Security is not allowed based on biological sex, religion, sexual orientation, or race." Furthermore, the US CFR does not permit discrimination in receiving contracts based on biological sex, religion, sexual orientation, or race

Power

The fifth language element is power, which is defined as an individual's ability to influence another person to think or behave in a manner the other person would not have otherwise done. DeVito examines how language can be used to help people gain power over others or lose power over others (DeVito, 2009). The Powerful and Powerless Language list provides examples of powerful and powerless language that speakers can use during a speech. Powerless language should generally be avoided in public speaking because it can damage the speaker's credibility.

Powerful and Powerless Language

Language Strategy	Definition	Example
Powerful Language		
Direct Requests	Asking the audience to engage in a specific behavior.	"At the conclusion of today's speech, I want you to go out and buy a bottle of hand sanitizer and start using it to protect your life."
Bargaining	An agreement that affects both parties of a situation.	"If you vote for me, I promise to make sure that our schools get the funding they so desperately need."
Ingratiation	Attempting to bring oneself into the favor or good graces of an audience.	"Because you are all smart and talented people, I know that you will see why we need to cut government spending."
Powerless Language		
Hesitations	Language that makes the speaker sound unprepared or uncertain.	"Well, as best I was able to find out, or I should say, from what little material I was able to dig up, I kind of think that this is a pretty interesting topic."
Intensifiers	Overemphasizing all aspects of the speech.	"Great! Fantastic! This topic is absolutely amazing and fabulous!"
Disqualifiers	Attempts to downplay one's qualifications and competence about a specific topic.	"I'm not really an expert on this topic, and I'm not very good at doing research, but here goes nothing."
Tag Questions	A question added to the end of a phrase seeking the audience's consent for what was said.	"This is a very important behavior, isn't it?" or "You really should do this, don't you think?"
Self-Critical Statements	Downplaying one's own abilities and making one's lack of confidence public.	"I have to tell you that I'm not a great public speaker, but I'll go ahead and give it a try."
Hedges	Modifiers used to indicate that one isn't completely sure of the statement just made.	"I really believe this may be true, sort of." "Maybe my conclusion is a good idea. Possibly not."
Verbal Surrogates	Utterances used to fill space while speaking; filler words.	"I was, like, err, going to, uhhh, say something, um, important, like, about this."

Variety

The last important language element is variety, or a speaker's ability to use and implement a range of different language choices. In many ways, variety encompasses all the characteristics of language previously discussed in this chapter. Often, speakers find one language device and then beat it into the ground like a railroad spike. Unfortunately, when a speaker starts using the same language device too often, the language device will start to lose the power that it may have had. For this reason, we recommend that you always think about the language you plan on using in a speech and make sure that you use a range of language choices.

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Chapter 6: Delivery

How do I effectively deliver my speech?

Wahoo! You have finally written your speech. You have carefully chosen just the right language, you've considered all listening styles, and you are confident that you have created a meaningful speech that will capture your audience's attention. Now, it's time to learn how to effectively deliver your speech.

Egg delivery, by Scott Swigart, licensed under CC BY 2.0

How we deliver a speech is just as important, if not more so, than the message we want to convey. If you have worked hard on preparing the verbal part of your speech, you may feel that delivery is just an "extra" that requires much time or effort. After all, your speech is carefully planned, researched, and polished. It is committed safely to paper and hard drive. It's a carefully constructed, logically crafted, ethical message. The words alone should engage your audience's attention and interest—right?

After all the work you put into building such a message, you might wish that you could simply read it to the audience. However, reading a speech occurs in only a few circumstances—when the message is highly technical, complex, and extremely important, such as a new medical discovery; when international protocols and etiquette are crucially important and the world is listening; or when the speaker is representing a high-ranking person, such as a president or a king, who is unable to be present. For this public speaking class, you will not be encouraged to read your speech. Instead, you will be asked to give an extemporaneous presentation. We will examine what that means.

Delivering the nonverbal part of your speech as well as your message is a presentation of yourself. Through eye contact, vocal expression, body posture, gestures, and facial display, you enhance your message and invite your audience to give their serious attention to it—and to you. Your credibility, your sincerity, and your topic knowledge become apparent through your nonverbal behaviors.

The interplay between your speech's verbal and nonverbal components can either bring the message vividly to life or confuse or bore the audience. Therefore, it is best that you neither overdramatize your delivery behaviors nor downplay them. This is a balance achieved through rehearsal, trial and error, and experience.

In this chapter, we are going to examine effective speech-delivery strategies. First, to help you enhance your delivery, we will explore speech delivery's four basic methods. Second, we will discuss how to prepare your delivery for different environments. Third, we will talk about how to effectively use notecards to enhance your delivery. Finally, we will examine good delivery characteristics and give some effective practicing strategies for the day when you will deliver your speech.

House of Ruth Luncheon, by Maryland GovPics, licensed under CC BY 2.0

The easiest approach to speech delivery is not always the best. Substantial work goes into carefully preparing an interesting and ethical message, so it is understandable that students may have the impulse to avoid messing it up by simply reading it word for word. But students who do this miss out on one of the major reasons for studying public speaking: to learn ways to connect with one's audience and to increase one's confidence in doing so. You already know how to read, and you already know how to talk. But public speaking is neither reading nor talking.

Public speaking is more formal than talking. During a speech, you present yourself professionally. This doesn't mean you must wear a suit or dress up, unless your instructor asks you to, but it does mean making yourself presentable by being well-groomed and wearing clean, appropriate clothes. It also means being prepared to use language correctly and appropriately for the audience and the topic, to make eye contact with your audience, and to look like you know your topic very well.

While public speaking is more formal than talking, it is less formal than reading. Speaking allows for meaningful pauses, eye contact, small changes in word order, and vocal emphasis. Reading is more or less exactly replicating words on paper without using any nonverbal interpretation. Speaking—as you will realize if you think about excellent speakers who you have seen and heard—provides a more animated message.

The next sections introduce four delivery methods that can help you balance between too much and too little formality when publicly speaking.

Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking means to present 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 his or her message's central theme. 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 public speech.

- Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan your main point.
- 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 that 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 means to present a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner, and using brief notes. 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 that they are uncertain 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 both verbally and nonverbally engaging. 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 most public speaking situations, most of the information in this chapter is targeted to this kind of speaking.

Manuscript Speaking

Manuscript speaking means to read a written message word-for-word. During a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains his or her attention on the printed page, except when using visual aids.

The advantage to reading from a manuscript is that you are reading the exact 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 mispronouncing 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 an audience's 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 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: first, the speaker is already an accomplished public speaker who has learned to use a conversational tone while delivering a prepared script, and second, the speech is written in a style that sounds conversational.

Memorized Speaking

Memorized speaking means to recite 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 of memorizing a speech is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. Being note-free means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. If your speech requires 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 include using pitch, tone, volume, and pace—and you gesture and use 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 delivery style 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.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=35#h5p-54

How do different speaking contexts affect my delivery?

You may be asked to speak in different contexts or venues. Do you use the same delivery gestures and vocal variation in each context?

Empty, by Mad Mou, licensed under 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 a television appearance 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 setting or symbolic importance, you should still be prepared to adapt to the setting in which you will speak.

Our public speaking audiences, circumstances, and physical contexts 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, at other times, you may speak at an unfamiliar location with 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 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 to gesture.

However, for new speakers who feel anxious, it is all too tempting to grip the lectern's edges 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 to use the lectern only as 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 pause 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 an 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 movies and plays where an actor moves around the stage, but this is generally not good speech strategy. A small space also requires that you carefully manage your 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.

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 weather challenges, 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 numerous 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 adapting. 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 adapting. 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. Ask someone to listen from a middle row in the audience and to signal whether you can be heard well. The best plan, of course, is 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

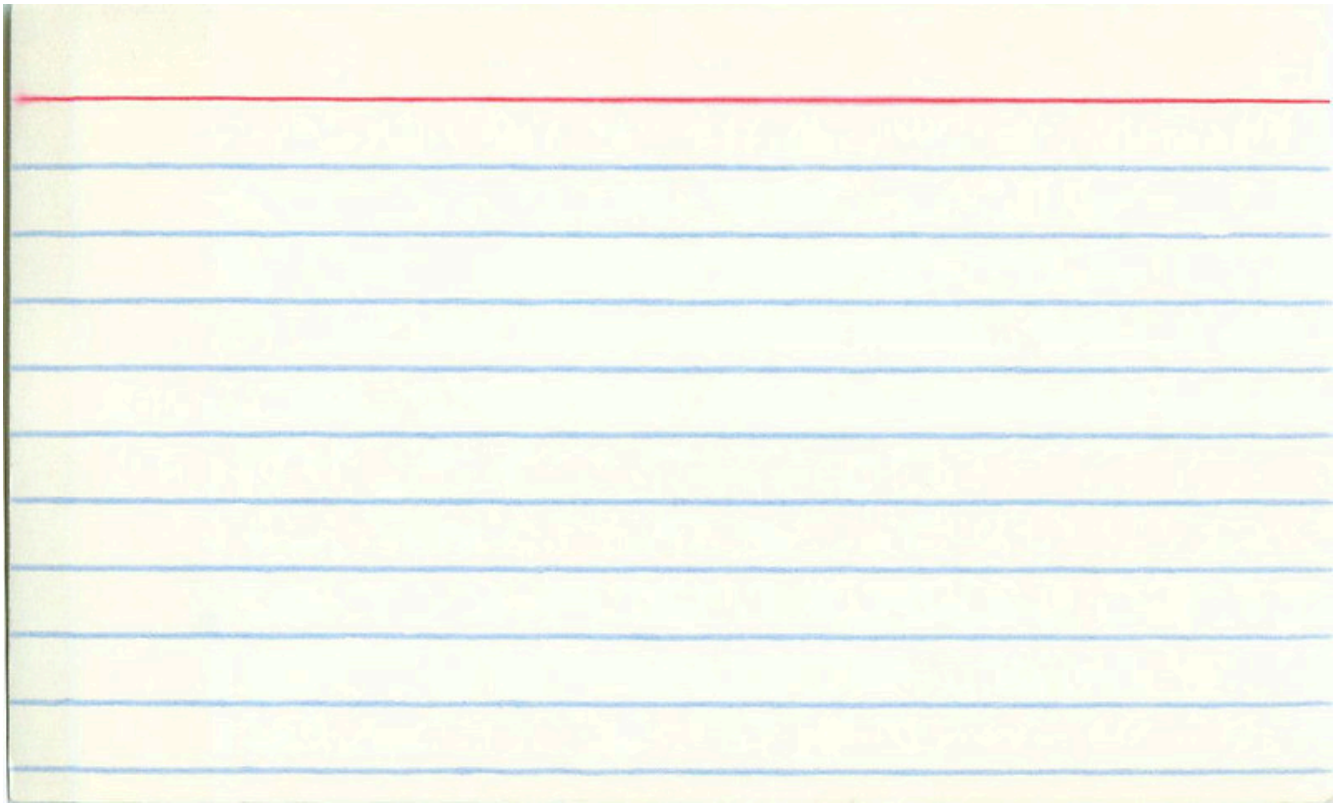
A small audience provides an opportunity for a more intimate, minimally formal tone. If your audience has only eight to twelve people, you can generate greater audience contact. You do not have to revamp your speech just because the audience is small. When the presentation is over, there will most likely be opportunities to answer questions and to contact your listeners individually.

Your classroom audience may be as many as twenty to thirty students. The format for this size audience 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. Despite the audience size, you should be guided as much as possible by your preparation.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=35#h5p-55

How do I use notes effectively when I speak?



Blank index card!, by Dave Gray, licensed under CC BY 2.0

It's much 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, which should have notes, not the full text of your speech. This can also be done with an autocue device, such as the TelePrompTer, which does not provide a full word-for-word script.

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 uses only five cards. For many people, this does not sound like nearly enough cards. However, we 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

First, using notes adds to a speaker's credibility. If you depend on a full manuscript to get through your delivery, your listeners might believe you don't know your speech's content. Second, the temptation to read the entire speech directly from a manuscript is nearly overwhelming, even if you're only carrying it as a safety net. 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 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 Keywords

Your cards should include keywords and phrases, not full sentences. Arrange the words and phrases in order so that you can stay organized and avoid forgetting important points.

One exception to the keyword guideline is including 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 and its citation. If you plan to use such a quotation, make sure it has central importance in your speech.

Hold Your Notes Naturally

Using notes is a normal part of presenting. 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 while holding your notes in your hand because nervous shaking is more noticeable. 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 reason to use notecards is to contribute to your overall appearance, confidence, and credibility.

Tips for Holding your Notecards:

- Try not to hold your notecards with both hands in front of your belly. This closes you off to the audience.
- Use only one hand.
- Relax your hand to your side when not gesturing.
- Raise your hand to your side when getting ready to read your notecard so it doesn't block the front of your body.
- Raise your hand high enough to read the notecard without dropping your head.

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 keyword 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, and write 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 discover what might go wrong with your notes and what steps to take to make things go smoothly.

Write in Large Letters

Write in large enough letters to read your cards by glancing, not peering at them. A few keywords and phrases, written in large, bold print with plenty of white space between them, helps. 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, using your notecards allows you to depart from the exact prepared wording in your manuscript. To recover 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 your speech's visual aspect will be spoiled by you squinting to read your cards.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=35#h5p-56

How do I practice to deliver a successful speech?

Now that you have your notecards prepared, you are ready to practice your speech.

Speech, by Christian Pierret, licensed under CC BY 2.0

There is no foolproof recipe for delivering a good speech. Each of us is unique and embody different experiences and interests. This means that each person has a delivery style or approach that is most effective for her or him. 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 delivery will also be good.

We are obligated to do our best out of respect for our audience and their needs. Fortunately, there are some tools that can help you improve even the very first time you present a speech. You will continue developing your skills each time you put them to use. Have fun, and experiment to find out which delivery elements are most effective for you.

What Is Good Delivery?

The more you care about your topic, the more motivated you are to present it well. Good delivery means to present a clear, coherent message in an interesting way. Communication scholar Stephen E. Lucas tells us the following:

> 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 people who write about delivery cite the findings of psychologist Albert Mehrabian, who asserts that the bulk of what an audience understands about 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, we will explain six good delivery elements: 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 effective practicing tips.

Conversational Style

Conversational style is a speaker's ability to sound expressive and spontaneous, which allows the audience to perceive the speaker 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 your audience's sake, do your best to appear natural. It might be helpful to remember that the two most important speech elements are the message and the audience. You are the conduit, and it is your role to effectively put the two together. 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" (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 much 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 audience members in the eye, but if you recall speakers who did not maintain eye contact, you'll realize why this speech-delivery element is so important. Without eye contact, the audience begins to feel invisible and unimportant, as if the speaker is just speaking to hear her or his own voice. Eye contact lets your audience feel that your attention is on them, not solely on the cards in front of you.

Sustaining eye contact with your audience is one of the most important effective delivery tools. 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, eye contact is an important way to bring an audience into your speech.

While eye contact is a powerful tool, it is not simply a sign of sincerity, 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 your audience's gaze 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 until it becomes easier for you to provide real eye contact. But, the problem with fake eye contact is that it tends to look mechanical. Another problem with fake eye contact is that you lose the opportunity to assess how well your audience understands your message. Still, fake eye contact is somewhat better than gripping your cards, 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. You'll develop this ability 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 to hear you clearly—even those in the back of the room, 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, 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, looking away from your notecards, and setting your voice at a moderate speed. Using vocalics effectively also means that you use 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 how loud or soft a speaker's voice is. 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 air conditioner hum or the dull traffic roar passing by. In addition, you can use volume strategically to emphasize your speech's most important points. Select these points carefully; if you emphasize everything, nothing will seem important. You also want to be sure to adjust your volume to the presentation's

physical setting. If you are in a large auditorium and your audience is several yards away, speak louder. If you are in a smaller space, with the audience a few feet away, 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 delivery is less likely to vary. Because rate is an important tool in enhancing your speech's meaning, 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 communicates enthusiasm, urgency, or humor. A slower, moderated rate conveys respect, seriousness, or careful reasoning. By varying rapid and slower rates within a single speech, you emphasize your main points and keep your audience interested.

Pitch

Pitch refers to how high or low a speaker's voice is. Some speakers have deep voices and others have high voices. As with your singing-voice range, your speaking-voice pitch is determined mostly by physiology, specifically your vocal folds or cords' length and your vocal tract size. We all have a normal speaking pitch where our voice is naturally settled—it is the pitch where we are most comfortable speaking and the pitch that feels most natural to you.

While our voices may be generally comfortable at a specific pitch level, we all modulate or move our pitch up or down. In fact, we do this all the time. When we change our voice's pitch, 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 they are nervous. One way to ascertain whether you sound monotone is to record your voice and listen to how you sound. If you notice that your voice doesn't fluctuate very much, you will need to intentionally alter your pitch to ensure that your speech's emphasis 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 listener's understanding or approval. It hurts the speaker's credibility, so avoid doing it.

Effectively using pitch is one of the keys to delivering an interesting speech that will hold your audience's attention.

Pauses

Pauses are brief breaks in a speaker's delivery that can show emphasis and enhance a message's clarity. In

terms of timing, using pauses effectively 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 pauses used over and over again in a speech. Your audience should never be able to detect that you're about to slow down or that 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, you use volume, pitch, rate, and pauses spontaneously. If you try to over rehearse 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, provide free sound files that illustrate how to pronounce words.

Many people have commented on how some highly educated public speakers, including US presidents, have mispronounced words such as nuclear and cavalry. There are 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 very awkward and anxious situation for the audience. Everyone felt embarrassed, and the teacher, opting not to humiliate the student in front of the class, did not say anything out loud, but instead, provided a private written comment at the end of class.

One important aspect of pronunciation is articulation, or the ability to clearly pronounce each 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, which means substitutions, omissions, distortions, and additions.

- **Substitutions** occur when a speaker replaces one consonant or vowel with another consonant, for example, *water* becomes *wudda*; *ask* becomes *ax*; *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, for instance, *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, for example, *anyway* becomes *anyways*; *athletic* becomes *athaletic*; *black* becomes *buhlack*; *interpret* becomes *interpretate*.

Another aspect of public speaking pronunciation is to avoid using verbal surrogates. These are filler words used as placeholders for actual words, such as 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 Self-Presentation

In addition to using our voices effectively, another key to great public speaking is using our bodies effectively. This means to use the body to emphasize 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 you take your position seriously. If, however, you are slouching, hunched over, or leaning on something, you could be perceived as ill prepared, anxious, lacking credibility, or not serious about your speaking responsibilities. While speakers often assume a more casual posture as the 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 you are using a non-movable microphone, never stand in one place during a speech. However, moving during a speech should also not resemble pacing. For example, there was once 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 movement into your speech is to walk a few steps when you transition from one idea to the next. By only moving at transition points, you help focus your audience's attention on the transition from one idea to the next, and you 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, not gesturing at all is wasting an opportunity to suggest emphasis, enthusiasm, or another personal connection with your topic.

There are many ways to use gestures. The most obvious are hand gestures. Use gestures moderately at carefully selected times during your 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, well-placed, simple, natural gestures that indicate emphasis, direction, or the size of something is usually effective. Normally, a gesture with one hand is enough. Rather than trying to use a gesture for every sentence, use only 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, 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 speech-delivery aspects, practicing in front of others will help you to be conscious of such distractions and help you to plan ways to avoid doing them.

Facial Expressions

Faces are amazing, and they convey 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 video, often the only way to critically evaluate what your face is doing while you are speaking is to watch a recording of your speech. If video is not available, practice speaking in front of a mirror.

There are two extremes you want to avoid: no facial expression and over animated facial expressions. First, do not show 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 such a speaker's message 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. The other extreme 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, use facial expression 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 Gulf of Mexico's oil spill. 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 an audience and distract from the message. If you keep your speech's meaning foremost in your mind, you will more readily find a facial-expression balance.

Another common problem some new speakers have is showing only one expression. For example, during a college speech competition, one speaker discussed how people die on amusement park rides. One of the judges pulled the speaker aside and informed him that his speech was creepy. Apparently, while speaking about death, the speaker smiled the entire time. The incongruity between the speech on death and dying and the speaker smiling left the judge a little creeped out. If you are excited in a part of your speech, show excitement on your face. On the other hand, if you are at a serious part of your speech, show a serious facial expression.

Dress

While there are no clear-cut guidelines for how to dress, it 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 to determine 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 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 and come across as overly formal or even arrogant.

Another general dressing rule is to avoid wearing something distracting. Overly tight or revealing garments, over-the-top hairstyles or makeup, jangling jewelry draw your audience's attention away from your speech (unless your speech is about these items). Remember that your message is your speech's most important aspect—keep that message in mind when you choose your clothing and accessories.

Remember...You are your visual aid.

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 your carefully prepared 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

A big mistake that novice public speakers make is to use the same gesture over and over during a speech. While you don't want your gestures to look fake, be careful to include various different nonverbal components while speaking. 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. To develop your best speech delivery, 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, 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 novice public speakers find that they don't know what to do with their hands while speaking. Your practice sessions will help you get comfortable. When you're not gesturing, 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 during practice, you'll begin to get used to it.

Seek Input from Others

Because we can't see ourselves as others see us, one great way 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 fellow students. However, by practicing in front of others before speech time, you will learn to anticipate and correct problems so that you can receive a better evaluation when you give your speech for real.

Ask your practice observers to be honest about what you can improve upon. Sometimes, students create study groups just for this purpose. When you create a peer study group, everyone understands 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 them questions; for example, 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 your shirt or jacket sleeves, 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, 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 as well as you are. Give feedback in the spirit of helping them deliver the most engaging speech as possible.

Use Audio and/or Video to Record Yourself

Technology and the myriad electronic devices people are likely to own, has made it easier than ever to record yourself and others. Video, of course, allows you the advantage of being able to see yourself as others see you, while audio allows you to concentrate on your delivery's audible aspects. 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 will 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 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 reading them. If you see in the video that you misjudged your eye contact, motivate yourself 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'll discover your strengths and see weaknesses 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 areas to improve, you will begin to develop a keen sense of what works and what audiences respond to.

Practice out loud in front of other people several times, spreading your rehearsals out over several days. To practice, of course, your speech needs to be finalized well ahead of your delivery date. During these practice sessions, time yourself to make sure your speech is the appropriate time length. For an example, during a classroom presentation in which each speech was to last thirty to forty-five minutes, the first student spoke for seventy-five minutes before the professor asked, "Can we speed this up?" The student said, "Yes," and proceeded to continue speaking for another seventy-five minutes before finally concluding his speech. Although we might fault the professor for not stopping him sooner, 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, to build your extemporaneous speaking confidence, to develop your vocal skills, and to become adept at self-presentation. Through targeted practice, you'll develop habits that build continuously on your strengths and that challenge you 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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Chapter 7: Research

What is research?

What and How is Research Useful?

When conducting research, you get to ask questions and actually find answers. For example, if you have ever wondered what the best job interview strategies are, research will tell you. If you've ever wondered what it takes to be a NASCAR driver, an astronaut, a marine biologist, or a university professor, once again, research is one of the easiest ways to find answers to questions you're interested in knowing. Second, research can open a world you never knew existed. We often find ideas we had never considered and learn facts we never knew when we conduct research. Lastly, research can lead you to new ideas and activities. Maybe you want to learn how to compose music, draw, learn a foreign language, or write a screenplay; research is always the best first step toward learning anything.

We define research as scholarly investigation into a topic to discover, revise, or report facts, theories, and applications. Notice that there are three distinct parts of research: discovering, revising, and reporting. The reporting function is primarily what you will be doing in this course. This is the phase when you accumulate information about a topic and report that information to others.

What is Primary and Secondary Research?

There are two main research information sources. Watch Emily Craig's video, *Market Research: the Difference Between Primary and Secondary Sources*, to get a better understanding of the two.

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Market Research: the Difference Between Primary and Secondary Sources, byEmily Craig, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bPDNt9463g

1. Primary Research Sources: Primary research is reported by the person conducting the research and is considered an active form of research because the researcher is actually conducting the research for the purpose of creating new knowledge. The researcher discovers or revises facts, theories, and applications. For the purposes of your speeches, you may use two basic primary research categories: surveys and interviews. This includes firsthand research where you personally complete an interview or survey and share the results in your speech.

Conducting surveys: A survey is a collection of facts, figures, or opinions gathered from participants and used to indicate how everyone within a target group may respond. Maybe you're going to be

speaking before an education board about its plans to build a new library, so you create a survey and distribute it to all your neighbors seeking their feedback on the project. During your speech, you could then discuss your survey and the results you found.

Conducting interviews: An interview is a conversation in which the interviewer asks a series of questions aimed at learning facts, figures, or opinions from one or more respondents. As with a survey, an interviewer generally has a list of prepared questions to ask; but unlike a survey, an interview allows for follow-up questions that can aid in understanding why a respondent gave a certain answer.

2. Secondary Research Sources: Secondary research is carried out to discover or revise facts, theories, and applications and is reported by someone not involved in conducting the actual research. Most of what we consider research falls into the secondary research category. These sources are what you will mostly use for your speeches:

- Almanacs
- Atlases
- Biographical resources
- Books
- Books of quotations
- Digital collections
- Encyclopedias; Wikipedia, but only used properly
- Government publications
- Images, to an extent
- Newspapers
- Periodicals
- Podcasts
- Poetry collections
- Social news sites
- Videos
- Weblogs
- Website reference works

*These can all be found on the Internet or at the SLCC library

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How do I analyze research?

Nonacademic and Academic Sources

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

Nonacademic examples and resources:

Books Most college and university libraries offer both the physical stacks where the books are located and the electronic databases that contain ebooks. The two largest ebook databases are ebrary and NetLibrary. Although these library collections are generally cost-prohibitive for an individual, more and more academic institutions are subscribing to them. Some libraries are also making portions of their collections available online for free, for example, Harvard University's Digital Collections, New York Public Library's E-book Collection, The British Library's Online Gallery, and the US Library of Congress. With the influx of computer technology, libraries have started to create vast stores of digitized content from around the world. These online libraries contain full-text documents, free of charge to everyone. Some online libraries we recommend are Project Gutenberg, Google Books, Open Library, and Get Free eBooks. This is a short list of just a handful of the libraries that are now offering free electronic content.

General-interest periodicals These are magazines and newsletters published on a fairly systematic basis. Some popular magazines in this category include *The New Yorker*, *People*, *Reader's Digest*, *Parade*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. These magazines are considered general interest because most people in the United States find them interesting and topical.

Special-interest periodicals These are magazines and newsletters that are published for a narrower audience. In a 2005 article, *Business Wire* noted that in the United States there are over ten thousand different magazines published annually, but only two thousand of which have significant circulation1. More widely known special-interest periodicals are *Sports Illustrated*, *Bloomberg's Business Week*, *Gentleman's Quarterly*, *Vogue*, *Popular Science*, and *House and Garden*. But for every major magazine, there are a great many other lesser-known magazines, such as *American Coin Op Magazine*, *Varmint Hunter*, *Shark Diver Magazine*, *Pet Product News International*, and *Water Garden News*, to name just a few.

Newspapers – According to newspapers.com, the top ten newspapers in the United States are *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Post*, *Long Island Newsday*, and the *Houston Chronicle*. Most colleges and universities subscribe to a number of these newspapers in paper form or electronic access.

Blogs – 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 information source. However, as with all Internet information, you must wade through much junk to find useful, accurate information. According to Technorati.com, some of the most commonly read blogs in the world in 2011 are as follows: The Huffington Post, Gizmodo, Mashable!, and The Daily Beast.

Encyclopedias – These are information sources that provide short, very general information about a topic. Encyclopedias are available in both print and electronic formats, and their content ranges from eclectic and general, such as the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, to the very specific, such as the *Encyclopedia of 20th Century*

Architecture or *Encyclopedia of Afterlife Beliefs and Phenomena*. One of the most popular online encyclopedic sources is *Wikipedia*. Like other encyclopedias, *Wikipedia* can be useful for finding basic information, such as the baseball teams that Catfish Hunter played for, but will not give you the depth of information you need for a speech. Also, keep in mind that *Wikipedia* can be edited by anyone, unlike the general and specialized encyclopedias available through your library, and therefore, often contains content errors and biased information

Websites – These are the last major nonacademic information sources. In the twenty-first century, we live in a world where there is much information readily available at our fingertips. Unfortunately, you can spend hours and hours searching for information and never quite find what you're looking for if you don't devise an Internet search strategy. First, select a good search engine to help you find appropriate information. This list contains links to common search engines and the general information found there

Search Engines

General Search Engines

- Google
- Yahoo
- Bing
- Ask
- About

US Government Sites

- USA Gov
- US Government Open Data

Medical Sites

- HON Med Hunt
- US National Library of Medicine

Comparison Shopping

- Bizrate Comparison
- Google Shopping

US Population Statistics

- Population Reference Bureau
- US Census Bureau

Art-related Information

- ARTCYCLOPEDIA: The Fine Art Search Engine
- The Library of Congress

Job Postings Search Engines

- Monster

- Ziprecruiter
- Indeed
- Diversity Jobs
- USA Jobs

Academic and Scholarly Sources These include texts that are read by dozens of academics who provide feedback. If you include academic research in your writing process, it will be time consuming, but it provides you with an extra level of confidence in the information's relevance and accuracy. The main difference between academic or scholarly information and the information you get from the popular press is oversight. In the nonacademic world, the primary information gatekeeper is the editor, who may or may not be a content expert. Academia has established a way to perform a series of checks to ensure that the information is accurate and follows agreed-upon academic standards. In this section, we will discuss scholarly books and articles, computerized databases, and scholarly web information.

Academic examples and resources:

Scholarly Books – According to the Text and Academic Authors Association, there are two types of scholarly books: textbooks and academic books. **Textbooks** are books that are written about a segment of content within an academic field and are written for undergraduate or graduate student audiences. These books tend to be very specifically focused. **Academic books** are books that are primarily written for other academics for informational and research purposes. Generally speaking, when instructors ask you to find scholarly books, they are referring to academic books. Thankfully, there are hundreds of thousands of academic books published on almost every topic you can imagine. In the communication, field, there are a handful of major publishers who publish academic books, for example, SAGE, Routledge, Jossey-Bass, Pfeiffer, the American Psychological Association, and the National Communication Association, among others.

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

Computerized Databases – Finding academic research is easier today than it ever has been because of large computer databases. Here's how these databases work: a database company signs contracts with publishers

to gain the right to store the publishers' content electronically. The database companies then create thematic databases containing publications related to general knowledge areas, such as business, communication, psychology, medicine, etc. The database companies then sell database subscriptions to libraries. Use our SLCC library database.

How to Use SLCC Library

The Web – In addition to the subscription databases, there are also numerous great sources for scholarly information on the web. As mentioned earlier, however, finding scholarly information on the web poses a problem because anyone can post information on the web. Fortunately, there are many great websites that filter this information for us.

Scholarly Information on the Web

Website	Type of Information
The Directory of Open Access Journals	The Directory of Open Access Journals is a free, online academic journals database.
Google Scholar	Google Scholar attempts to filter out nonacademic information. Unfortunately, it tends to return a large number of for-pay site results.
Communication Institute for Online Scholarship	Communication Institute for Online Scholarship is a clearinghouse for online communication scholarship. This site contains full-text journals and books.
Los Alamos National Laboratory	This is an open-access site devoted to making physical science research accessible.
BioMed Central	BioMed Central provides open-access medical research.
OSTI.gov	OSTI.gov provides access to scholarly research that interests people working for the Department of Energy.
Free Medical Journals	This site provides the public with free access to medical journals.
Highwire Stanford	This is the link to Stanford University's free, full-text science archives.
Public Library of Science	This is the Public Library of Science's journal for biology.

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Tips for Finding Authoritative and Credible Sources and Evidence

1. **Create a Research Log** – George believes it's important to keep a "step-by-step account of the process of identifying, obtaining, and evaluating sources for a specific project…" (George, 2008). In essence, keeping a log of your research is very helpful because it can help you keep track of what you've read thus far.
2. **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, start your research with sources written for the general public. Generally, these lower-level sources are great for topic background information and are helpful when trying to learn a subject's basic vocabulary.
3. **Search your Library** – Try to search as many different databases as possible. Look for relevant books,

ebooks, newspaper articles, magazine articles, journal articles, and media files. Modern college and university libraries have a ton of sources, and one search may not reveal everything you are looking for on the first pass. Furthermore, don't forget to think about topic synonyms. The more topic synonyms you can generate, the better you'll be at finding information.

4. **Learn to Skim** – Start by reading the introductory paragraphs. Generally, the first few paragraphs will give you a good idea about the overall topic. If you're reading a research article, start by reading the abstract. If the first few paragraphs or abstract don't sound like they're applicable, there's a good chance the source won't be useful for you. Second, look for highlighted, italicized, or bulleted information. Generally, authors use highlighting, italics, and bullets to separate information to make it jump out for readers. Third, look for tables, charts, graphs, and figures. All these forms are separated from the text to make the information more easily understandable for a reader, so discovering if the content is relevant is a way to see if it helps you. Fourth, look at headings and subheadings. Headings and subheadings show you how an author has grouped information into meaningful segments.
5. **Read Bibliographies and Reference Pages** – After you've finished reading useful sources, see who those sources cited on their bibliographies or reference pages. We call this method backtracking. Often, the sources cited by others can lead us to even better sources than the ones we found initially.
6. **Ask for Help** – Don't be afraid to ask for help. Librarians are your friends. They won't do your work for you, but they are more than willing to help if you ask.

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Textbook Cartoon, by Abi Fuller, licensed under CCO

How to Analyze Sources

To analyze your sources, follow these guidelines:

Consider the Source

- The source is the author and or publisher who provides the information you are reading.
- Is it clear who the source is? If not, be suspicious of that website or article.
- Is the source qualified? Does the author have the qualifications to speak on the subject? If there is no author or there is no information about the author, be suspicious. Use profnet to search for credible source information.
- Are there references attached to the website or article you are looking at? Are those references verifiable and credible? If you look at a source's bibliography or reference page, and it has only a couple of citations, then you can assume that either the information was not properly cited, or it was largely made up by someone.
- Are other people actively citing the work? One way to find out whether a given source is widely accepted is to see if numerous people are citing it. If you find an article that has been cited by many other authors, then clearly the work has been viewed as credible and useful.

    - Academic or not? Because of the enhanced scrutiny academic sources go through, we argue that you can generally rely more on the information contained in academic sources than nonacademic sources.

Consider Source Bias

- Take a look at this article.
- This article gives a list of websites that might not pass some of our consider-your-source bias. Take a look and see which of these websites are biased.
- Even though a source may have credible information, if it clearly has a vested interest in something, look elsewhere.

Determine Document Currency

- How long has it been since the website has been updated? When was the article written? If the answer is 2012 or earlier, find something more recent since information may have changed in the last five years.
- Ensuring your evidence is recent is important to your speaker credibility.
- Not all information that is old however, is irrelevant. Sometimes, we must look at history to understand the present or to predict the future. *Some* facts and information have not changed much or at all over time.

Use Fact-Checking Sites

- This site-list can be used to fact check information you are not sure is accurate in an article or website. If you find inaccurate information, look for a more credible information source.
    - Pop Culture and Urban Myths: Snopes
    - Politcal Claims: PolitiFact, Factcheck, The Fact Checker
    - Medical Claims: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Health Central
    - News Events: Check reputable news organizations such as the New York Times, BBC News, or CNN

How do I cite my sources in a speech?

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Citation Style

Citation styles provide particular formats for in-text citations and bibliographies to use in your research paper. Choose the citation style based on the discipline in which you are writing. Usually, your professor will indicate the citation style that he or she would like you to use (guides.temple.edu). **Some common citation styles:**

- American Psychological Association, **APA Style:** frequently used in the social sciences.
- Chicago Manual of Style, **Chicago Style:** Notes and Bibliography format is often used in the humanities; Author-Date format is often used in the social sciences and sciences.
- Modern Language Association, **MLA Style:** widely used in the humanities (guides.temple.edu).

The APA and the MLA are two commonly used style guides in academia today. Generally speaking, scholars in the various social science fields, such as psychology, human communication, and business are more likely to use APA style, and scholars in the various humanities fields such as English, philosophy, and rhetoric are more likely to use MLA style, in addition to Chicago Manual for publishing. These styles are quite different from each other, so learning them takes time.

APA Style

In this course, you will use APA style in your written work and your speech citations. First, let's discuss how to cite research references inside your written work and at the end for your bibliography and works-cited page.

How to cite research references inside your outline

When citing research references inside your outline, they are called in-text or parenthetical citations. Look at EasyBib's website, which has a list of different examples to help you see how it is done in APA format.

As you probably noticed, in-text or parenthetical citations are very similar to the way you might cite your research references inside an English or research paper. Since the outlines for your speeches are full sentences, use the same in-text citation. Look at SLCC Libguides for another example of in-text citations.

How to cite research reference pages at the end of your outline

The reference page, also known as a bibliography or works-cited page, is the last page on your outline. How you title this page depends on if you are using APA, MLA, or Chicago Style, etc. In APA format, which is what we will use in this class, use the title, "References." Visit the Purdue Owl website and navigate to the bottom of the page to see an example. The Purdue Online Writing Lab is also a great site to help you with APA format for your speech research.

There are several places you can go online and in Microsoft Word that will cite sources for you in APA. These are called citation managers, which are software programs used to download, organize, and output your

citations. You can output thousands of different citation styles, including APA, Chicago, and MLA using citation managers (guides.temple.edu). All you have to do is input the information! When you use the SLCC library to do research, they provide automatic APA citation for you!

Citation Machine

Scribbr

The Owl at Purdue

Citing Sources Orally in a Speech

Now, we will discuss how to use oral citations in your speech and provide examples. This will be extremely important to your class grade, as you will be graded on the way you cite your sources orally in your speech and how many citations you mention. Keep in mind that written references are more complete and more formal than oral references, which means you want your oral citations in your speech to flow and fit in with the rest of your speech's content.

Either immediately before or after you give source information during your speech, identify these key oral citation standards or elements:

1. Name the website, author, person, magazine, etc.
2. State your source's credentials—ethos. This includes the person, website, etc. and explain in your speech why and how this is an authoritative topic source. Explain why you are using this source compared to other possible sources.
3. Give the article, book, or video title, etc.
4. Give the source's date, if it is necessary and relevant, which it usually is.

Here are some examples that correspond to the numbers above:

"According to Dr. Jim Pritchard, a practicing architect in Salt Lake City, architecture is not a dying discipline but is actually thriving ...." (2)

"The 2016 edition of Crompton's Encyclopedia explains that ... "(3, 4)

"I read in my English textbook, *Effective Writing*, that writing skills are one of the number-one skills required to have a successful career .... "(3)

Example from your textbook in Appendix A: "It killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide and 675,000 Americans, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Website flu.gov." (1, 3)

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*... (1, 2, 3, 4)

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*... (1, 2, 3, 4)

Here is an example of an informative speech given during a competition. Listen carefully for the sources, and watch how the speaker seamlessly gives his audience evidence.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=5#oembed-2

Robert Cannon NFA Info Finals – Informative Speaking, by Cannonball of Death, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SogNbDakslQ

Key things to remember:

- Is it important that you explain who the author of a text is? Or, why is the source website relevant to your speech's topic? Why mention the research study date or a source-book title? By including this explanation in your speech you help the audience see the ethos or credibility in your sources, and therefore, your credibility as the speaker.
- Mentioning your sources boosts your credibility. If you are not a credible speaker, people won't take you seriously; they won't listen to you at all; or they could even make you look bad in public, embarrass you, or ruin your reputation, etc.
- Proper oral speech citation also helps you avoid oral plagiarism, which is a serious issue and could lead to failing the class or being kicked out of school, etc. Oral plagiarism has the same consequences as written plagiarism.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=5#h5p-5

What does it mean to use sources ethically?

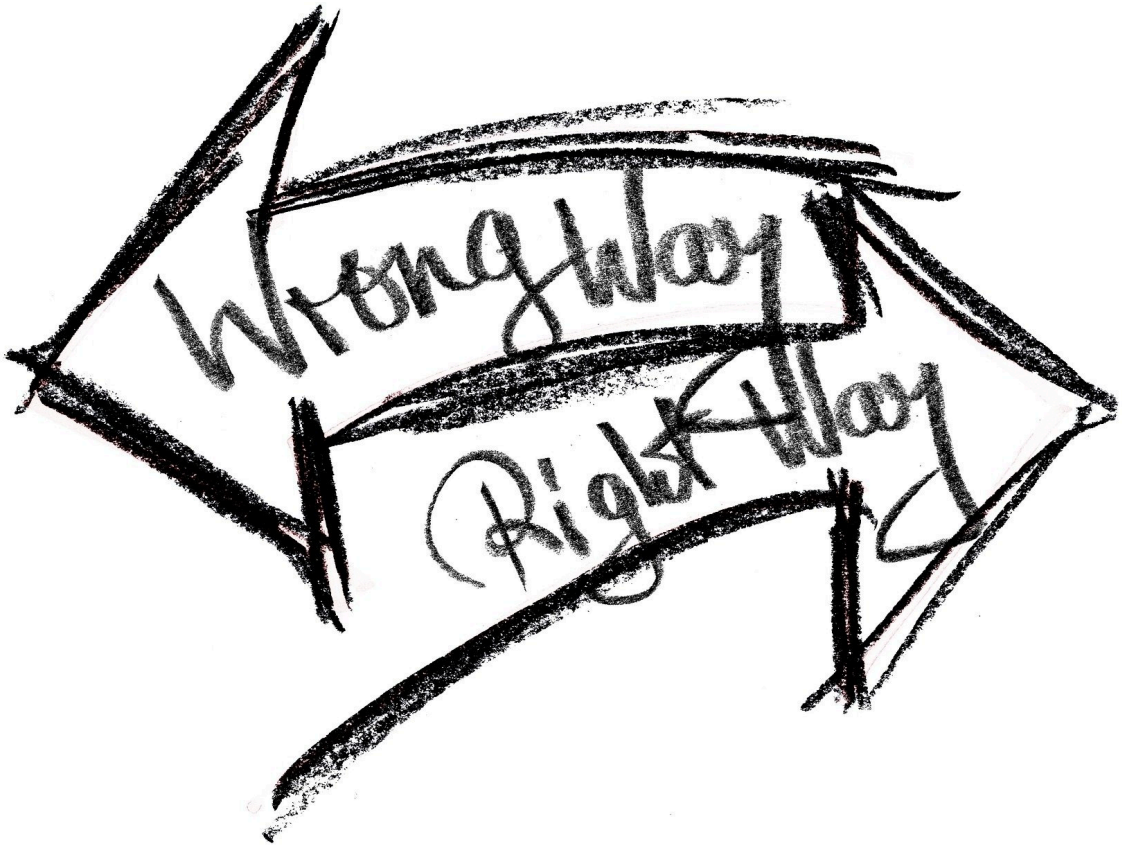
Avoid Plagiarism

If the idea isn't yours, cite the information source during your speech. Listing the citation on a bibliography or reference page is only half of the correct citation. You must provide correct citations for all your sources within your speech as well. In a very helpful book called *Avoiding Plagiarism: A Student Guide to Writing Your Own Work*, Menager-Beeley and Paulos provide a list of twelve strategies for avoiding plagiarism (Menager-Beeley & Paulos, 2009):

1. **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 start learning this skill now.
2. **Allow yourself enough time to research the assignment.** Not having adequate time to prepare is no excuse for plagiarism.
3. **Keep careful track of your sources.** A common mistake people make is that they forget where information came from when they start creating the speech itself. When you log your sources, you're less likely to inadvertently lose sources and to cite them incorrectly.
4. **Take careful notes.** It doesn't matter what method you choose for taking research notes, but whatever you do, be systematic to avoid plagiarizing.
5. **Assemble your thoughts, and make it clear who is speaking.** When creating your speech, make sure that you clearly differentiate your voice in the speech from your quoted author's voice. The easiest way to do this is to create a direct quotation or a paraphrase. Remember, audience members cannot see where the

quotation marks are located within your speech text, so clearly articulate with words and vocal tone when you are using someone else's ideas within your speech.

6. **If you use an idea, a quotation, paraphrase, or summary, then credit the source.** We can't reiterate it enough—if it is not your idea, tell your audience where the information came from. Giving credit is especially important when your speech includes a statistic, an original theory, or a fact that is not common knowledge.
7. **Learn how to cite sources correctly, both in the body of your paper and in your reference or works-cited page.**
8. **Quote accurately and sparingly.** A public speech should be based on factual information and references, but it shouldn't be a string of direct quotations strung 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.
9. **Paraphrase carefully.** Modifying an author's words 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 ways that students inadvertently plagiarize. First and foremost, paraphrasing is putting the author's argument, intent, or ideas into your own words.
10. **Do not patchwrite or 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 patchspeak. In patchspeaking, students rely completely on weaving together quotations and paraphrases in a manner that is devoid of the student's original thinking.
11. **Do not auto-summarize.** Some students have learned that most word processing features have an auto-summary function. The auto-summary function will summarize a ten-page document into a short paragraph.
12. **Do not rework another student's speech or buy paper-mill papers or speech-mill speeches.** In today's Internet environment, there are numerous student-speech storehouses on the Internet. Whether you use a speech that is freely available or pay money for a speech, you are plagiarizing. This is also true if your speech's main substance was copied from a web page. Any time you try to present someone else's ideas as your own during a speech, you are plagiarizing.



"Arrows Direction Way", by Geralt, licensed under Pixabay License

Use Sources Ethically In a speech

Ways to use sources ethically in a speech:

1. **Avoid plagiarism**, as we already discussed.
2. **Avoid Academic Fraud** – While there are numerous websites from which you can download free speeches for your class, this is tantamount to fraud. If you didn't do the research and write your own speech, then you are fraudulently trying to pass off someone else's work as your own. In addition to being unethical, many institutions have student codes that forbid such activity. Penalties for academic fraud can be as severe as suspension or expulsion from your institution.
3. **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 you believe the information to be biased, tell your audience and allow them to decide whether to accept or disregard the information.
4. **Give Author Credentials** – Always provide the author's credentials. In a world where anyone can say anything and have it published on the Internet or even 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 information about your cited authors' credentials.
5. **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 make sure that you maintain their anonymity or confidentiality when you present those results. Furthermore, be respectful if someone says something is off the record during an interview. Always maintain participants' privacy and confidentiality during primary research unless you have their express permission to reveal their names or other identifying information.

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How do I establish ethos?

Establishing ethos—one of the three rhetorical appeals—is achieved by including authoritative evidence or research inside of your speech. You establish ethos as well through your credibility and ethics as a speaker.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you prepare to establish ethos for any speech:

Credibility

- Does the audience see you as topic-credible? What have you done or said to ensure this?
- What makes you credible? Do you explain your credibility to the audience in the speech?
- Can the audience trust you? What reason have you given them to trust you?

Authoritative Sources

- Do you cite your authoritative sources out loud in your speech?
- Are your sources actually authoritative for this topic?
- What makes your sources authoritative? Do you explain that to your audience?

Appearance

- Does your dress, clothing, and appearance match the topic, occasion, and audience for your speech? How might your audience perceive your appearance from your perspective?

You must be able to answer all of these questions with a yes and a good explanation. The audience should clearly hear and see your ethos in your speech.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=5#h5p-7

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Chapter 8: Support

What is support?

Support Defined

In public speaking, the word **support** refers to a range of strategies that are used to develop your speech's 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 synonymously or interchangeably because both are designed to help ground a speech's specific purpose.

Support Every Claim in a Speech

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 table's purpose. 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. When selecting the different support types for your speech, make sure that every claim you make within the speech can be supported. For example, if you state, "The majority of Americans want immigration reform," make sure that you have a source that actually says this. 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 review your speech, make sure that each and every claim that you make is adequately supported by the evidence you have selected to use within the speech. In addition to being the foundation that a speech stands on, support also helps to clarify content, to increase speaker credibility, and to make the speech more vivid.

The first reason to use support in a speech is to **clarify content**. Speakers often choose a piece of support because a previous writer or speaker 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. Use this definition to make sure your audience understands what hazing is and what types of behaviors your campus identifies as hazing.

Another important reason to use support is because it enhances 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. By doing so, you let your audience know that you've done your topic homework.

In addition to clarifying content and enhancing credibility, support helps make a speech more vivid. **Vividness** refers to a speaker's ability to present information in a striking, exciting manner. The goal of using vividness

is to make your speech more memorable. For example, a student was speaking to fellow students about the importance of wearing seat belts and stated that the impact from hitting a windshield at just twenty miles per hour without a seat belt would be equivalent to falling out of their second-floor classroom window and landing face-first on the pavement below. Because the students were in that classroom several times each week, they were easily able to visualize the speaker's analogy, and it created an image that was remembered years later. Support helps make your speech more interesting and memorable to audience members.

"Support", by Pixel Fantasy, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Criteria Used to Evaluate Support

There are four criteria to use when evaluating support options: accuracy, authority, currency, and objectivity.

Accuracy

One of the quickest ways to lose credibility is to use support that is inaccurate or even questionably accurate. Admittedly, determining whether your support is accurate can be difficult if you are not a topic expert, but here are some questions to ask yourself to help assess a source's accuracy: does the information within one piece of supporting evidence completely contradict other supporting evidence you've seen? If the support is using a statistic, does the supporting evidence explain where that statistic came from and how it was determined? Does the logic behind the support make sense?

For example, one student presenter stated, "The amount of pollution produced by using paper towels instead of hand dryers is equivalent to driving a car from the east coast to St. Louis." Fellow students as well as the

instructor recognized that this information sounded wrong and asked questions about the information source, the amount of time it would take to produce this much pollution, and the number of hand dryers used. The audience demonstrated strong listening skills by questioning the information, but the speaker lost credibility by being unable to answer their questions.

Authority

The second criteria to use to evaluate support to build your credibility is to cite authoritative sources—those who are topic experts. In today's world, there are myriad people who call themselves experts on a range of topics. As a novice researcher, how can you determine whether an individual is truly an expert? Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut way to wade through the masses of experts and determine each one's legitimacy quickly. However, the following table lists questions based on Marie-Line Germain's research that you can ask yourself to help determine whether someone is an expert (Germain, 2006). You don't have to answer yes to all the questions to conclude that a source is credible, but a string of no answers should be a red flag that the source's credibility is questionable.

Who Is an Expert?

Questions to Ask Yourself	Yes	No
1. Is the person widely recognizable as an expert?		
2. Does the person have an appropriate degree/training/certification to make her or him an expert?		
3. Is the person a member of a recognized profession in her or his claimed area of expertise?		
4. Has the person published articles or books (not self-published) on the claimed area of expertise?		
5. Does the person have appropriate experience in her or his claimed area of expertise?		
6. Does the person have clear knowledge about her or his claimed area of expertise?		
7. Is the person clearly knowledgeable about the field related to her or his claimed area of expertise?		
8. When all is said and done, does the person truly have the qualifications to be considered an expert in her or his claimed area of expertise?		

Currency

The third criteria to use to evaluate support to build your credibility is currency. For example, some ideas stay fairly consistent over time, such as the date the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor or the mathematical formula for finding a circle's area, but other ideas change wildly in a short time, including ideas about technology, health treatments, and laws. So, it is important to investigate how current your information is.

Objectivity

The last criteria to evaluate when examining support is whether the person or organization behind the information is objective or biased. **Bias** prevents impartiality about a topic. Although there is a certain logic to the view that every one of us is innately biased, to be a credible speaker, avoid passing along someone's

unfounded bias in your speech. Ideally, use support that is unbiased. The following table provides questions to ask yourself when evaluating a potential piece of support to detect bias. Again, you don't have to have all yes or no responses to detect bias. However, being aware of possible bias and where your audience might see bias will help you to select the best possible support to include in your speech.

Is a Potential Source of Support Biased?

Questions to Ask Yourself	Yes	No
1. Does the source represent an individual's, an organization's, or another group's viewpoint?		
2. Does the source sound unfair in its judgment, either for or against a specific topic?		
3. Does the source sound like personal prejudices, opinions, or thoughts?		
4. Does the source exist only on a website (i.e., not in print or any other format)?		
5. Is the information published or posted anonymously or pseudonymously?		
6. Does the source have any political or financial interests related to the information being disseminated?		
7. Does the source demonstrate any specific political orientation, religious affiliation, or other ideology?		
8. Does the source's viewpoint differ from all other information you've read?		

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=37#h5p-8

What are the different types of support?

The following sections are adapted from section 8.2 of Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Statistics and How to Use Them

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. The Table below provides a list of some websites where you can find a range of statistical information that may be useful for your speeches.

Statistics-Oriented Websites

Website	Type of Information
us Bureau of Labor Statistics	Bureau of Labor Statistics provides links to websites for labor issues related to numerous countries.
Bureau of Justice Statistics	Bureau of Justice Statistics provides information on US crime statistics.
United States' Census Bureau	United States' Census Bureau provides much information about people living in the United States.
National Center for Health Statistics	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.
STATS PERFORM	STATS PERFORM is a nonprofit organization that helps people understand quantitative data. It provides data, sports research, news and video content.
Roper Center for Public Opinion Research	Roper Center for Public Opinion Research provides data related to a range of issues in the United States.
Nielsen Media Data	Nielsen Media Data provides data on how consumers use various media forms.
Gallup	Gallup provides public opinion data on a range of social and political issues in the United States and around the world.
Pew Research Center	Pew Research Center provides public opinion data on a range of social and political issues in the United States and around the world.

Unfortunately, there are many speakers who do not know how to interpret statistics and data or who intentionally manipulate them to mislead their listeners. As a popular Mark Twain saying goes, "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics" (Twain, 1924).

To avoid misusing statistics when publicly speaking, **do three things:**

1. 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.
2. 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 such as, "increased by 50 percent" may conflict with data showing an increase of 100 percent.
3. Evaluate sources according to the criteria discussed earlier in the chapter: accuracy, authority, currency, and objectivity.

Types of Definitions, Examples, Testimony, and Analogies

Definitions

Imagine that you gave a speech about how presidential vetoes are used, and your audience did not know the meaning of the word veto. For your speech to be effective, define what a veto is and what it does. Making sure everyone is on the same page is a fundamental communication task. As speakers, we often need to clearly define what we are talking about to make sure that our audience understands our meaning. By using clear definitions, speakers communicate a word or idea in a manner that makes it understandable for their audiences. For public speaking purposes, there are four different types of definitions that may be used as support: lexical, persuasive, stipulative, and theoretical.

Lexical definitions specifically state how a word is used within a specific language. Lexical definitions are useful when a word may be unfamiliar to an audience, and you want to ensure that the audience has 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 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. Linguist and political strategist Frank Luntz is widely regarded as one of the most effective creators of persuasive definitions (Luntz, 2007). Luntz has the ability to take terms that political groups don't like and repackage them into politically persuasive definitions. 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

Stipulative definitions are assigned to a word or term by the person who coins that word or term for the first time. For example, 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.

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.

Definitions are important to provide clarity for your audience. Effective speakers strike a balance between using definitions to increase an audience's understanding and leaving definitions out that an 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 defining those terms. Patients may then walk away not really understanding what their health situation is or what needs to be done about it.

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Examples

Other often-used support types are 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 example types used as support: positive, negative, nonexamples, and best examples.

Positive examples are used to clarify or to clearly illustrate a positive principle, method, or phenomenon. For example, 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. This positive example type provides a model for how a politician should behave in crisis management. Using a positive example shows a desirable solution, decision, or course of action.

Negative examples, by contrast, are used to illustrate what not to do. On the same theme of crisis management, a speaker could discuss the many problems with how the US government responded to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Using a negative example shows an undesirable solution, decision, or course of action.

Nonexamples are used to explain what something is not. 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 show the *best* way someone should behave within a specific context. For example, a speaker could show a clip of a CEO speaking during a press conference to show how effectively one should behave both verbally and nonverbally during a crisis. While positive examples show appropriate ways to behave, best examples illustrate the best way to behave in a specific context.

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 help you be thrown from a car and save you from fire or other hazards in the wrecked automobile. 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 considers how the audience will respond to the example and how the example fits with what else the audience knows.

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Testimony

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

Expert testimony expresses the attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors recommended by someone who is an acknowledged topic expert. Expert testimony accompanies the discussion we had earlier relating to what qualifies someone as an expert. For example, imagine that you're going to give a speech on why physical education should be mandatory for all public school grades K–12. During your research, you come across The Surgeon General's Vision for a Fit and Healthy Nation. If you cite information from within the report written by US Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin about her strategies for combating the US childhood obesity problem, you are using Dr. Benjamin's words as a noted expert on the subject to support your speech's basic premise. Her expertise gives credibility to your claims.

Eyewitness testimony, on the other hand, is given by someone who has direct contact with your speech topic. Imagine that you are giving a speech on the Gulf of Mexico's 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster. 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 oil platform was. You could tell your listeners about your friend's testimony of what she saw as she was flying over the spill. However, using eyewitness testimony as support can be a little tricky because you are relying on someone's firsthand account, and firsthand accounts may not always be reliable. As such, evaluate your witness's credibility and the testimony's recency. Overall, the more detail you can give about the witness and when the witness made his or her observation, the more useful that witness's testimony will be when attempting to create a solid argument. However, never rely completely on eyewitness testimony because this support type is not always the most reliable, and your audience may still perceive it as biased.

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 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, if you compare a new airplane to an eagle, they clearly are not the same class. 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.

While figurative analogies may be very vivid and help a listener create a mental picture, they do not really help a listener determine the information's validity. 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, on the other hand, compare two objects or ideas that clearly belong to the same class. Your goal in using a 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, 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 such as McDonald's, Subway, or Taco Bell. If you 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 success as the existing brands.

As with figurative analogies, make sure that the audience can see a reasonable connection between the two compared ideas or objects. If your audience sees your new fast-food brand as very different from McDonald's or Subway, 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.

Narratives

A fourth support type is a narrative or story that helps an audience understand the speaker's message. Narratives are similar to examples except that they are generally longer and take on a story form with a clear arc—a beginning, middle, and end. 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). Obviously, we are advocating that you select truthful narratives when you use this speech support type. Clella Jaffe explains that narratives are fundamental to public speaking and can be used for support in all three general speaking purposes: informative, persuasive, and entertaining (Jaffe, 2010).

Informative narratives, as Jaffe describes, are those that provide information or explanations about a speaker's topic (Jaffe, 2010). For example, informative narratives can help audiences understand nature and natural phenomena. Often, the most complicated science and mathematical issues in our world can be understood through storytelling. 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 was hit on the head by an apple and subsequently developed the gravity theory. Even if the story is not precisely accurate, it serves as a way to help people grasp gravity's basic concept.

Persuasive narratives are stories used to persuade people to accept or reject a specific attitude, value, belief, or behavior. For example, religious texts are filled with persuasive narratives. He had compassion on it, and taking it up, placed it in his bosom. The snake was quickly revived by the warmth, and resuming its natural instincts, bit its benefactor, inflicting on him a mortal wound. 'Oh,' cried the Farmer with his last breath, 'I am rightly served for pitying a scoundrel.'" This persuasive narrative is designed to warn people that just because you help someone in need doesn't mean the other person will respond in kind.

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 success stories 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 are much fun, use them sparingly as support for a more serious topic or for a traditional informative or persuasive speech.

How do I use support in a speech?

The following sections are adapted from section 8.3 of Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Using Support in a Speech

When researching a topic, you'll find a range of supporting evidence types. 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 support types 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

Variety is most important in using support. Nothing will kill a speech faster than if you use the same support

type over and over again. Try to use as much support as needed to make your point without going overboard. You might begin with a few definitions and then rely on a gripping 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 like statistics, while others find narratives compelling. By using various support types, you'll appeal to a broad audience range, and thus, effectively adapt to your audience. Even if your audience members prefer a specific support type, providing multiple support types 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 Support Types

Depending on your speech's type, context, and audience, different support types 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 entertaining after-dinner speech. At the same time, entertaining narratives may be great for a speech in which the general purpose is to entertain, but may decrease a speaker's credibility if the goal is to persuade an audience about a serious topic.

Check for Relevance

Another concept to consider about potential support is whether or not it is relevant. Select supporting material that supports your speech's specific purpose. You may find the coolest quotation, but if that quotation doesn't really help your speech's core argument, leave it out. If you use too many irrelevant support sources, your audience will quickly catch on, and your credibility will drop through the floor.

Your support materials should be relevant not only to your topic but also to your audience. If you are giving a speech to sixty-year-olds, you may be able to begin with, "Think back to where you were when you heard that President Kennedy was shot." But this image would be meaningless to twenty-five-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. If you find three different sources that support your speech's purpose in the same way, don't include all three support types. Instead, pick the support type that most benefits your speech. Remember, the goal is to support your speech, not to have the support become your speech.

Don't Manipulate Your Support

The last factor related to sifting through your support involves a very important ethical concept called **support-manipulation**. Often, 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. When you go out of your way to pull the wool over your audience's eyes, you are being unethical and not treating your audience with respect.

Using a Reverse Outline

One recommendation for selecting the appropriate speech support type is what we call a reverse outline. A reverse outline is a tool you can use to determine your speech support's adequacy by starting with your conclusion and logically working backward through your speech to determine if the support you provided is appropriate and comprehensive. In essence, we recommend that you think of your speech's conclusion first and then work your way backward showing how you get to the conclusion. By forcing yourself to think about logic in reverse, you'll find any missteps along the way. This technique is not only helpful for analyzing your speech's overall flow, it can also let you see if different speech sections are not completely supported individually.

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In-Speech Support Types

Let's begin by examining in-speech support types: quotations, paraphrases, summaries, numerical support, and pictographic support.

Quotations

The first common in-speech support types are direct quotations. Direct quotations occur when a speaker uses the exact wording of another speaker or writer within his or her new speech. Quotations are very helpful and can definitely provide a supporting tool for your speech's specific purpose. Here are five tips for using in-speech quotations:

1. Use a direct quotation if the original author's words are witty, engaging, distinct, or particularly vivid.
2. Use a direct quotation if you want to highlight a specific expert and his or her expertise within your speech.
3. Use a direct quotation if you are going to specifically analyze something that is said within the quotation. If your analysis depends on the quotation's exact wording, then it is important to use the quotation.
4. Keep quotations to a minimum. One of the biggest mistakes some speakers make is stringing together a series of quotations and calling it a speech. Remember, a speech is your unique insight into a topic, not a series of quotations.
5. Keep quotations short. Long quotations lose an audience; and therefore, the connection between your support and your argument gets lost.

Paraphrases

The second in-speech support type is paraphrasing. Paraphrasing involves taking the general idea or theme from another speaker or author and condensing the idea or theme into your own words. A mistake that some speakers make is dropping a few words or rearranging some words within a direct quotation and thinking that is a paraphrase. When paraphrasing, understand the other speaker or author's ideas well enough to relate them without looking back at the original. Here are four tips for using in-speech paraphrases:

1. Paraphrase when you can say it more concisely than the original speaker or author.
2. Paraphrase when the exact wording from the original speaker or author won't improve your audience's understanding of the support.
3. Paraphrase when you want to adapt an example, analogy, or narrative by another speaker or author to make its relevance more evident.
4. 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 quotations and paraphrases are taking a whole text and singling out a few lines or a section, a summary involves condensing or encapsulating the entire text as a support type. Summaries are helpful when you want to clearly spell out the speaker or author's intent behind a text. Here are three suggestions for using in-speech summaries.

1. Summarize when you need another speaker or author's complete argument to help your audience understand the argument within your speech.
2. Summarize when explaining possible counterarguments to the one posed within your speech.
3. Summarize when you need to cite several different sources effectively and efficiently to support a specific argument.

Numerical Support

Speakers often need to use numerical support or to cite data and numbers within a speech. The most common reason for using numerical support comes when citing statistics. When using data to support your speech, make sure that your audience can accurately interpret the numbers in the same way you are doing. Here are three tips for using in-speech numerical support:

1. Clearly state the numbers used and where they came from.
2. Make sure you explain what the numbers mean and how you think they should be interpreted.
3. If the numbers are overly complicated or if you use a variety of numbers within a speech, consider turning this support into a visual aid to enhance your audience's understanding of the numerical support.

Pictographic Support

The last commonly used in-speech support type is pictographic support, which is also commonly referred to as visual aids. For this chapter's purpose, we will use the term pictographic support to mean any drawn or visual *representation* of an object or process and stress that we are using source images as a support type. 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 the golf club. While the golf club in this instance is a visual aid, it is not pictographic support. If you showed a diagram illustrating the steps for an effective golf swing, the diagram is an example of pictographic support. So, while all pictographic support types are visual aids, not all visual aids are pictographic support. Here are five suggestions for effectively using in-speech pictographic support.

1. Use pictographic support when it would be easier and shorter than orally explaining an object or process.
2. Use pictographic support when you really want to emphasize the importance of the support. Audiences recall information more readily when they both see and hear it rather than if they only see or only hear the information.
3. Make sure that pictographic support is aesthetically pleasing.
4. Pictographic support should be easy to understand, and it should take less time to use than words alone.
5. Make sure everyone in your audience can easily see your pictographic support. If listeners cannot see it, then it will not help them understand how it is supposed to help your speech's specific purpose.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=37#h5p-12

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Chapter 9: Analyzing the Audience

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How do I acknowledge the audience?

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Identify Different Ways to Acknowledge Your 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 to find 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 inconvenient stuffy conference room, tell them how much you appreciate their presence in spite of the circumstances. These gestures go a long way towards warming them up to hear your message.

For instance, when a political candidate who travels from town to town giving the same campaign speech makes a statement like this, "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," it lets the audience know that the candidate has at least taken the trouble to tailor the speech to the present audience.

Be Clear

Next, make sure that you state your topic clearly at the outset, using words that your audience will understand. Letting them know what your speech is about shows that you respect them as listeners and that you value their time and attention. Also, throughout your speech, define your terms clearly and carefully to avoid misleading or alarming people by mistake. Avoid using jargon or language that excludes listeners who aren't familiar with topic-specific terms. If you have analyzed your audience appropriately, you'll know to whom you're speaking and present a clear, decisive message that lets listeners know what you think, and you will avoid making any fear-based or offensive statements. Conversely, if you have hastily approached **audience analysis**—the process of learning all you reasonably can about your audience—you might find yourself presenting a speech with no clear message.

Adapt Your Speech to the Audience's Needs

We learn public speaking to inform various audiences and hopefully 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. In other cases, your audience could include fixed-income retirees who might not agree that raising local taxes is a vital future investment.

Even in an audience who 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, experiences, knowledge, and values belonging to every individual. For example, an audience member who has been in a car accident caused by a drunk driver might not appreciate a lighthearted joke about barhopping.

These examples illustrate why audience analysis is so centrally important. Audience analysis includes considering your audience's **demographic information**, such as the gender, age, marital status, race, and ethnicity. Another less obvious demographic factor is **socioeconomic status**, which refers to a combination of income, wealth, education level, and occupational prestige. Each dimension gives you some information about which topics and which various topic aspects will be well received.

For example, suppose you are preparing to give an informative speech about early childhood health care. If your audience are couples who have recently had a new baby and live in an affluent suburb, you can expect

that they will be young adults with high socioeconomic status and that they are eager to know about the very best available health care for their children. In contrast, if your audience are nurses, they may differ in age but will have similar educational levels and occupational prestige. They will already know much about the topic, so find an interesting aspect that may be new for them, such as community health care resources for families with limited financial resources, or referral services for children with special needs.

Audience analysis also takes into account **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 early childhood health care topic, expect new parents to be passionate about wanting the best for their child. The psychographics of nurses would revolve around their professional competence and the need to provide standards-of-care for their patients.

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Audience Diversity

Diversity is a key dimension to know about your audience, and therefore, an important part 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). For example, in our grandparents' day, a racially mixed neighborhood included 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 city neighborhoods are richly diverse, including 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.

While race, ethnicity, and culture may be relatively visible aspects of diversity, there are many other aspects that are less obvious, so be aware that your audience is often more diverse than you might initially think. For example, suppose you are going to give a talk on pool safety to very affluent suburban community residents. Ask yourself, 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 military family members, 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 opinions exists.

This is where the **frame of reference** we mentioned earlier becomes an important concept. People have

a 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 large investments before profits are realized.

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 our audience members are unique individuals and deserve to receive equal sensitivity and respect. Respecting diversity is not merely a public speaking responsibility; it is a responsibility worthy of embracing in all our human interactions.

Offending Your Audience

It might seem obvious that audience analysis automatically inhibits speakers from making offensive remarks, but even very experienced speakers sometimes forget this basic rule. For example, if you are 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 tequila brand? 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.

Not only does insensitive humor offend an audience, 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, avoid embedding assumptions about people in your messages. Even the most subtle suggestion may not go unnoticed. 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 your audience members' complexity and if you treat them as stereotypes, they will resent your assumptions and doubt your credibility.

Ethical 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 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.

To convey regard and respect for your audience, be sincere. Examine the motives behind your topic choice, your speech's true purpose, and your willingness to work to make sure your speech's content is true and real. 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.

What are ethical appeals and why are they important for getting the audience to listen?

Ethical appeals represent your speech's content. Properly understanding and using ethical appeals is an element of effective speechmaking and is very beneficial for you in this public speaking class and in your world outside of this class. You can use these appeals to inform, and better yet, to persuade your audience or whoever you are talking to!

It is very important that you learn these appeals and apply them in your speeches. You will notice these appeals throughout this course, and some you have already seen. Let's look a little more closely at what ethical appeals are, and more importantly, how you can relate each appeal back to your speech.

"Heart icon red hollow", by Bagande, licensed under CC0

Pathos is your passion, the emotional appeal that you write out and present in your speech. You are trying to get your audience to feel something and trying to develop an emotional connection with them.

Examples: telling a story; examples and anecdotes of any kind; use other's stories, images, and vivid language.

"Award Ribbon Rosette Blue", by OpenClipart-Vectors, licensed under Pixabay License

Ethos is your ethics, the credibility appeal as the speaker to your audience. You are trying to get your audience to see that you are credible when you show and use credible resources.

Examples: credible sources from your research; you as a speaker; your observable and stated knowledge on the topic.

"Heart icon red hollow", by Bagande, licensed under CC0

Pathos is your passion, the emotional appeal that you write out and present in your speech. You are trying to get your audience to feel something and trying to develop an emotional connection with them.

Examples: telling a story; examples and anecdotes of any kind; use other's stories, images, and vivid language.

"Cranium Head Human", by Open Clipart-Vectors, licensed under Pixabay License

Logos is your logic, the logical appeal that you present to your audience in your speech. You are trying to get your audience to understand you by using reasoning.

Examples: statistics, facts, research.

Watch this video to learn more and see some fun examples:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=39#oembed-1

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos examples, by Chloe Isaac, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuFmFkj3Ofw

Keep in mind when it comes to informing and persuading an audience, it is important to teach the audience by using all three appeals. Everyone connects to information differently, and everyone is persuaded by different appeal combinations. Think about yourself: are you more informed or persuaded by Ethos, Pathos, Logos, or a combination? What makes you take action? What makes you want to listen and understand something? Is it someone's use of logic-Logos? Is it someone's emotional plea-Pathos? Or, is it who they are or their credibility-Ethos? Or, a combination?

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How do I choose an effective topic?

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How to Choose an Effective Topic

Your topic selection reflects 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 is worth listening to. As a student, you are probably sensitive to how unpleasant it is to listen to a speech on a highly complex or technical topic that you find impossible to understand. Conversely, consider that audiences do not want to waste their time or attention listening to a speech that is too simple. For example, if your speech's purpose is to inform or persuade students in your public speaking class, a topic such as fitness or drunk driving is unlikely to go very far toward informing your audience, and in all likelihood, it will not persuade them either. Instead, your audience members and your professor will quickly recognize that you are thinking of your own needs rather than your audience's.

It behooves you to seek a topic that is novel and interesting both for you and for your audience. It is also important to conduct some credible research to ensure that even the most informed audience members 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 are more likely to hold your classroom audience's interest than topics they've heard about time and time again.

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

Choosing a Topic

Before you get working on any speech, first, pick a topic.

When choosing your speech's topic, remember these very important concepts:

- The audience
  - Who is your audience?
  - How will they receive the topic? Will they be bored? Will they be excited, etc?
  - How will you adjust the speech and topic to fit this specific audience?
- The topic is appropriate and adapted for you, the audience, and occasion. If you think you might cry or become overly emotional while speaking on your topic, don't pick that one!
- The topic is narrowed down, but still has substance and can fit inside the given speech time limit. It is a very important skill to learn how to narrow down your ideas, but still make them substantive, especially in a five-minute presentation.
- The topic is unique and original and not worn out or overdone. Please don't talk about marijuana, recycling, texting and driving, abortion, health and fitness, being vegetarian or vegan, just to name a few—I am sure you can think of more examples. If you do a Google search and see it returns 81,000,000 results or more, this probably means the topic is overdone! Although, a way you can do one of these topics is only if you take a very unique focus—one that isn't overdone.

Controversial Topics

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 energy source. Others say that even mining 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. The topic is extremely controversial, and yet it is interesting and very important.

Don't avoid controversy altogether, but 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.

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How do I gather and use audience information

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"Company Social Network Community", by Hurca, licensed under Pixabay License

While audience analysis does not guarantee against judgment errors, it will help you make good topic, language, presentation style, and other speech-aspect choices. 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, so acknowledge this before making assumptions. But knowing how to gather and use information through audience analysis is an essential skill for successful speakers.

Demographic Analysis

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

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.

Demographic Analysis

Demographic	Description
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 and fifties, it is likely they remember a time when people feared they would contract the AIDS virus from shaking hands or using a public restroom. 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).
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.
Group Membership	Think about "majors" in college, 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. Fraternities and sororities, 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.

Demographic	Description
Education	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 education levels attained by members of your audience, you might not know their motivations, but you will know to what extent they could somehow afford the money for an education, afford the time to get an education, and survive educational demands successfully. The kind of education is also important. 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. 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 crucially necessary to effective health care.

Psychographic Analysis

Earlier, we mentioned psychographic information, which includes such things as values, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs. Authors Grice and Skinner present a model in which values are the basis for beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Grice & Skinner, 2009). They say, "A value expresses a judgment of what is desirable and undesirable, right and wrong, or good and evil. Values are usually stated in the form of a word or phrase. For example, most of us probably share the values of equality, freedom, honesty, fairness, justice, good health, and family. These values compose the principles or standards we use to judge and develop our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors."

It is important to recognize that while demographic information is fairly straightforward and verifiable, psychographic information is much less clearcut. Two different people who both say they believe in equal education opportunities may have very different interpretations of what equal opportunities are. We also acknowledge that people inherit values from their family upbringing, cultural influences, and life experiences. The extent to which someone values family loyalty and parent obedience, thrift, humility, and work may be determined by these influences more than by individual choice. Psychographic analysis can reveal preexisting notions that limit your audience's frame of reference. By knowing about such notions ahead of time, you can address them in your speech. Audiences are likely to have two basic kinds of preexisting notions: those about the topic and those about the speaker.

Psychographic Analysis

Psychographic	Description
	Many things are a great deal more complex than we realize. Media stereotypes often contribute to our oversimplifications. For instance, a student once said: "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.
Pre-Existing Notions about Your Topic	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. 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.
Pre-Existing 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.

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?

Situational Analysis

Situation	Description
Audience Size	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. 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. 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.
Physical Settings	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.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=39#h5p-17

What tools can I use for gathering and using audience information?

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

Direct Observation

One way to learn about people is to observe them. By observing nonverbal behavior patterns, you'll learn much 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 men and women make physical contact? Does the setting suggest more conservative behavior? Listen to conversations to hear issues that concern people. Are people in a school campus center talking about political unrest in the Middle East? About concerns over future Pell Grant funding? Consider eavesdropping's ethical dimensions, 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 one respondent questions. A survey is set questions administered to several—or, preferably, many—respondents. Conduct interviews face-to-face, by phone, or by written means, such as texting. Interviews allow more in-depth discussions than surveys, and interviews are also more time consuming. Surveys are also sometimes conducted face-to-face or by phone, but online surveys are increasingly common. Collect and tabulate survey results manually, or set up an automated online survey through either free or subscription portal sites such as 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.

Whether you use interviews or 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 people's private lives. For instance, if your speech is about the debate between creationism and evolution, create questions that will ensure getting opinions about that topic; do not meander into people's beliefs about sexual behavior or their personal religious practices.
- Create and use a standard set of questions. If you ad lib and phrase your questions differently for different interviewees, you are comparing apples and oranges when you tabulate your responses
- 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. To accurately identify trends, 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 tendency is a widely recognized interview and survey weakness, 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).

To reduce these socially desirable responding effects, choose 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, use a limited, carefully prepared question list designed to get at the information you need to understand your audiences' beliefs, attitudes, and values as they are specifically topic related.

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 towards 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 focus group is to understand group members' beliefs, attitudes, and values about your topic, not to confirm your assumptions.

Using Existing Data about Your Audience

Occasionally, audience information already exists and is available. For instance, if you have a student audience, it might not be difficult to find out what their academic majors are. You might also find out how invested they are in their educations. For instance, you can reasonably assume that seniors are 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 audience, you might be able to learn other significant facts. For instance, are they veterans? Are they retired teachers? Do they volunteer at civic organizations such as Lions Club or Mothers Against Drunk Driving? This information will help you respond to their concerns and interests.

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

Demographic information about narrower segments of the US, such as individual zip codes, is available

through private organizations such as The Nielsen Company, Sperling's Best Places, and Point2Homes. Sales and marketing professionals use this data, and you may find it useful for your audience analysis as well.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=39#h5p-18

Why should I always keep the audience in mind?

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How an Audience Analysis Can Help a Speaker Alter a Speech While Speaking

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 your audiences' interests. Ultimately, a successful audience analysis can guide you in preparing your basic speech content and help you adjust your speech on the fly.

Prepare Content with Your Audience in Mind

The first thing a good audience analysis can do is to help you focus your content for your specific audience. If you are planning to deliver a persuasive speech on why people should become vegans and you find out through analysis that half your audience come from cattle ranching families, you need to carefully think through your content approach. 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 your speech's topic prior to the speaking event, you can also use your audience analysis to help ensure that your speech's content will be as clear and understandable as humanly possible. Use your audience analysis to help make sure that you are clear.

One area to be careful of is using idioms that your audience may not know. An **idiom** is a word or phrase in which the meaning cannot be predicted from normal, dictionary definitions. Many idioms are based on culture or an historical time.

Adjusting Your Speech Based on Your Analysis

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

The audience feedback you receive *during* your speech invaluably indicates ways to adjust your presentation. If you're speaking after lunch and notice audience members looking drowsy, make adjustments to liven up your speech's tone. Use humor. Raise your voice slightly. Pose some questions and ask for a show of hands to get your listeners actively involved. Other audience feedback such as frowns and head shaking mean that some listeners aren't convinced by your arguments. In this case, spend more time on a specific topic area and provide more evidence than you originally intended. Good speakers learn a lot by watching their audience while speaking, and then they make specific adjustments to both the speech content and delivery to enhance the speech's ultimate impact.

The second adjustment type has to do with your speech's physical setting. 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 them, or tell your listeners that they can view them after the presentation. You may also need to account for a microphone. If you're lucky enough to have a cordless microphone, 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, make adjustments to how you deliver the presentation.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=39#h5p-19

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Chapter 10: Visual Aid

What is the importance of visual aids?

Reasons Visual Aids Are Important in Public Speaking

Visual aids, which we will also refer to as presentation aids in this chapter, fulfill several functions: they can help your audience understand the information you are conveying, help you clarify a complex message or visual information, help to emphasize important ideas, help the audience remember and retain the message, add variety and interest to your speech, and enhance your credibility as a speaker. Let's examine each of these functions.

To Improve Audience Understanding

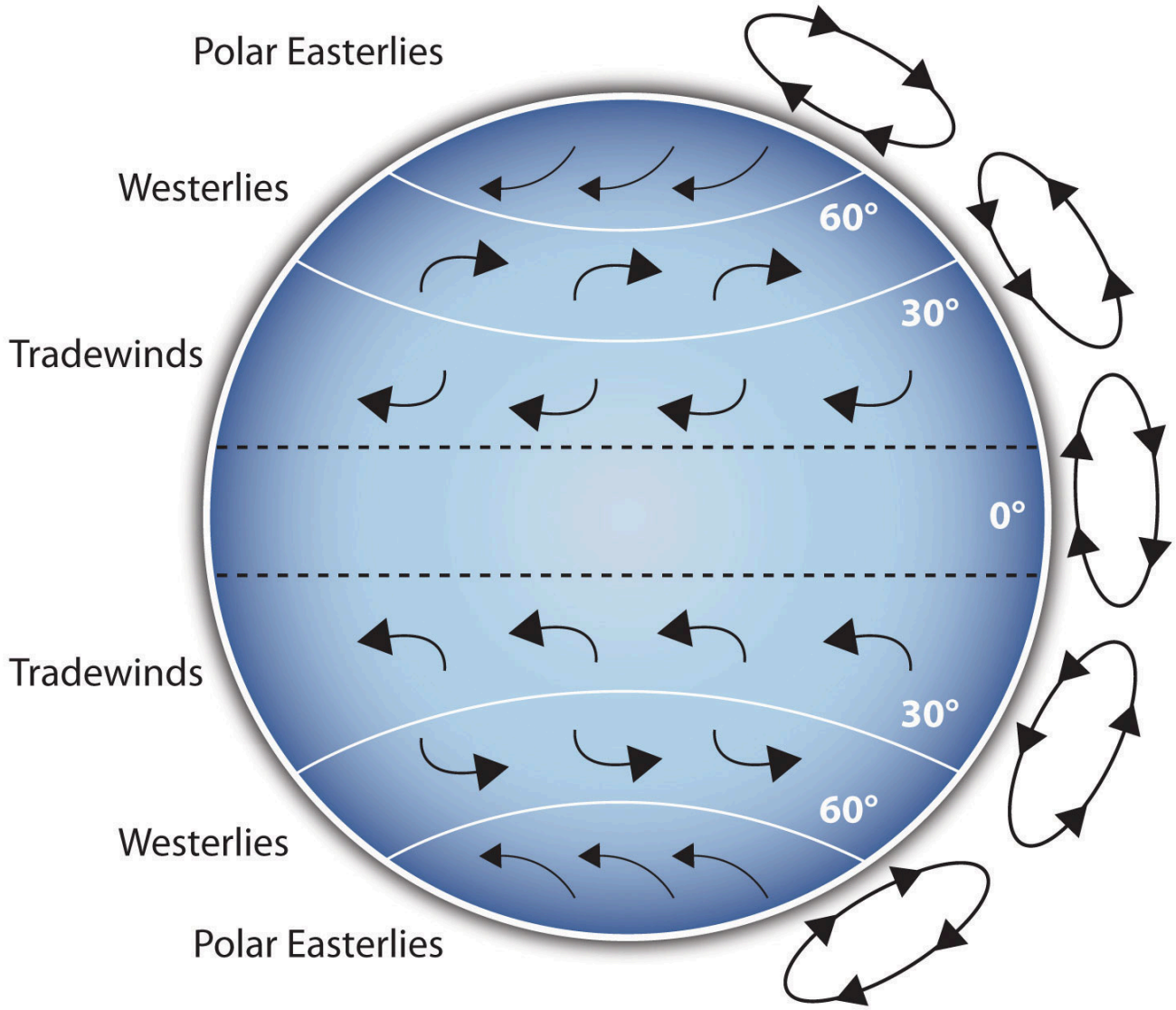
Presentation aids help the audience understand your information. Human communication is a complex process that often leads to misunderstandings. If you are like most people, you can easily remember incidents when you misunderstood a message or when someone else misunderstood what you said to them. Misunderstandings 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.

As a speaker, one of your basic goals is to help your audience understand your message. If some of the information you convey is unclear, your listeners will feel puzzled or possibly even misled. One way to reduce misunderstandings is to use thoughtfully prepared presentation aids.

To Clarify

Presentation aids can help clarify a complex message or visual information. For instance, if your speech is about the Coriolis effect's impact on tropical storms, you will have great difficulty clarifying it without a diagram because the process is complex. The Coriolis Effect diagram you see is effective because it shows the audience the interaction between equatorial wind patterns and other directional wind patterns. The diagram allows the audience to process the information in two ways: through your verbal explanation and through the diagram' visual elements.



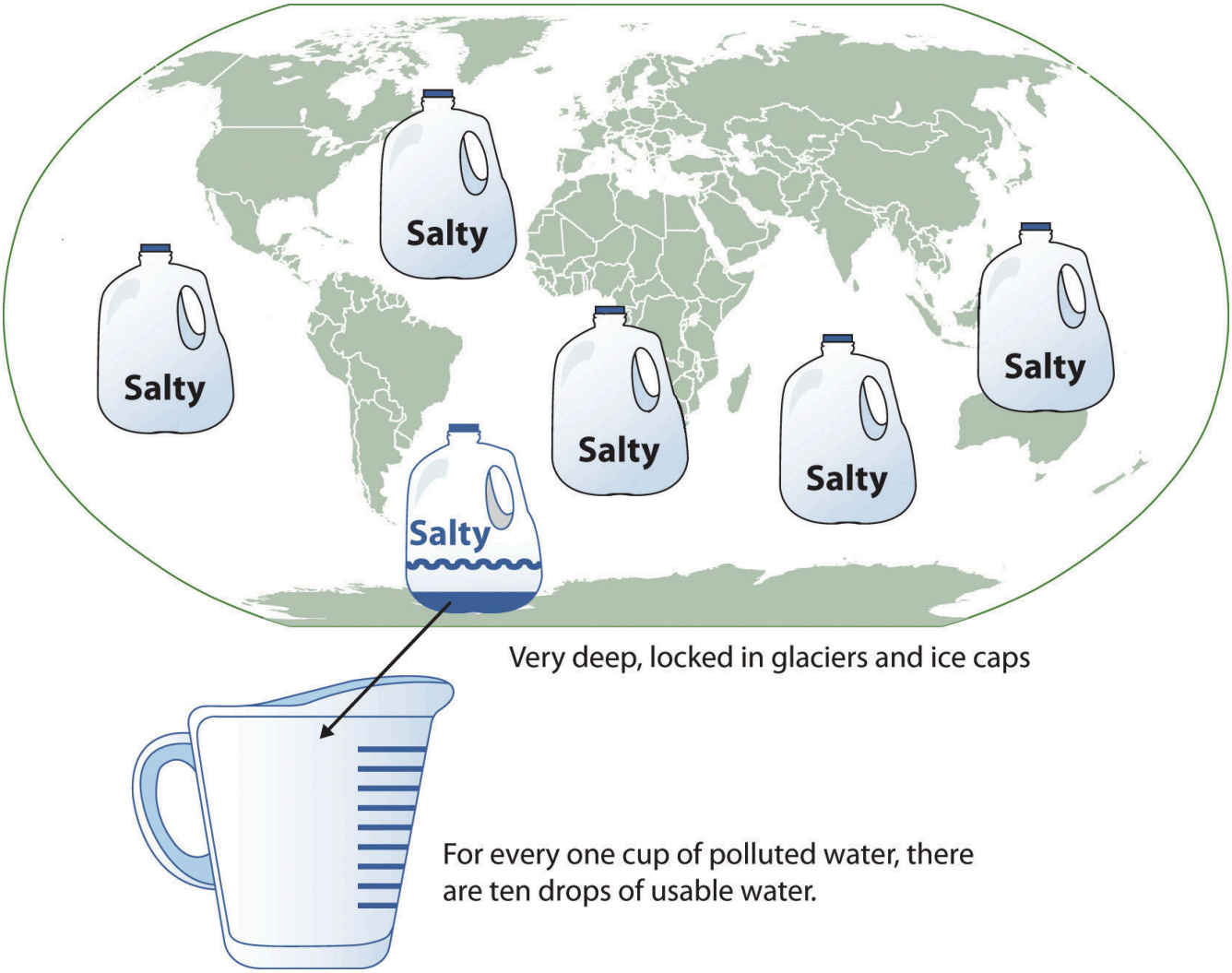
Coriolis effect diagram, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Petroglyph diagram, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Another way visual aids clarify is when a speaker wants to 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 convey what they look like. Instead, show a petroglyph example such as in the Petroglyph image. Notice how more easily your audience can form a clear mental image of your intended meaning.

To Emphasize

Presentation aids also help emphasize important ideas. For example, in a water conservation speech, you want to show water's environmental proportions. When you use a conceptual drawing like the one in the Planetary Water Supply image, you show that if the world's 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 useful water's scarcity and thus draws attention to this important information in your speech.



Planetary water supply diagram, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Chinese lettering amplified diagram, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Another way to emphasize a specific interesting aspect of your speech is to visually zoom in. In the Chinese Lettering Amplified image, we see a visual aid of various parts of Chinese characters. On the left side of the visual aid, see how the characters all fit together, with an emphasized version of a single character on the right.

To Aid Retention and Recall

Presentation aids also function to help the audience remembering and retain your speech. A 1996 US Department of Labor article summarizes research on how people learn and remember. The authors found that "83 percent of human learning occurs visually, and the remaining 17 percent through the other senses: 11 percent through hearing, 3.5 percent through smell, 1 percent through taste, and 1.5 percent through touch" (United States Department of Labor, 1996). Since most people learn visually, this learning component 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. For example, in a memory study, learners were asked to recall information after three days. The researchers found that the learners 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 visual and oral components can contribute to long-term memory.

For this reason, showing a visual image aids your listeners' memory. When you deliver effective graphic images and when your audience understand them clearly, they are likely to remember your message long after your speech is over. Moreover, people often 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 your speech's organizational sequence, you help your listeners to observe, follow, and remember your information.

An added plus to 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, display a slide sequence 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 that you are going to deliver.

To Add Variety and Interest

Additionally, well-chosen presentation aids add variety and interest to your speech. For example, you may have prepared a very good speech to inform local gardeners about several new rose varieties suitable for growing in their area. Although your listeners will undoubtedly understand and remember your message well without any presentation aids, your speech will have a greater impact if you accompany your remarks with a picture of each rose. But, imagine how your audience will be even more enthralled if you display an actual flower of each variety in a bud vase!

To Enhance a Speaker's Credibility

Presentation aids can also enhance your credibility as a speaker and will contribute to your professional image. However, your presentation aids must contain important information, be clear, clean, uncluttered, organized, and large enough for the audience to see and interpret correctly. Also, you must give proper credit to your presentation aid's source. Using a statistical chart or a map without proper credit will detract from your credibility, just as would not citing a quotation credit in your speech.

But, keep in mind that presentation aids alone will not be enough to create a professional image, nor will impressive presentation aids rescue a poor speech. And, even if you give a good speech, you will appear unprofessional if your presentation aids are poorly executed. Misspellings and shoddy designs can damage your credibility as a speaker.

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.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=41#h5p-35

What types of media can I use as presentation aids?

Your speech venue will dictate how you use presentation aids. For example, 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 large-screen text and images.

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. For instance, do not combine realistic renderings with cartoons unless there is a clear and

compelling reason to do so. Being selective will produce presentation aids that look like a coherent set, thereby enhancing your professionalism.

Create your presentation aids with careful choices and effective designs. They should never look or be hastily made, dirty, battered, or disorganized. They do not have to be fancy, but they do need to look professional.

In this section, let's discuss the major presentation media types to use, such as computer-based media, audiovisual media, and low-tech media.

Computer-Based Media

In most business, industry, and other professional careers 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 using PowerPoint or other similar software to create and display presentation aids.

If your public speaking course meets in a smart classroom, you've probably had the opportunity to see the computer system in action. Many such systems today are nimble and 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 news organizations' notice.

Presentation Software

Computer presentations were first introduced to the world back in the 1970s, but these software packages were expensive and needed highly trained technicians to operate the programs. Today, there are many **presentation software** programs that are free or relatively inexpensive and that non-specialists can learn quickly. See the Presentation Software Packages list for examples.

Table 10.1 Presentation Software Packages

Name	Price
Google Presentations	Free
Keynote	$
OpenOffice Impress	Free
PowerPoint	$
PrezentIt	Free
Prezi	Free/$
ThinkFree Show	Free
Zoho Show	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 seriously threatened the presentation data's accuracy. 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 such presentation aid's shortcomings in NASA meetings. While recent versions of PowerPoint and similar programs allow much more creative slide-design freedom, this freedom comes with a responsibility—the user must take responsibility for using the technology to support the speech and not get carried away with the software's many special effects.

Good Design Principles

In essence, observe 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 one text font on your visuals so that they look like a unified set. In terms of scale or proportion, 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, it is imperative to practice in advance with the equipment you intend to use. Your slide display's rhythm should be reasonably consistent—don't display a dozen different slides in the first minute of a five-minute presentation and then display only one slide per minute for the speech's duration.

Interactive Clickers

In addition to presentation software such as PowerPoint, interactive computer-based presentation aids are also available. 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. Many various course instructors use clickers in their classrooms.

Using computer-based speech aids brings up a few logistical considerations. In some venues, you may need to stand behind a high-tech console to operate the computer. Be aware that this will physically isolate you from the audience with whom you are trying to establish a relationship. When you stand behind presentation equipment, you may feel really comfortable, but you end up limiting your nonverbal interaction with your audience. On speech day, 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, were always used without a computer.

Audio presentation aids *are useful for illustrating musical themes.* For instance, if you're speaking about how nature sounds inspired Polish composer Frederick Chopin, convey that meaning through playing an example. If you have a smart classroom, use it to play an MP3. Alternatively, you may need to bring your music player. In that case, be sure the room's speakers work. The people in the back of the room must be able to hear it, and the speakers must not sound distorted when you turn up the volume.

Video presentation aids that *clarify, explain, amplify, emphasize, or illustrate a speech's key concept* is appropriate, as long as you do not rely on the video to do your presentation for you. There are several things you must do. First, identify a specific video section that delivers meaning. Second, cue the video so that you can

just pop it into the player, and it will begin at the right place. Third, tell your audience where the footage comes from, for instance, you are showing them an example from the 1985 BBC documentary *In Search of the Trojan War*. Fourth, tell your audience why you're showing the footage, such as, "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 your speech time.

Low-Tech Media

Low-tech media such as chalk and dry erase boards, flipcharts, poster and foam boards, and handouts are useful in speaking situations where computer technology is not available, where computer-based presentation aids are unnecessary or counterproductive, and where low-tech presentation aids accompany computer-based media. One of the big advantages to using low-tech media is that they are very predictable and there is little that can interfere with using them. Additionally, they are generally inexpensive to produce. However, unlike digital media, low-tech presentation aids are prone to physical damage such as smudges, scratches, dents, and rips and can be difficult to keep professional looking if you have to carry them through a rainstorm or blizzard. So, take steps to protect them as you transport them to the speech location.

Let's examine some low-tech media to 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 use **chalk and dry-erase boards** effectively. Typically, these speakers *use the chalk or dry-erase board for a speech's interactive components*. For example, you're giving a speech to executives and have a PowerPoint prepared, but at various points in your speech you want to visually show information that you are receiving from your audience. Chalk or dry-erase boards are very useful for this. If you ever use one, follow these three simple rules: 1) Write large enough so that everyone in the room can see. 2) Print legibly. 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 use properly.

Flipchart

Flipcharts are useful when you're trying to *convey change over a number of steps*, such as to map dramatic population shifts. For example, prepare highly visible identical maps on three pages. Only change the data from page to page. Neatly title each page and actively point out each page's changed information. For another example, use a flipchart to show the malaria-bearing mosquito's growth and development stages. Again, label each page, making an effort to give the pages a consistent look.

Organize your flipchart 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 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 flipcharts need to be propped up on an easel. If you arrive for your speech to find that the classroom's easel has disappeared, you will need to rig up another system that allows you to flip the pages.

Poster Board or Foam Board

Foam board is a thin sheet of Styrofoam with heavy paper bonded to both surfaces. It is a *lightweight, inexpensive foundation for information and will stand on its own* when placed on 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 text paragraphs to foam or poster board, for a professional look, make sure the poster board's color matches the paste-on paper's color. Choose a color that allows for easy visual contrast so that 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 poster color for a Protestant reformation speech.

Avoid producing a poster presentation aid that looks like you simply cut out magazine pictures and pasted them on. Additionally, slapping some text and images on a board looks unprofessional and will not be viewed as credible or effective. Instead, when creating a poster, 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.

Handouts

Handouts are appropriate for delivering *information that audience members can take with them.* But, handouts require much management if they are to contribute to your credibility as a speaker.

First, make sure to bring enough handout copies for each audience member. Having to share with one's neighbor does not contribute to a professional image. Under no circumstances should you ever provide a single 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 can hold 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 cases, it might not even reach everybody by your speech's end. 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 interested audience members 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 your presentation's pace.

Like other presentation aids, handouts should include only information necessary to support your points, and that information should be organized in such a way that listeners understand it. For example, in a speech about how new healthcare legislation will affect small business owners in your state, a good handout might

summarize key legislation effects and include state agencies' names and web addresses where audience members can request more detailed information.

If your handout is designed for your audience to follow along, tell them so. State that you will be referring to specific information during the speech. Then, as you present your speech, ask your audience to look, for example, at the second line in the first information cluster. 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.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=41#h5p-36

What are the guidelines for preparing presentation aids?

Must Be Easily Seen and Heard

The first presentation aids rule is that every audience member must be able to see and hear them. 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 must be large enough to read. Audio must be loud enough to hear. If you are passing out food samples 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 colored picture's glossy paper will glare in the light so that upfront listeners won't be able to see it either.

Create text-based visuals, charts, and graphs with strong, clean lines and blocks of color. Weak graph or illustration lines do not get stronger when magnified. Either strengthen those lines by hand or choose another stronger-lined graphic element. On a poster or a slide, a graphic element should take up about one third of the area. This leaves room for a small text grouping, rendered in a large, simple font. The textual elements should be located closest to the graphic element that they represent.

Carefully limit the amount of text on a presentation aid. If much text is absolutely necessary, 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 text lines, not the type size.

We recommend two things: First, use a simple, easy-to-read text/font/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 text clusters you are able to read from that distance.

Must Be Transported Easily

You should be able to carry your presentation aids into the room by yourself and be skilled in using the equipment needed to present them. Your presentation aids should not distract you from delivering your speech.

Must Be Aesthetically Pleasing

For our purposes, aesthetics refers to a presentation aid's beauty or good taste. Earlier, we mentioned universal good design principles: unity, emphasis or focal point, scale and proportion, balance, and rhythm. Because peoples' taste differs widely, not everyone will agree on what is aesthetically pleasing, and you may not think you have 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 visual design decisions you make should be dictated by your speech's content. 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 are perceived as carefully planned and executed speech elements.

Must Use Big, Simple, Bold Text

Use text only when you must. For example, if you're presenting a First Amendment analysis, it is permissible to display the First Amendment text, but not your entire analysis. The text must be big, simple, and bold. It needs white space around it to separate it from another graphic element or text clusters that might be on the same presentation aid. When you display text, read it out loud before you talk about it. That way, your listeners won't be reading it while trying to listen to you. However, under no circumstances should you merely read what's on your text aids and consider that a speech.

Must Cite Your Sources

If you create your own graphic images, control their size and the visible line strength. However, if for instance, you want to display a part of the Dead Sea Scrolls, find a way to enlarge the photograph. Then, to show integrity, cite your source and include a caption, and 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.

What are the guidelines for using computer software programs?

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 words 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 use, follow some general guidelines.

Don't Create Illegible Slides

One of the biggest mistakes novice software users 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 your presentation room.

Don't Write Everything Out

Don't 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 against putting 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 read their slides 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 are ever 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 shouldn't need to hide behind a computer monitor to see what's being projected.

Don't Go Overboard with Slide Color

Color is very important and can definitely make a strong impact on an audience. However, don't go overboard or use unappealing color combinations. For example, never use a light font color, such as yellow, on a solid white background because it's impossible to read.

Also, realize that while colors may be rich and vibrant on your computer screen, a different monitor may distort them. While we favor experimenting with various color schemes, always check your presentation out on multiple computers to see if the slide color is distorted in a way that makes it hard to read.

Don't Overuse Slide Animation & Movement

Everyone who has experimented with PowerPoint knows that using animation to transition between slides can be fun, but know that too much movement is actually distracting. While all presentation software packages offer very cool slide movements and other bells and whistles, they do not always enhance your presentation. If you're going to use slide transitions or word animation, stick to only three or four different transition types in your whole presentation. Furthermore, do not use more than one movement type on a given slide. And be consistent: if you create text movement on the screen's right side in a bulleted list, make sure that all bulleted-list items come from the screen's right side.

Don't Fail to 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 his or her 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.

Don't Forget to Have a Backup Plan

Lastly, always have a backup plan. Unfortunately, things go wrong. One aspect of being 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 your predicaments; it is your responsibility. If you take this responsibility seriously and check your presentation room 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!—you will need time to think through how to adapt your speech so that it will still be effective.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=41#h5p-37

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Chapter 11: Visual Aid Types

What are the advantages and disadvantages of different types of presentation aids?

As we saw in the organic farming conference's orientation presentation, using presentation aids can be risky. However, with forethought and adequate practice, you'll learn to choose presentation aids that enhance your message and boost your professional appearance. One principle to keep in mind is to use only as many presentation aids necessary to present your message. 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 technology works on your speech day, 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 is gone? Be prepared to adapt to an uncomfortable and scary situation. As the speaker, you are responsible for arranging the things you need to make your presentation aids work as intended. Some tips: bring a roll of duct tape to display your poster even if the easel is gone. Find an extra chair if your table has disappeared. Prepare an alternative plan in case a computer glitch prevents you from using your computer-based presentation aids. The more sophisticated the equipment is, the more you should be prepared with an alternative, even in a smart classroom.

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

Charts are commonly defined as *graphical representations of data*, often numerical, or *a sketch representing an ordered process*. Whether you create your charts or find charts that already exist, it is important for them to match exactly your speech's specific purpose. For example, the Acupuncture Charts show two charts related to acupuncture. Although both charts are good, they are not equal. One chart is useful in a speech about acupuncture's history and development, while the other chart is more useful for showing meridian locations, energy flow lines, and acupuncture points.

Acupuncture Chart, by an unknown author, Public Domain

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.

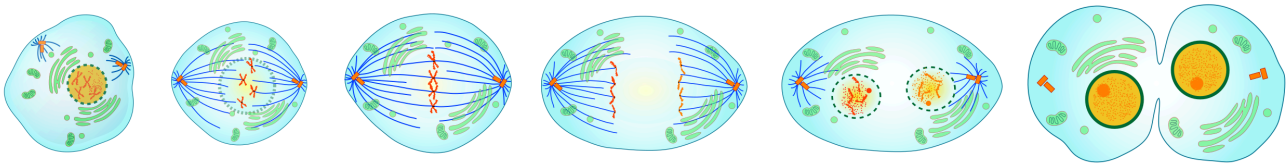
Statistical Charts

Figure 10.6

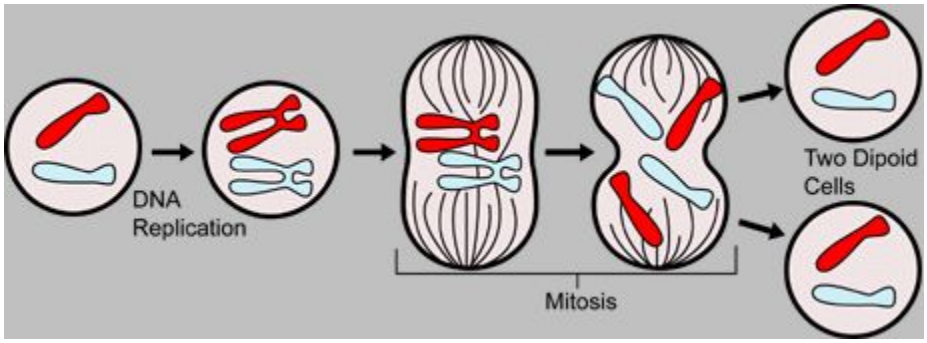
	Public Speaking Anxiety		Distress	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Word-repetition (n=21)	40.24	35.48	65.38	56.23
	(8.27)	(10.46)	(19.03)	(20.24)
Positive Self-Affirmation (n=21)	38.14	37.81	60.62	58.05
	(9.33)	(9.75)	(18.23)	(18.23)
Control (n=21)	37.48	37.57	56.62	54.52
	(9.23)	(11.07)	(17.41)	(19.40)

Statistical charts *provide limited, specific information that requires interpreting* and *must be kept as simple as possible* for most audiences. For example, the Mean and Standard Deviation Table is a statistical chart from a study comparing the effects of cognitive defusion and positive affirmation interventions on reducing public speaking anxiety. Unless you are familiar with statistics, this chart may be very confusing. When visually displaying information from a quantitative study, 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 don't use this type of information.

Sequence-of-Steps Charts



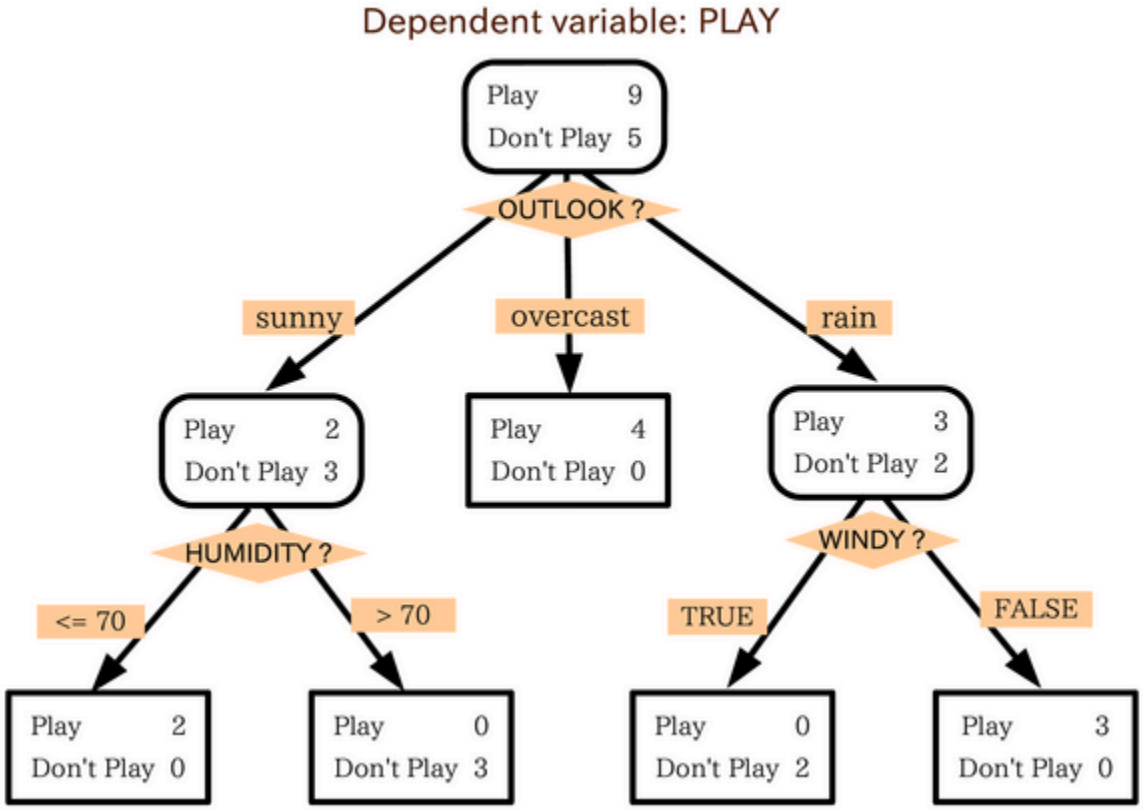
Mitosis cells sequence, by Lady of Hats, licensed under CC0



Major events in mitosis, by NCBI, licensed under CC0

Sequence-of-steps charts are also useful when you *explain a process that involves several steps*. For example, the two Major Events in Mitosis images both depict the cell division process called mitosis, using a sequence-of-steps chart, but they each deliver different information. The first chart lacks labels to indicate the different cell division phases. Although the first chart may have more color and look more polished, the missing information will confuse an audience. In the second chart, each phase is labeled with a brief explanation of what is happening, which will help an audience understand the process.

Decision Trees



Decision tree model, by T-kita, licensed under CC0

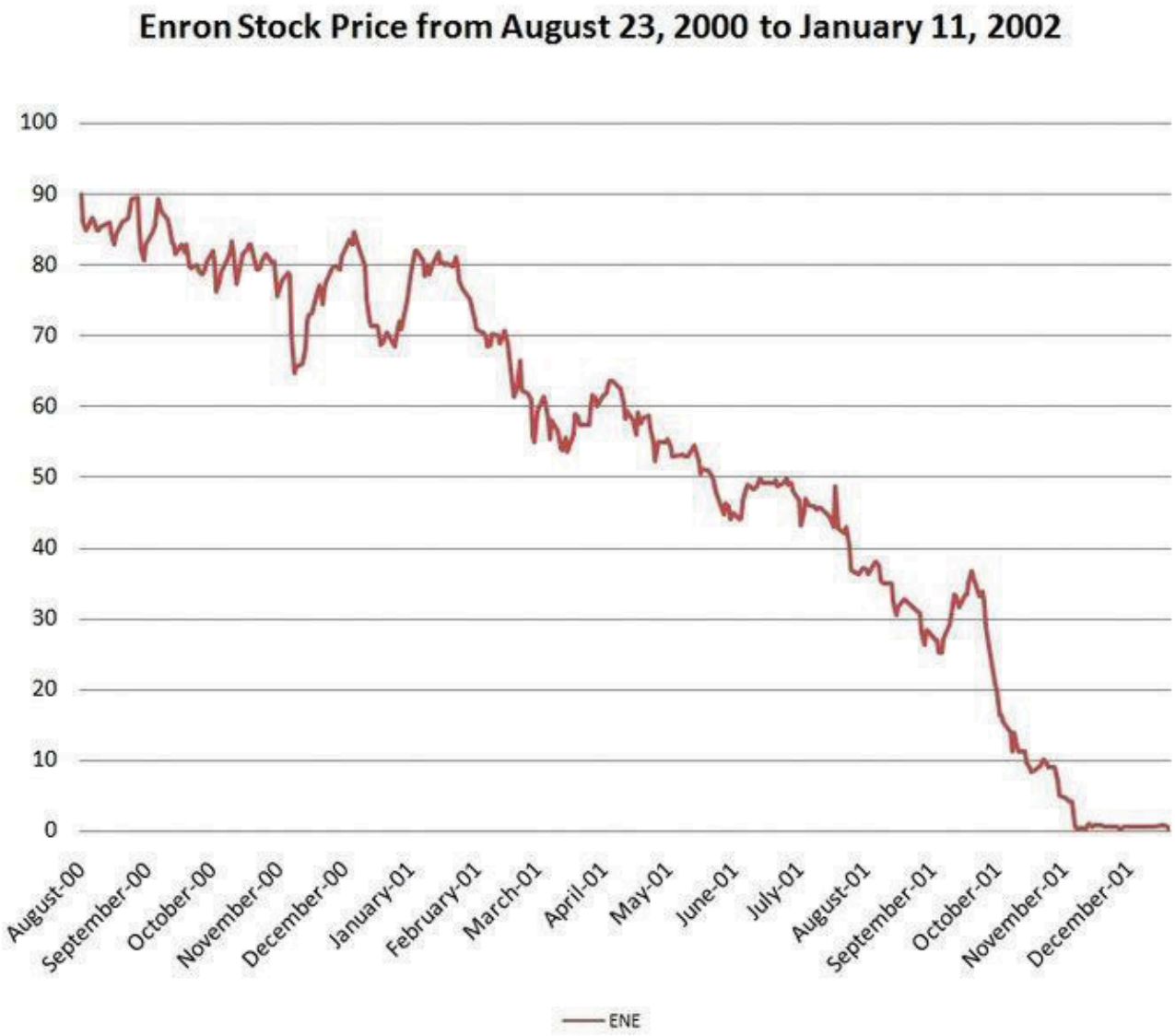
Decision trees are useful for *showing the relationships between ideas*. The example in the image To Play or Not to Play shows how a decision tree could be used to determine the appropriate baseball-playing weather. As with the other chart types, be sure that the chart's information is relevant to your speech's purpose and that each question and decision is clearly labeled.

Graphs

Graphs, strictly speaking, are considered a chart type, but are so widely used that we will discuss them separately. A **graph** *represents quantitative data's pictorial relationships using dots, lines, bars, pie slices,* and the like. Graphs show the variation in one variable compared with that of one or more other variables. Where a statistical chart may report the mean ages of individuals entering college, a graph will show how the mean age changes over time. A statistical chart may report how many computers are sold in the United States, while a graph will show the breakdown of those computers by operating systems such as Windows, Macintosh, and Linux. Public speakers can show graphs using different formats, some of which are specialized for various professional fields. Very complex graphs often contain too much information that is not related to the purpose of a student's speech. If the graph is cluttered, it becomes difficult to comprehend.

In this section, let's analyze common graphs that speakers use: line graphs, bar graphs, and pie graphs.

Line Graph



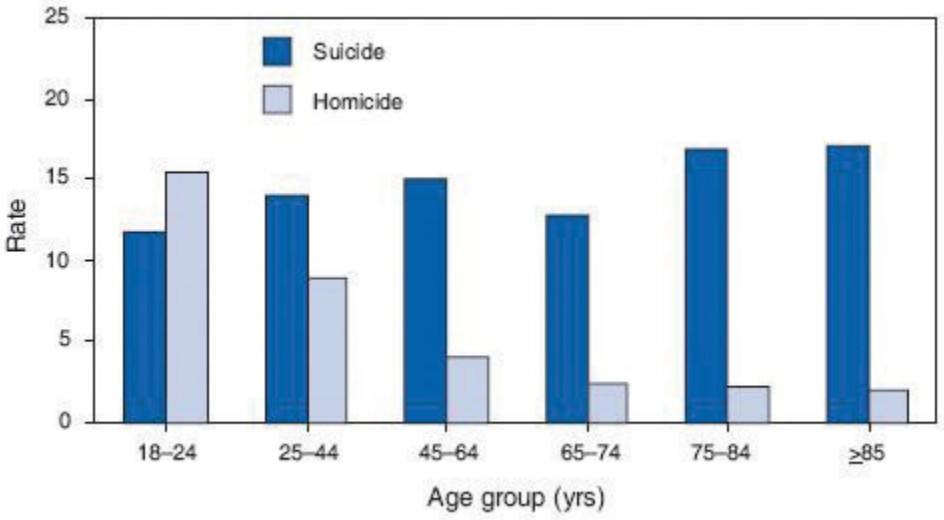
Enron stock price, by Nehrams2020, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Line graphs are designed to *show trends over time*. In the Enron's Stock Price image, we see a line graph depicting Enron's stock price falling from August 2000 to January 2002. Notice that although it has some steep rises, the line has an overall downward trend clearly depicting Enron's plummeting stock price. Showing such a line graph helps the audience see the relationships between the numbers, and audiences can understand the information by seeing the graph much more easily than they could if the speaker just read the numbers aloud.

Bar Graph

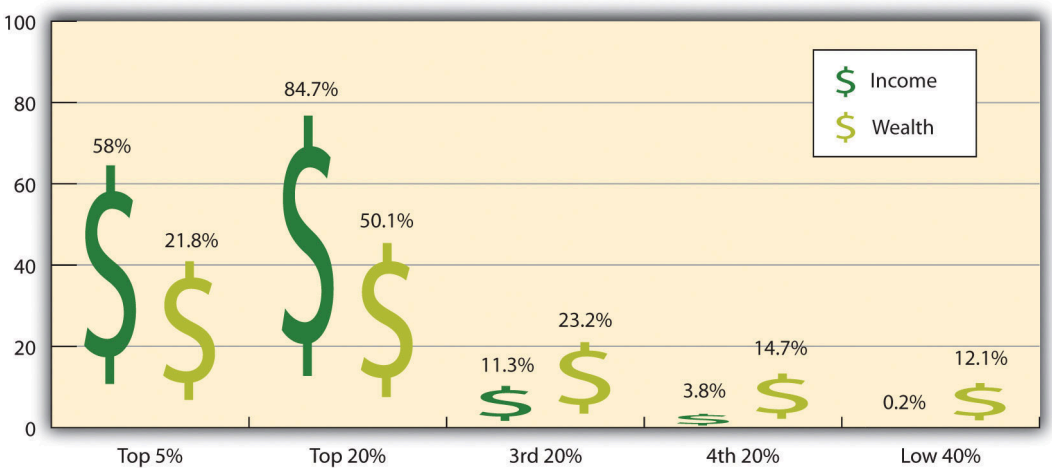
Bar graphs are used to *show differences between quantities*. They can be used for population demographics, fuel costs, math ability in different grades, and many other data.

The graph in the image Natural Death vs. Homicide is well designed. It is relatively simple and carefully labeled, making it easy for you to guide your audience through the quantities of each death type. The bar graph is designed to show the difference between natural deaths and homicides across various age groups. When you look at the data, the first grouping clearly shows that eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds are more likely to die because of a homicide than any other age group.



Homicide suicide USA, by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, licensed under CC0

The image called Distribution of Income and Wealth in the United States is a complicated bar graph depicting the disparity between the-haves- and the-have-nots within the United States. The graph's left side shows that the top 20 percent of people within the United States account for 84.7 percent of all of the wealth and 50.1 percent of all of the income. On the other hand, those in the bottom 40 percent account for only 0.2 percent of the wealth and 12.1 percent of the actual income.

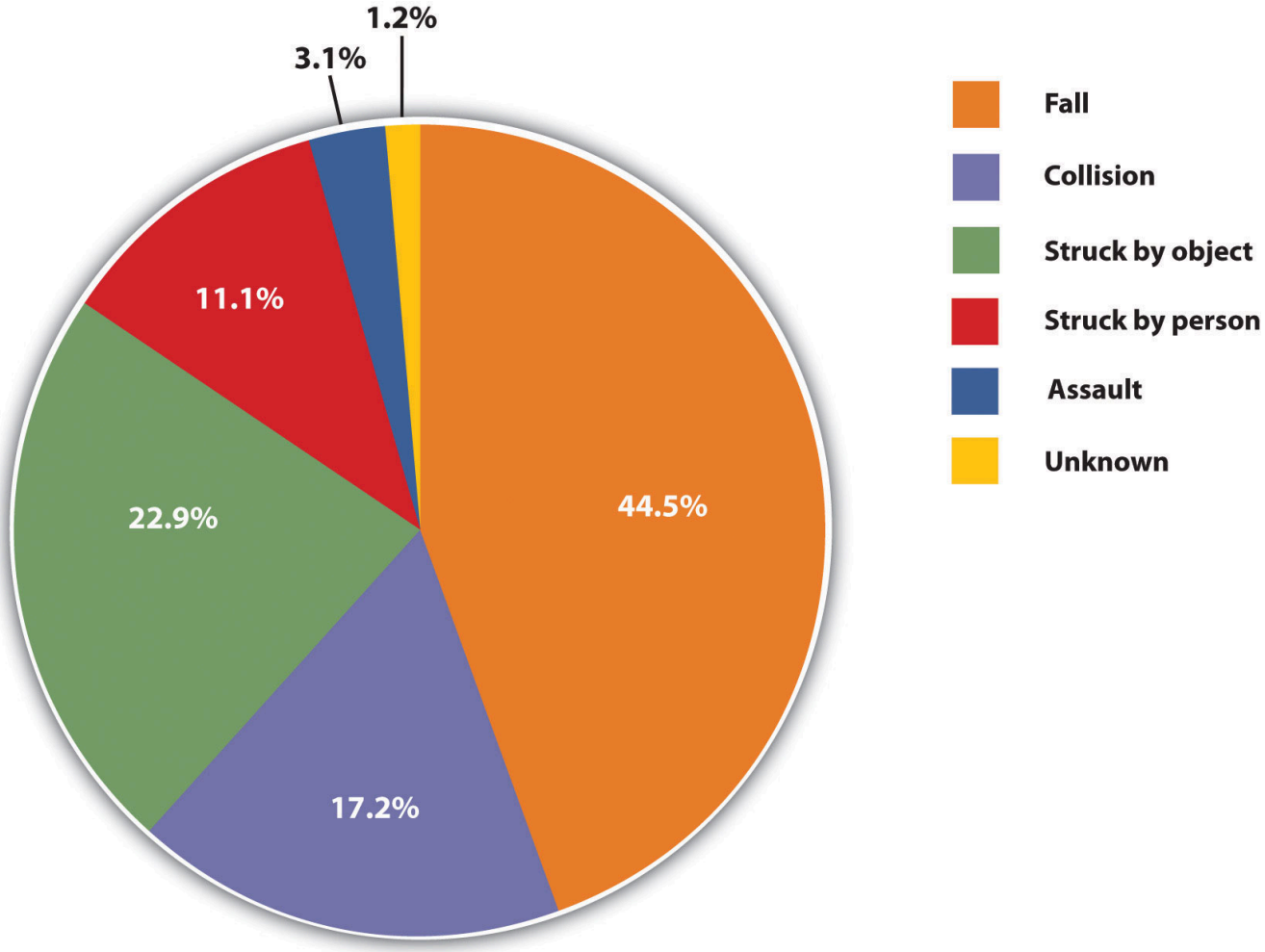


Distribution of Income and Wealth in the United States, by Wolff, E. N., licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

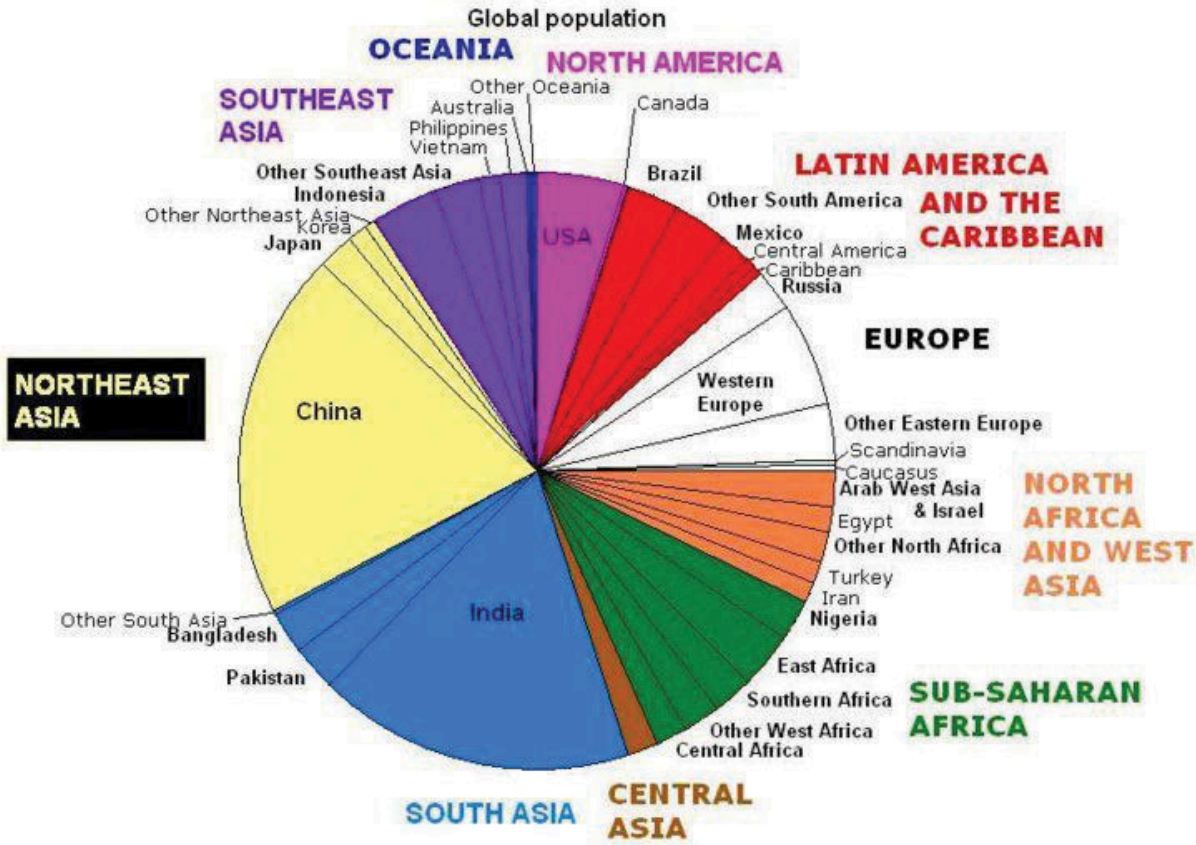
While the graph is very well designed, it presents much information. In a written publication, readers will have time to sit and analyze the graph, but in a speaking situation, audience members must understand the graph information very quickly. For that reason, the Distribution of Income and Wealth in the US graph is probably not as effective for speeches as the Natural Death vs. Homicide graph.

Pie Graph

Pie graphs should be *simplified as much as possible without eliminating important information*. As with other graphs, the sections of the pie need to be plotted proportionally. In the pie graph shown in Figure 10.12 "Causes of Concussions in Children", we see a clear and proportional chart that has been color-coded. Color-coding is useful when it's difficult to fit the explanations in the actual sections of the graph; in that case, you need to include a legend, or key, to indicate what the colors in the graph mean. In this graph, audience members can see very quickly that falls are the primary reason children receive concussions.



Causes of concussions in children, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



World population pie chart, by Brutannica, licensed under CC0

The pie graph World Populations is jumbled, illegible, confusing, and overwhelming in every way. The color-coding doesn't help. Overall, this graph simply contains too much information and is more likely to confuse an audience than help them understand something.

Representations

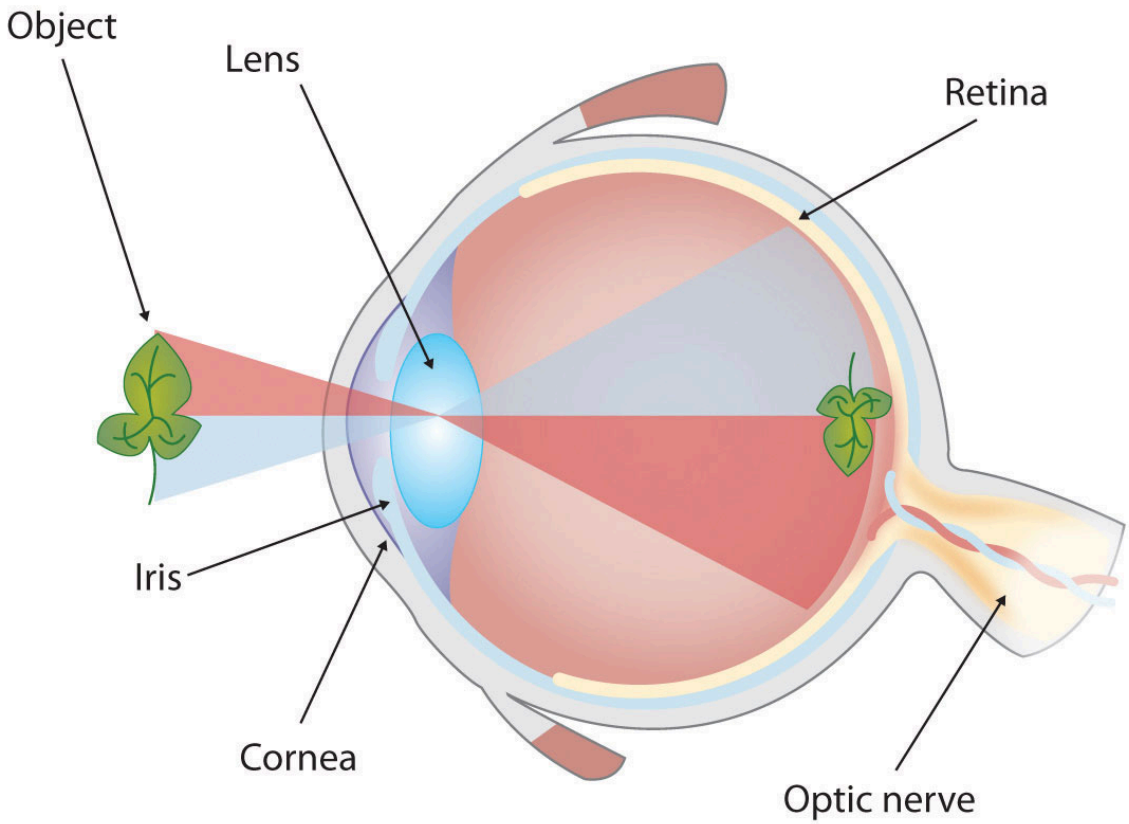
Representations are presentation aids designed to *represent real processes or objects.* Often, speakers want to visually demonstrate something that they cannot physically bring with them to their speech. For example, if you're giving a speech on the human brain, and you just don't have access to a cadaver's brain, use a picture of a brain or an image that *represents* the human brain instead.

In this section let's explore four common representations: diagrams, maps, photographs, and video or recordings.

Diagrams

Diagrams are drawings or sketches that *outline and explain an object's parts, a process, or phenomenon* that

cannot be readily seen. Like graphs, diagrams are considered a chart type, as in organization charts and process flow charts.



The human eye, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

When you use a diagram, explain each part of the object, process, or phenomenon, and pay special attention to elements that are complicated or prone to misunderstanding. In The Human Eye diagram, you might wish to highlight that the light stimulus is reversed when it is processed through the brain or that the optic nerve is not a single stalk as many people think.

Maps

Maps are extremely useful to *emphasize clear and limited information*. There are numerous map types, including population, weather, ocean current, political, and economic maps, so find the right kind for your speech's purpose. Choose a map that emphasizes the information you need to deliver.

The map called African Map with Nigerian Emphasis is simple, showing clearly Nigeria's geographic location. This can be extremely valuable for audience members who cannot name or locate countries on the African continent.

African Map with Nigerian Emphasis, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Rhode Island Map, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

The Rhode Island Map emphasizes the complicated configuration of islands and waterways that characterize this state's geography. Although the map does not list the islands' names, it is helpful in orienting the audience to the islands' directions and distances to other geographic features, such as the city of Providence and the Atlantic Ocean.

Photographs and Drawings

Wigwams, by iheartpandas, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Tall ship rigging in Amsterdam close, by Nojhan, licensed under CC0

Photographs or drawings are sometimes the best way to *show unfamiliar but important details.* For example, the Wigwam picture shows a North East Native American living dwelling in which you can see the curved birchbark exterior that makes this dwelling so ideal for various weather conditions. Likewise, the tall ship in the Ship's Rigging image emphasizes the sheer amount and complexity of a ship's rigging.

Video and Audio Recordings

Video and audio recordings are very useful to *enhance speeches by demonstrating, explaining, or showing important* aspects of your presentation, whether it is a well-chosen short YouTube or Vimeo video, a segment from a song, or a piece of a podcast.

For example, imagine that you're giving a speech on how Lap-Band® surgeries help people lose weight. In one of your speech sections, show the following forty-three-second video to demonstrate the surgical part of how it works: Lap Band Procedure Animation. Also, you could offer a real patient recording explaining why he or she decided to get Lap-Band surgery.

There is one major caveat to using audio and video clips during a speech: do not forget that they are only 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 speech length. If you

are giving a five-minute speech, then any audio or video clip you use should be under thirty seconds. 2) Practice with the audio or video equipment prior to speaking. If you are unfamiliar with the equipment, you'll look foolish figuring out how it works, distract the audience from your speech, and negatively impact your credibility. 3) Don't fail to cue the clip to the appropriate place prior to beginning your speech. We cannot tell you how often we've seen students spend valuable speech-time trying to find a YouTube or DVD clip. Make sure your clip is ready to go before you start speaking.

Objects or Models

Objects and models are other presentation aids that help your audience understand your message. **Objects** refer to *anything you can hold up and talk about* during your speech. For example, if you're talking about the importance of not using plastic water bottles, hold up a plastic water bottle and a stainless-steel water bottle as examples. If you're talking about musical percussion instruments and you own and can play several different types, bring some to show your audience what they look like and how they sound.

Models, on the other hand, are *re-creations of physical objects* that you otherwise cannot provide during a speech. For example, if you're speech is on heart murmurs, show how heart murmurs work by holding up a human heart model.

Animals

Animal topic speeches are fun, and bringing *an animal adds a very engaging dimension* as your presentation aid. However, while this is tempting, it carries some serious risks to consider.

The first risk is that animal behavior is unpredictable. You may think this won't be a problem if your presentation animal is small enough to be kept confined throughout your speech—for example, a goldfish in a bowl, or lizard in a jug, or bird in a cage. However, even caged animals can distract your audience if they run about, chirp, or exhibit other agitated behavior. Also, chances are great that an animal will react stressfully to the 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. For example, many people have fears and aversions to animals like snakes, spiders, and mice; and some have animal allergies. 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 animal representation.

The Speaker as a Presentation Aid – Appropriate Attire

PowerToFly™

GUIDE

GENDER NEUTRAL DRESS CODE

FIRST...

Spell out specific dress code rules by article of clothing, not by gender, use non-gendered pronouns, and make sure that any grooming guidelines could apply to anyone.

Don't place burdens on anyone based on their gender, and try to empower employees to manage their own appearance in accordance with professional expectations.

Guide gender neutral dress code, by Katherine Plumhoff, licensed under Power to Fly License

Accessible Version: Guide Gender Neutral Dress Code

The speaker—*you—are your best presentation aid*, and even if you don't mean to be, you are always the audience's visual aid. Some of this section has been covered in previous chapters, but the information is worth revisiting. Sometimes speakers are purposefully visual. For example, if your speech is about ballroom dancing or ballet, you use your body to demonstrate the basic moves in the cha-cha or the five basic ballet positions.

Otherwise, you, the speaker, are the visual aid without realizing it. So, be prepared! This means that you *must dress appropriately for your speech*. As difficult as it is for some people to be the center of attention, your speaker-rating will be higher if your other visual aids do not distract from you, and how you dress plays into your speaker ethos. Think about wearing clothing, shoes, and accessories that are purposefully chosen for your speech and that do not distract the audience. Often, it is suggested to wear office professional attire.

Office professional attire guidelines are on a continuum depending on where and who your audience is. It is not either/or. Let's look at the fabric continuum for example: Soft, semi-soft, semi-stiff, and stiff fabric. Soft fabrics are less professional—a sweater or t-shirt is soft fabric. As the fabric gets stiffer, it moves along the continuum toward more professional. Suits, for example, are very stiff material, thus more professional. It is not necessary for a speaker to wear a suit for every speaking occasion, but as the speaker—the visual aid—make sure you dress appropriately for the occasion, the audience, and the speech topic.

For example, if you work for a blood drive service, and you are going to speak at a local church to encourage the audience to give blood. What would you wear? Think about your audience, the topic, and the occasion. It is probably a good idea to wear a shirt affiliated with the blood-collecting company, and depending on the church and how formal or informal the audience is, wear nice pants with a tie, or not. If the church is informal, wear your company shirt, a nice pair of jeans, and a nice pair of shoes. The general rule for dressing appropriately for any speaking situation is that your attire is a little nicer than the audience's. This gives you—the speaker, a sense of authority and ethos when you are dressed appropriately, and it shows that you really thought about how your outfit, shoes, and accessories match your speech.

Other People as Presentation Aids

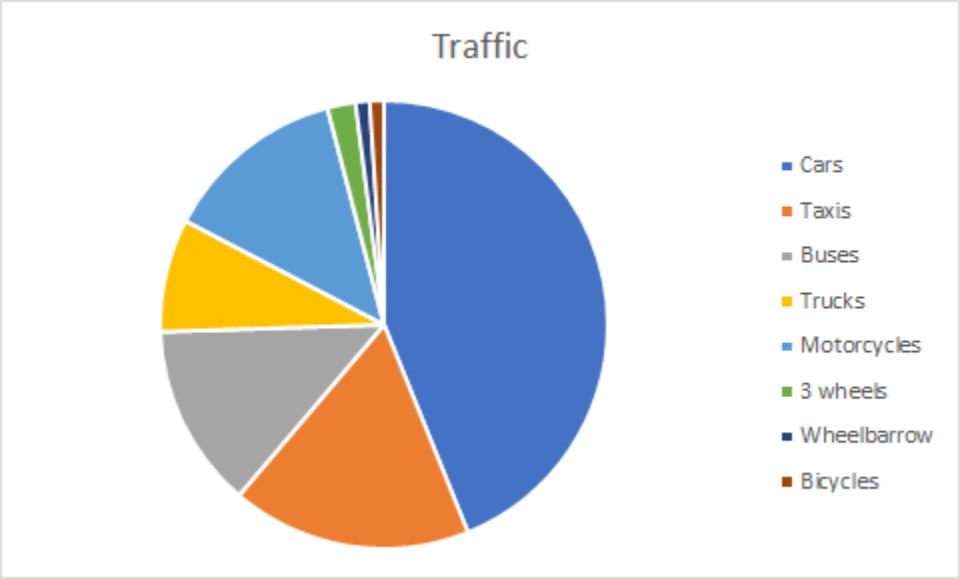
Other people as presentation aids *are effective for demonstrations* especially when it can be cumbersome and distracting for the speaker to use her or his own body to illustrate a point. In such cases, ask someone else to serve as your presentation aid.

Ask a person or persons ahead of time to be your presentation aid—do not assume that an audience member will volunteer on the spot. For example, if you plan to demonstrate how to immobilize a broken bone, an effective volunteer must know ahead of time that you will touch him or her as much as necessary to splint their foot. Also, make certain that they will arrive dressed presentably and that their appearance or behavior will not draw attention away from your message.

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 the task's dimension.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=920#h5p-38

How do I use presentation software?



Traffic pie chart, by Cherise King, licensed under CC0

Pie Charts like the one pictured in the Presentation Software Image are great to include in your visual aid, and presentation software helps to easily show images like this to the audience. The most popular presentation software programs are PowerPoint and Prezi.

Watch comedian Don McMillan share his PowerPoint perspective, though what he says applies to all presentation software. Look at the questions below, and notice various elements to avoid and elements to pay attention to when making a presentation software visual aid.

- What are some of the problems with presentation software and PowerPoints (PPTs) that McMillan points out sarcastically?
- Have you created any PPTs that look like the examples he offers?
- What did you learn from this video?
- What did you like about this video in relation to PPTs?
- What do you notice about the comedian's use of color?
- If there are things you think you will change now about your visual aid, PPT, Prezi, etc., what are these things?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=920#oembed-1

Life after death by PowerPoint (Corporate Comedy Video), by Don McMillan, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbSPPFYxx3o

Presentation Software Guidelines

1. Do not overwhelm listeners with complicated slides.
2. Do not read the slides to your audience.
3. You should narrate by giving your audience the context for your slides.
4. Make sure the images, graphics, words, etc., are large enough to read.
5. Do not block the audience's view of the slides.
6. Do not show a slide when you are not talking about it. Consider placing a blank slide between content slides to help keep your audience's attention.
7. Do not present in the dark. Make sure the audience can see you, even in dim light. You are the focus, not your aid.
8. Anticipate problems, especially when using technology. Plan ahead.

Examples

Take a look these example PowerPoints. Read the text below them to know what to look for in the presentation. They have no audio; they are just examples of how to or how not to use text and images in presentation software.

Example 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlAlgFltjiY

Notice how there is a good use of just images and titles on these slides and not a lot of words. Notice that there are titles; each slide should have at least a one-word title. You do not want tons of words on your PPT, as this will encourage the audience and you, the speaker, to read from the PPT. That is not the reason for doing a PPT or using presentation software.

Example 2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_4W_sBc0jQ

Notice how these PPT slides are creative, but they are also far too distracting for the audience. If you use these kind of slides, the audience will be focused on the slides (visual aid) and not on what you are saying. You want the audience to pay attention and listen to you, and the slides are only an aid, a visual aid, not the whole presentation.

Example 3

https://youtu.be/EMmBX69kv0Q

Notice how these slides do not have many words, but they are just a little too simple. There is no graphic on the slide, there are only words, which is not the main job of a visual aid. The visual aid should be more than just words alone. You can speak the words, but you can't speak the images or graphics.

Example 4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYPOUfruDmM

Notice how these slides are just right! They are simple, but not too simple; not too many words; not distracting for the audience; have graphics that are interesting, but not too many graphics; can be easily seen by the audience; and have a good calming color scheme.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=920#h5p-39

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Chapter 12: Informative Speaking

Why is speaking to inform important?

Accuracy, Clarity, and Interest Are Key to Effective Speaking

A good informative speaker conveys accurate, clear, and interesting information to the audience and keeps them engaged in the topic. Achieving all three goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to speaker effectiveness. If information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be useless to the audience. But, there is no topic about which you can possibly give complete information, therefore, we strongly recommend you carefully narrow your topic and purpose.

Accuracy

To be accurate, make sure that your information is current. Even if you know much about your topic or wrote a good paper on the topic in a high school course, verify your own accuracy and completeness. Most people understand that technology changes rapidly, so update your information often. The same applies to topics that on the surface seem to require less updating. For example, the American Civil War occurred 150 years ago, but contemporary research still offers new and emerging theories about the war's causes and its long-term effects. So, even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, carefully check your information to confirm that it is accurate and current.

Clarity

For your listeners to benefit from your speech, convey your ideas in a fashion that your audience can understand. Your speech's clarity relies on logical organization and understandable word choices. Do not assume that something that's obvious to you will also be obvious to your audience. Formulate your work with the objective of being understood in all details, and rehearse your speech in front of peers who will tell you whether your speech's information makes sense.

Interest

In addition to being accurate and clear, be interesting. Your listeners will benefit the most if they can give sustained attention to the speech, and this is unlikely to happen if they are bored. This often means don't use some topics you know a lot about. Why? Suppose, for example, that you had a summer job as a veterinary assistant and learned a great deal about canine parasites. This topic might be very interesting to you, but how interesting will it be to others in your class? To make this topic interesting, find a way to connect it with the audience's interests and curiosities. For instance, perhaps there are certain canine parasites that also pose risks to humans—this might be an interesting connection.

Why We Speak to Inform

Informative speaking is a means to deliver knowledge. In informative speaking, we avoid expressing opinions. This doesn't mean you may not speak about controversial topics. However, if you do so, you must deliver a fair statement of each issue's side in a debate. If your speech is about standardized educational testing, you must honestly represent both proponents' and critics' views. Do not take sides, and do not slant your explanation

of the debate to influence your listeners' opinion. You are simply and clearly defining the debate. If you watch the evening television news on a major network, such as ABC, CBS, or NBC, you will see newscasters who undoubtedly have personal opinions, but they are trained to avoid expressing those opinions through loaded words, gestures, facial expressions, or vocal tone. Like those newscasters, you are educating your listeners simply by informing them. Let them make up their own minds. This is probably the most important reason for informative speaking.

How to Make Information Clear and Interesting for the Audience

To present a clear and interesting speech, use descriptions, causal analysis, or categories. With description, use words to create a picture in your audience's minds. Describe physical realities, social realities, emotional experiences, sequences, consequences, or contexts. For instance, describe the towns peoples' mindset during the Salem, Massachusetts witch trials. Also, use causal analysis, which focuses on the connections between causes and consequences. For example, in speaking about health care costs, explain how a serious illness can put even a well-insured family into bankruptcy. Use categories to group things together. For instance, say that there are three investment categories for the future: liquid savings, avoiding debt, and acquiring properties that will increase in value.

How to Adjust a Complex Topic for the Audience

If your speech is too complex or too simplistic, it will not hold your listeners' interest. How can you determine the right complexity level? Your audience analysis is one important way to do this. Do your listeners belong to a given age group, or are they more diverse? Did they all go to public schools in the United States, or are some international students? Are they all students majoring in communication studies, or is there a mixture of majors in your audience? The answers to these and other audience analysis questions will help you to gauge what they know and what they are curious about.

Never assume that just because your audience is made up of students, they all share your knowledge set. If you do, you might not make sense to everyone. If, for instance, you're an intercultural communication student discussing **multiple identities**, the psychology students in your audience will most likely reject your message. Similarly, the word viral has very different meanings depending on whether it is used with respect to human disease, popular response to a website, or population theory. In using the word viral, you absolutely must explain specifically what you mean. Do not hurry to explain a term that is easily misinterpreted. Make certain your listeners know what you mean before continuing your speech. Stephen Lucas explains, "You cannot assume they will know what you mean. Rather, you must be sure to explain everything so thoroughly that they cannot help but understand" (Lucas, 2004). Define terms to help listeners understand them the way you mean them to. Give explanations that are consistent with your definitions, and show how those ideas apply to your speech topic. In this way, you avoid many misunderstandings.

Similarly, be very careful about assuming there is a topic that everybody knows. Suppose you've decided to present an informative speech on how the early New England colonists survived. You may have learned in elementary school that their survival was attributable, in part, to Squanto assisting them. Many listeners will know which states are in New England, but if there are international students in the audience, they will not. Clarify either by pointing out the region on a map or by stating that it's the six states in the American northeast. Other knowledge gaps can still confound your speech's effectiveness. For instance, who or what is Squanto? How are the settlers assisted? Only a few listeners are likely to know that Squanto is a Native American Indian who spoke English and that this greatly surprised the settlers when they landed. Because Squanto spoke

English, he could advise settlers in survival strategies during that first harsh winter. If you neglect to provide that information, your speech will not be fully informative.

Another way to improve your delivery, is to practice your speech in front of a live audience of friends or classmates. Notice terms that confuse them and that you must define.

Avoid Unnecessary Jargon

If you decide to give an informative speech on a highly specialized topic, limit how much technical language or **jargon** you use. Loading a speech with specialized language has the potential to tax your listeners. It can be too difficult to translate your meanings, and if that happens, you will not effectively deliver information. Even if you define many technical terms, the audience may feel as if they are being bombarded with definitions instead of useful information. Don't treat your speech as a crash course in an entire topic. If you must, introduce one specialized term and carefully define and explain it to the audience. Define it in words, and then use a concrete and relevant example to clarify the meaning.

Some topics by their very nature are too technical for a short speech. For example, in a five-minute speech, you would be foolish to try to inform your audience about what caused the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear emergency that occurred in Japan. Present other technical topics in audience-friendly ways that minimize using technical terms. For instance, in a speech about Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that buried the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, you can use the term "pyroclastic flow" as long as you take the time to either show or tell what it means.

Create Concrete Images

As a college student, you have been significantly exposed to **abstract** terms and have become comfortable using and hearing abstract ideas. However, abstract terms lend themselves to many interpretations. For instance, in the abstract, the term responsibility can mean many things, such as duty, task, authority, or blame. Because of the potential for misunderstanding, use a concrete word instead. For example, rather than saying, "Helen Worth was responsible for the project," convey a clearer meaning by saying, "Helen Worth managed the project," or "Helen Kimes completed the project," or "Helen Worth was to blame for the failed project ."

To illustrate the differences between abstract and **concrete** language, let's look at a few word pairs:

Abstract	**Concrete**
transportation	Airplane
success	completion of project
discrimination	exclusion of women from _____.
profound	knowledgeable
knowledgeable	knowledgeable

By using an abstract term in a sentence and then comparing the concrete, notice the more precise concrete term's meaning. Precise terms are more clearly understood. In the last pair of terms, knowledgeable is listed as a concrete term, but it can also be considered an abstract term. Still, it's likely to be much clearer and more precise than profound.

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Limit Information

If you overload your audience with information, they will be unable to follow your narrative. When you developed your speech, you carefully narrowed your topic, limiting information to its most complete and coherent. If you carefully adhere to your own narrowing, you won't go off on tangents or confuse your audience. Use definitions, descriptions, explanations, and examples you need to make your meanings clear, but don't add tangential information merely because you find it interesting.

Link Current Knowledge to New Knowledge

Certain knowledge sets are common to many people in your classroom audience. For instance, most know what Wikipedia is. Many find it a useful and convenient information source about coursework-related topics. Because many Wikipedia entries are lengthy, greatly annotated, and followed by substantial authoritative source lists, many students use Wikipedia in writing papers to fulfill course requirements. This a current knowledge set that virtually every classroom listener is likely to know.

Because your listeners are already familiar with Wikipedia, you can link important new knowledge to their already-existing knowledge. Wikipedia is an open source, meaning that anyone can supplement, edit, correct, distort, or otherwise alter Wikipedia information. In addition to your listeners' knowledge that Wikipedia provides much good information, they must now know that it isn't authoritative. Some listeners may not enjoy hearing this message. So find a way to make it acceptable by showing what Wikipedia does well. For example, some Wikipedia entries contain many good references at the end. Most of which are likely to be authoritative, having been written by scholars. In searching for topic, information, a student can look up one or more of those references in full-text databases or in the library. In this way, Wikipedia can be helpful in steering a student toward the authoritative information they need. Explaining this to your audience will help them accept, rather than reject, the bad news about Wikipedia.

Make It Vividly Memorable

If you've already chosen a topic, found an interesting way to narrow it, developed presentation aids, and worked to maintain audience contact, your delivery is likely to be memorable. Now, turn to your content and find opportunities to make it appropriately vivid by using explanations, comparisons, examples, or language.

Let's say that you're preparing a speech on the United States' interning Japanese American people from the San Francisco Bay area during World War II. Your goal is to paint a memorable image in your listeners' minds. Do this through a dramatic before and after contrast. For example, say, "In 1941, the Bay area had a vibrant and productive Japanese American community: people went to work every day—they opened their shops, typed office reports, and taught classroom students, just as they had been doing for years. But on December 7, 1941,

everything changed. Within six months, Bay area residents of Japanese ancestry were gone, transported to internment camps located hundreds of miles from the Pacific coast."

This strategy rests on the audience's ability to visualize the two contrasting situations. You have presented two image sets that are familiar to most college students—images that they can easily visualize. Once the audience's imagination is visually engaged, they are more likely to remember the speech.

Providing memorable imagery does not stop after the introduction. While maintaining an even-handed approach that does not seek to persuade, provide the audience with information about the circumstances that triggered the internment policy, perhaps by describing the advice that was given to President Roosevelt by his top advisers. You might depict the conditions Japanese Americans faced during their internment by describing a typical day in camp. To conclude your speech on a memorable note, name a notable individual—an actor, writer, or politician—who is an internment survivor.

Such a strategy might feel unnatural to you. After all, this is not how you talk to your friends or participate in a classroom discussion. Remember, though, that public speaking is not the same as talking. It's prepared and formal. It demands more of you. In a conversation, it might not be important to be memorable; your goal might merely be to maintain a friendship. But in a speech, when you expect the audience to pay attention, you must make the speech memorable.

Make It Relevant and Useful

When thinking about your topic, it is always very important to keep your audience members center stage in your mind. For instance, if your speech is about air pollution, ask your audience to imagine feeling their eyes and lungs burning from smog. This is a strategy for making the topic more real to them, since it may happen to them often; and even if it hasn't, it easily could. If your speech is about Mark Twain, instead of simply saying that he was very famous during his lifetime, remind your audience that he was so prominent that their own great-grandparents likely knew of his work and had strong opinions about it. In doing so, you've connected your topic to their own forebears.

Personalize Your Content

Giving a human face to a topic helps the audience perceive it as interesting. If your topic is related to the Maasai rite of passage into manhood, the prevalence of drug addiction in a particular locale, the development of a professional filmmaker, or the treatment of a disease, putting a human face on it should not be difficult. Find a case study you can describe within the speech and refer to the human subject by name. This conveys to the audience that these processes happen to real people. Use a real case study, though—don't make one up. Using a fictional character without letting your audience know that the example is hypothetical is a betrayal of the listener's trust, and hence, is unethical.

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What are some informative speech topics?

For some speakers, deciding on a topic is one of informative speaking's most difficult parts. The following subsections discuss several topic categories to use for an informative presentation. Then, we discuss how to structure your speech to address potential audience difficulties in understanding your topic or information.

Objects

The term objects encompasses many topics that we don't ordinarily consider to be things. It's a category that includes people, institutions, places, substances, and inanimate things. The following are some of these topics:

- Mitochondria
- Dream catchers
- Sharks
- Hubble telescope
- Seattle's Space Needle
- Malta
- Silicon chip
- Spruce Goose
- Medieval armor
- DDT insecticide
- Soy inks
- NAACP

You must narrow your object topic because, like any topic, you can't say everything about it in a single speech. In most cases, there are choices about how to narrow the topic. Here are some specific purpose statements that reflect ways to narrow:

- To inform the audience about soy inks' role in reducing toxic pollution.
- To inform the audience about the banned insecticide DDT's current uses.
- To inform the audience about what we've learned from the Hubble telescope.
- To inform the audience about the NAACP's role in passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- To describe the gigantic Spruce Goose's significance—the wooden airplane that launched an airline.

These specific purposes reflect a narrow but interesting approach to each topic. They are precise, and show you how to maintain your focus on a narrow but deep knowledge set.

People

The people category applies both to specific individuals and also to roles. The following are some of these topics:

- Dalai Lamas
- Astronauts
- Tsar Nicholas II
- Modern midwives

- Mata Hari
- Catherine the Great
- Navajo code talkers
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Justice Thurgood Marshall
- Madame Curie
- Leopold Mozart
- Aristotle
- The Hemlock Society
- Sonia Sotomayor
- Jack the Ripper

There is much information about each example. To narrow the topic or to write a thesis statement, recognize that your speech is not a biography or time line of someone's life. If you deliver a comprehensive report of your subject's every important event and accomplishment, then nothing will seem any more important than anything else. To capture and hold your audience's interest, narrow your focus on a feature, event, achievement, or secret about your human topic.

Here are some purpose statements that reflect ways to narrow:

- To inform the audience about the first US training program for the moon-landing astronauts.
- To inform the audience about how a young Dalai Lama is identified.
- To inform the audience about why Gandhi was regarded as a mahatma, or "great heart."
- To inform the audience about modern midwives' extensive scientific qualifications.

Because with any of these topics there's simply too much to say, narrow your purpose statement, which will be a strong decision-making tool about what to include in your speech.

Events

An event can be something that occurred only once or that is repeated:

- Emmett Till's murder.
- The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.
- The Industrial Revolution.
- The smallpox vaccine's discovery.
- The Bikini Atoll atomic bomb tests.
- The Bay of Pigs.
- The Super Bowl.
- The Academy Awards.

Again, carefully narrow these topics to build a coherent speech. Otherwise, your information is too broad and your speech is shallow. Here are a few ways to narrow the purpose:

- To explain how Emmett Till's murder helped energize the civil rights movement.
- To describe how the Industrial Revolution affected ordinary people's lives.
- To inform the audience about the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race's purpose.

There are many ways to approach these and other topics, but again, you must emphasize the event's important dimension. Otherwise, you produce a time line in which the main point gets lost. In an event speech, you may use a **chronological order**, but if you do so, you can't include every detail. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race's purpose.

Central Idea: The annual Iditarod commemorates the heroism of Balto, the sled dog that led a dog team carrying medicine 1,150 miles to save Nome, Alaska from a diphtheria outbreak.

Main Points:

1. Diphtheria broke out in a remote Alaskan town.
2. Sled dogs were the only transportation for getting medicine.
3. The Iditarod Trail was long, rugged, and under siege of severe weather.
4. Balto the dog knew where he was going, even when the musher did not.
5. The annual race commemorates Balto's heroism in saving the lives of Nome's citizens.

In this example, you must explain the event. However, another way to approach the same event is to describe it. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To describe the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Central Idea: It's a long and dangerous race.

Main Points:

1. The 1,150-mile, ten- to seventeen-day race goes through wilderness with widely spaced checkpoints for rest, first aid, and getting fresh dogs.
2. A musher, or dogsled driver, must be at least fourteen-years-old to endure the rigors of severe weather, exhaustion, and loneliness.
3. A musher is responsible for his or her own food, food for twelve to sixteen dogs, and for making sure they don't get lost.
4. Reaching the end of the race without getting lost, even in last place, is considered honorable and heroic.
5. The participation expense is greater than the prize awarded to the winner.

By now you can see that there are various ways to approach a topic while avoiding an uninspiring time line. In the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race's example, alternatively frame it as an Alaskan tourism topic, or emphasize the enormous staff involved in first aid, search and rescue, dog care, trail maintenance, event coordination, financial management, and registration.

Concepts

Concepts are abstract ideas that can include hypotheses and theories or that exist independently of whether they are observed or practiced, for example, social equality.

- The glass ceiling
- Ethnocentrism
- Honor codes
- Autism
- Karma
- Wellness
- Fairness theory

- Bioethics
- The American Dream
- Social equality

Here are a few ways to narrow the purpose:

- To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric.
- To describe the Hindu concept of karma.
- To distinguish the differences between wellness and health concepts.
- To show the resources available in our local school system for children with autism.
- To explain three of Dr. Stephen Suranovic's seven categories of fairness.

Here is an example of a way to develop one of these topics:

Specific Purpose: To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric.
Central Idea: There are benefits to being ethnocentric.
Main Points:

1. Ethnocentrism is the idea that one's own culture is superior to others.
2. Ethnocentrism strongly contributes to positive group identity.
3. Ethnocentrism facilitates coordinating social activities.
4. Ethnocentrism contributes to the group's sense of safety.
5. Ethnocentrism becomes harmful when it creates barriers.

For a concept about which people disagree, you must represent multiple and conflicting views as fully and fairly as possible, for instance:

Specific Purpose: To expose the audience to three different views of the American Dream.
Central Idea: The American Dream is a shared dream, an impossible dream, or a dangerous dream, depending on the individual's perspective.
Main Points:

1. The American Dream concept describes a state of abundant well-being in which an honest and productive American can own a home; bring up a family; work at a permanent, well-paying job with benefits; and retire in security and leisure.
2. Many capitalists support the social pattern of working hard to deserve and acquire the material comforts and security of a comfortable life.
3. Many sociologists argue that the American Dream is far out of reach for the 40 percent of Americans at the bottom of the economic scale.
4. Many environmentalists argue that the consumption patterns that accompany the American Dream have depleted resources and contributed to air, water, and soil pollution.

Processes

If your speech topic is a process, help your audience to understand it or to be able to perform it. In either instance, processes involve a predictable series of changes, phases, or steps.

- Soil erosion
- Cell division

- Physical therapy
- Volcanic eruption
- Paper recycling
- Consumer credit evaluations
- Scholarship money searches
- Navy Seal training
- Portfolio building
- The development of Alzheimer's disease

For some process topics, use presentation aids to make your meaning clear to your listeners. Even in cases where you don't absolutely need a presentation aid, it is useful. For instance, if your topic is evaluating consumer credit, instead of describing a comparison between two different interest rates applied to the same original debt amount, it is helpful to show a difference graph. Also, this topic can strongly serve your audiences' needs before they find themselves in financial trouble. Since this will be an informative speech, resist the impulse to tell your listeners that one form of borrowing is good and another is bad; simply show them the difference in numbers. They can reach their own conclusions.

Organizing your facts is crucially important when discussing a process. Every process stage must be clear and understandable. When two or more things occur at the same time, as they might in the development of Alzheimer's disease, make it clear that several things are occurring at once. For example, as plaque is accumulating in the brain, the patient is likely to begin exhibiting various symptoms.

Here's an example of a process speech's initial steps:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about how to build an academic portfolio.

Central Idea: A portfolio represents you and emphasizes your best skills.

Main Points:

1. A portfolio is an organized selection of the best examples of the skills you can offer an employer.
2. A portfolio should contain samples of a substantial body of written work, print and electronically published pieces, photography, and DVDs of your media productions.
3. A portfolio should be customized for each prospective employer.
4. The material in your portfolio should be consistent with the skills and experience in your résumé.

In a portfolio-building process speech, create smaller steps to include within each main point. For instance, create separate portfolio sections for different types of creative activities, write a table of contents, label and date your samples, make your samples look attractive and professional, and other steps. Insert these sections where it makes the most sense, in the most organized places, to give your audience the most coherent understanding possible.

You've probably noticed that some topics are appropriate in more than one category. For instance, the 1980 Mt. St. Helen's eruption could be legitimately handled as an event or as a process. If you approach the eruption as an event, focus most information on human responses and the consequences on humans and the landscape. If you approach the eruption as a process, use visual aids and explanations to describe geological changes before, during, and after the eruption. You might also approach this topic from the personal viewpoint of someone whose life was affected by the eruption. There are many ways to approach most topics, and because of that, narrowing your choices and purpose is the important foundation that determines your informative speech's structure.

How do I develop informative content?

Developing Your Topic for the Audience

One issue to consider when preparing an informative speech is how best to present the information to enhance audience learning. Katherine Rowan suggests focusing on areas where your audience may experience confusion and use these likely confusion sources as a guide for developing your speech's content. Rowan identifies three possible confusion sources: difficult concepts or language, difficult-to-envision structures or processes, and ideas that are difficult to understand because they are hard to believe (Rowan, 1995). The following subsections discuss each confusion source and provides strategies to deal with them.

Difficult Concepts or Language

Sometimes, audiences may have difficulty understanding information because of the concepts or language used. For example, they may not understand what the term organic food means or how it differs from all-natural foods. If an audience is likely to experience confusion over a basic concept or term, Rowan suggests using an elucidating explanation composed of four parts. The explanation's purpose is to clarify the meaning and concept by focusing on the concept's essential features.

The first part of an elucidating explanation is to provide a typical example that includes the concept's central features. If you are talking about what fruit is, an apple or orange would be a typical example.

The second step Rowan suggests is to follow up the typical example with a definition. Fruits might be defined as edible plant structures that contain the plant's seeds.

After providing a definition, move on to the third part of the elucidating explanation: provide a variety of examples and nonexamples. Here, include less typical fruit examples, such as avocados, squash, or tomatoes; and foods such as rhubarb, which is often treated as a fruit but is not by definition.

Fourth, Rowan suggests concluding by having the audience practice distinguishing examples from nonexamples. In this way, the audience leaves the speech clearly understanding the concepts.

Difficult-to-Envision Processes or Structures

A second audience confusion source, according to Rowan, is a process or structure that is complex and difficult to envision, such as the body's blood circulation system. To address this, Rowan suggests a quasi-scientific explanation, which starts by giving the process's big-picture perspective. Presentation aids or analogies are helpful in giving a process overview. For the body's blood circulation system, show a video or diagram of the entire system, or make an analogy to a pump. Then, move to explaining relationships among the process's components. Be sure when you explain relationships among components that you include transition and linking words like "leads to" and "because" so that your audience understands relationships between concepts. For example, remember the childhood song describing the body's bones with lines such as, "the hip bone's connected to the thigh bone; the thigh bone's connected to the knee bone." Making the connections between components helps the audience to remember and better understand the process.

Difficult to Understand because It's Hard to Believe; and Ethics

A third audience confusion source, and perhaps the most difficult to address as a speaker, is an idea that's difficult to understand because it's hard to believe. This often happens when people have implicit, but erroneous, theories about how the world works. For example, the idea that science tries to disprove theories is difficult for some people to understand; after all, shouldn't the purpose of science be to prove things? In such a case, Rowan suggests using a transformative explanation. A transformative explanation begins by discussing the audience's implicit theory and showing why it is plausible. Then you move to showing how the implicit theory is limited and conclude by presenting the accepted explanation and why that explanation is better. In the case of scientists disproving theories, start by talking about what science *has* proven—the causes of malaria, the usefulness of penicillin in treating infection—and why focusing on science as proof is a plausible way of thinking. Then, show how the science-as-proof theory is limited by providing examples of ideas that were accepted as proven but were later found to be false, such as the belief that diseases are caused by miasma, or bad air; or that bloodletting cures diseases by purging the body of bad humors. Then, conclude by showing how science is an enterprise designed to disprove theories and that all theories are accepted as tentative in light of existing knowledge.

Rowan's framework is helpful because it keeps our focus on the informative speech's most important element: increasing your audience's topic understanding.

Being Ethical

Honesty and credibility must be the undergird to your presentation; otherwise, you betray your listeners' trust. Therefore, if you choose a topic that turns out to be too difficult, you must decide what will serve your audience's needs and interests. Shortcuts and oversimplifications are not the answer.

Being ethical often involves a surprising amount of work. In the case of choosing too ambitious a topic, you have some choices:

- Narrow your topic further.
- Narrow your topic in a different way.
- Reconsider your specific purpose.
- Start over with a new topic.

Your goal is to serve your audience's interests and needs, whoever they are and whether you believe they already know something about your topic.

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How do I add logos?

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For informative speeches, focus on the rhetorical appeal, logos. The appeals as you recall are pathos, ethos, and logos. Logos is the logical appeal. An easy way to remember this is that logos starts with an "L" and so does logic. How can you use logos or appeal to logic inside your informative speech?

Ask yourself these questions to consider if you are using logos properly in your informative speech:

- Are you using statistics? If so, are you using them properly and making sure they are accurate?
- Are you stating facts that you have found through research, which are actually facts and not opinions?
- Are you explaining your ideas in a logical manner? Is your audience able to follow what you are saying?
- Are you using sound reasoning as you explain facts and statistics to your audience?
- Are you using definitions in the speech? If so, are they accurate?
- Are you thinking of the audience as a reasonable and logical group of individuals?
- Are you appealing to logic in your speech by using examples, statistics, facts, definitions, and explanations?
- Are you logically arranging and organizing ideas?
- Is your speech easy to understand? Will the audience understand your speech's main points?

You must answer yes to most of these questions for any research-based and informative speech. And remember, do not forget to also add pathos and ethos to your speech as well.

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Chapter 13: Topic and Purpose

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What are the general purposes of speaking and forms of topics?

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What do you think of when you hear the word purpose? Technically speaking, purpose can be defined as the reason for which something exists or is created or intended. For public speaking, all definitions apply. For example, why does the speech exist—how is the audience to use the information? Why do we personally create a speech? What is our intention for giving a specific speech? For this chapter, we focus on why we give speeches.

Ever since scholars started writing about public speaking as a distinct phenomenon, they began creating

different systems to classify speech types. For example, Aristotle discussed three types: deliberative—political speech; forensic—courtroom speech; and epideictic—praise or blame speech. Cicero also discussed three types: judicial—courtroom speech; deliberative—political speech; and demonstrative—ceremonial speech, which is similar to Aristotle's epideictic. More recently, St. Augustine of Hippo wrote about three specific speech types: to teach—provide people with information; to delight—entertain or show people false ideas; and to sway—persuade people to a religious ideology. All these speech types help people determine their speech's general purpose. A **general purpose** refers to your broad goal in creating and delivering a speech.

These typologies or public speaking classification systems serve to demonstrate that general speech purposes have remained consistent throughout public speaking's history. Modern public speaking scholars use three general purpose types: *to inform, to persuade, and to entertain*.

To Inform

The first general purpose type is to **inform**. Simply put, to inform means to help audience members acquire information that they do not already possess. Audience members can then use this information to understand something, such as a new technology or a new virus, or to perform a new task, or improve a skill such as how to swing a golf club, or how to assemble a layer cake. The most important goal of speaking to inform is that your audience gains knowledge. However, notice that the goal is not to encourage people to *use* that knowledge in any specific way. When you speak to encourage people to use knowledge in a specific way, you are no longer informing, you are persuading.

Let's look at an example of how an you can accidentally go from informing to persuading. Say you are assigned to inform an audience about a new vaccination program. In an informative speech, your purpose is to explain to the audience *what* the program is and *how* it works. If, however, you start encouraging your audience to participate in the vaccination program, you are no longer informing them about the program, but rather persuading them to become involved in the program. One of the most common mistakes new public speaking students make is to blur the line between informing and persuading.

Why We Share Knowledge

Knowledge sharing is the process of delivering information, skills, or expertise in some form to people who could benefit from it. In fact, understanding and exchanging knowledge is so important that an entire field of study called knowledge management has been created to help people—especially businesspeople—to become more effective at harnessing and exchanging knowledge. In the professional world, sharing knowledge is becoming increasingly important. Every year, millions of people attend knowledge sharing conference or convention in hopes of learning new information or skills that will help them in their personal or professional lives (Atwood, 2009).

People are motivated to share their knowledge with other people for a variety of reasons (Hendriks, 1999). For some, the personal sense of achievement or of responsibility drives them to share their knowledge, which are internal motivational factors. Others are driven to share knowledge because they desire recognition or possibly to enhance their job, which are external motivational factors. Knowledge sharing is an important part of every society, so learning how to deliver informative speeches is a valuable skill.

Common Types of Informative Topics

Informative Topics fall into six general types as identified by O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein: objects, people, events, concepts, processes, and issues (O'Hair, et al., 2007). The **first** informative speech type relates to **objects**, which can include how objects are designed, how they function, and what they mean. For example, one student gave a speech on how to design corsets and used a mannequin to demonstrate how corsets were placed on women and the amount of force necessary to lace one up.

The **second** informative speech type focuses on **people**. People-based speeches tend to be biography-oriented. Such topics include recounting an individual's achievements and explaining why he or she is important in history. Some speakers, who are famous themselves, will focus on their own lives and how various events shaped who they ultimately became. Dottie Walters is most noted as being the first female in the United States to run an advertising agency. In addition to her work in advertising, Dottie spent much time as a professional speaker. She often told the story about her early years in advertising when she pushed around a stroller with her daughter inside as she went from business to business trying to generate interest in her copywriting abilities. You don't have to be famous, however, to give a people-based speech. Instead, inform your audience about a historical or contemporary hero whose achievements are not widely known.

The **third** informative speech type involves explaining the significance of specific **events**, either historical or contemporary. For example, deliver a speech on a specific World War II battle or a specific presidential administration. If you're a history buff, event-oriented speeches may be right up your alley. There are countless historical events that many people aren't familiar with and will find interesting. Also, inform your audience about a more recent or contemporary event. Some examples include concerts, plays, and art festivals; athletic competitions; and natural phenomena, such as storms, eclipses, and earthquakes. The point is to make sure that in your informative speech, you talk about the event—who, what, when, where, why—and do not attempt to persuade people to pass judgment upon the event or its effects.

The **fourth** informative speech type involves **concepts** or abstract and difficult ideas or theories (O'Hair, et al., 2007). This speech type is very useful in helping people to understand complex ideas. Some include theories related to business, sociology, psychology, religion, politics, art, or any other major study area. For examples, see E. M. Griffin's excellent list of communication theories on his website.

The **fifth** informative speech type involves **processes**, which are divided into two unique types: how-it-works and how-to-do-it. The first process speech type helps audience members understand how a specific object or system works. For example, explain how a bill becomes a law in the United States. There are very specific steps that a bill must go through before it becomes a law, so there is a very clear process to explain to an audience. The how-to-do-it speech, on the other hand, is designed to help people come to an end result. For example, give a speech on how to quilt, how to change a tire, how to write a résumé, or millions of other how-to oriented topics. In our experience, the how-to speech is probably the most commonly delivered informative speech in public speaking classes.

The **sixth** and **final** informative speech type involves **issues**, problems, or dispute matters (O'Hair, et al., 2007). This informative speech topic is probably the most difficult for novice public speakers because it requires walking a fine line between informing and persuading. If you deliver this speech type, remember the goal is to balance how you discuss both sides of the issue. To see an example of how you can take a very divisive topic and make it informative, check out the series Point/Counterpoint published by Chelsea House. This book series covers everything from blogging's pros and cons to whether the United States should have mandatory military service.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=45#oembed-1

Informative Speech: How Walt Disney Changed Animation, by BelmontSpeechLab, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfbzG2l1v8g

Keep in mind that the example above is not perfect, but it does give you another example of an informative speech.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=45#h5p-43

To Persuade

The second general purpose type is to **persuade.** When we speak to persuade, we attempt to get listeners to embrace a view point or to adopt a behavior that they would not have done otherwise. A persuasive speech is distinguished from an informative speech by the fact that it includes a call for action for the audience to make some change in their behavior or thinking.

Why We Persuade

Persuasive speech fall into two main categories: pure persuasion and manipulative persuasion. **Pure persuasion** occurs when a speaker urges listeners to engage in a specific behavior or to change a view point because the speaker truly believes that the change is in the audience members' best interest. For example, you give a speech on the importance of practicing good oral hygiene because you truly believe that oral hygiene is important and that bad oral hygiene can lead to many physical, social, and psychological problems. In this case, the speaker has no ulterior or hidden motive, such as you are not a toothpaste salesperson.

Manipulative persuasion, on the other hand, occurs when a speaker urges listeners to engage in a specific behavior or to change a view point by misleading them, often to fulfill an ulterior motive beyond the persuasive attempt's face value. We call this manipulative persuasion because the speaker is not being honest about the real purpose for attempting to persuade the audience. Ultimately, this persuasion form is perceived as highly dishonest when audience members discover the ulterior motive. For example, suppose a physician who also owns much stock in a pharmaceutical company is asked to speak before a physicians' group about a specific disease. Instead of informing the group about the disease, the doctor spends his time attempting to persuade the audience that the drug his company manufactures is the best treatment for that specific disease.

Obviously, the key question that a persuasive speaker must answer is what is the intent? Is the speaker intending to persuade the audience because of a sincere belief in a certain behavior or view point's benefits? Or is the speaker using all possible means—including distorting the truth—to persuade the audience because he or she will derive personal benefits from adopting a certain behavior or view point? Unless your speech

assignment specifically calls for a manipulative persuasive speech, the usual and ethical understanding of a persuasive speech assignment is that you use the pure persuasion form.

Persuasion: Behavior versus Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

As we've mentioned in the preceding sections, persuasion can address behaviors— listeners' observable actions—and it can also address intangible thought processes such as attitudes, values, and beliefs.

When the speaker attempts to persuade an audience to change behavior, often we can observe and even measure how successful the persuasion was. For example, after a speech attempting to persuade the audience to donate money to a charity, the charity can measure how many donations were received. The following is a short list of various behavior-oriented persuasive speeches: washing one's hands frequently and using hand sanitizer, adapting one's driving habits to improve gas mileage, using open-source software, or drinking one soft drink or soda over another. In all these cases, the goal is to make a change in audience members' basic behavior.

The second type of persuasive topic involves a change in attitudes, values, or beliefs. An **attitude** is defined as an individual's general predisposition toward something as being good or bad, right or wrong, negative or positive. If you believe that dress codes on college campuses are a good idea, give a speech persuading others to adopt a positive attitude toward campus dress codes.

A speaker can also attempt to persuade listeners to change some value they hold. **Value** refers to an individual's perception of something's usefulness, importance, or worth. We can value a college education, we can value technology, and we can value freedom. Values, as a general concept, are fairly ambiguous and tend to be very lofty ideas. Ultimately, what we value in life actually motivates us to engage in many behaviors. For example, if you value protecting the environment, you may recycle more trash than someone who does not hold this value. If you value family history and heritage, you may be more motivated to spend time with your older relatives and ask them about their early lives than someone who does not hold this value.

Lastly, a speaker can attempt to persuade people to change their personal beliefs. **Beliefs** are propositions or positions that an individual holds as true or false without positive knowledge or proof. Typically, beliefs are divided into two basic categories: core and dispositional. **Core beliefs** are beliefs that people have actively engaged in and created over their lives, such as a belief in a higher power or a belief in extraterrestrial life forms. **Dispositional beliefs,** on the other hand, are beliefs that people have not actively engaged in; they are judgments based on related subjects, which people make when they encounter a proposition. Imagine, for example, that you are asked the question, "Can gorillas speak English?" While you may never have met a gorilla or even seen one in person, you can make instant judgments about your understanding of gorillas and fairly certainly say whether you believe that gorillas can speak English, or not.

When it comes to persuading people to alter beliefs, persuading audiences to change core beliefs is more difficult than persuading audiences to change dispositional beliefs. If you find a topic related to a dispositional belief, using your speech to help listeners alter how they process the belief is a realistic possibility. But, as a novice public speaker, avoid persuading people to change their core beliefs. Although core beliefs often appear to be more exciting and interesting than dispositional ones, you are very unlikely to alter anyone's core beliefs in a five- to ten-minute classroom speech.

To Entertain

The third and final general purpose type is to entertain. Whereas informative and persuasive speechmaking is focused on the speech process's end result, entertainment speaking is focused on the speech's theme and

occasion. An entertaining speech can be either informative or persuasive at its root, but the speech's context or theme requires speakers to think about the speech primarily in terms of audience enjoyment.

Why We Entertain

Entertaining speeches are very common in everyday life. An entertaining speech's fundamental goal is audience enjoyment, which can come in many forms. Entertaining speeches can be funny or serious. Overall, entertaining speeches are not designed to give an audience a deep understanding of life, but instead, to function as a way to divert an audience from their day-to-day lives for a short time. This is not to say that an entertaining speech cannot have real content that is highly informative or persuasive, but its goal is primarily about the speech's entertaining aspects and not focused on the speech's informative or persuasive quality.

Common Forms of Entertainment Topics

There are three basic entertaining speech types: the **after-dinner speech**, the **ceremonial speech**, and the **inspirational speech**. The after-dinner speech is a speaking form where a speaker takes a serious speech topic, either informative or persuasive, and injects humor into the speech to make it entertaining. Some novice speakers attempt to turn an after-dinner speech into a stand-up comedy routine, which doesn't have the same focus (Roye, 2010). After-dinner speeches are first and foremost simply speeches.

A ceremonial speech is an entertaining speech type where the specific speech context is the driving force. Common ceremonial speech types include introductions, toasts, and eulogies. In each case, there are specific events that drive the speech. Maybe you're introducing an individual who is about to receive an award, or giving a toast at your best friend's wedding, or delivering the eulogy at a relative's funeral. In each case, the speech and the speech's purpose is determined by the event context, not to inform or persuade.

The final entertaining speech type is designed to inspire the audience. Inspirational speeches are based on emotion, with the goal to motivate listeners to alter their lives in some significant way. Florence Littauer, a famous professional speaker, delivers an emotionally charged speech titled "Silver Boxes." In the speech, Mrs. Littauer demonstrates how people can use positive comments to encourage others in their daily lives. The title comes from a story she tells at the speech's beginning, where she was teaching a group of children about using positive speech, and one of the children defined positive speech as giving people little silver boxes with bows on top (speech).

How do I select a speech topic and a specific purpose?

Primary Speech Constraints

One of the most common stumbling blocks for novice public speakers is selecting their first speech topic. Generally, your public speaking instructor will provide you with some fairly specific parameters to make this a little easier, such as speaking about an event that has shaped your life or demonstrating how to do something. Whatever your basic parameters, at some point, you must settle on a specific topic. In this section, we discuss speaking constraints, picking a broad topic, and narrowing your topic.

Speaking Constraints

When we use the word constraint regarding public speaking, we mean any limitation or restriction imposed on the speaker. Whether in the classroom or in the boardroom, speakers are typically given specific instructions that they must follow. These instructions constrain speakers and limit what they can say. For example, professional public speakers are often hired to speak about a specific topic, such as time management, customer satisfaction, or entrepreneurship. In the workplace, a subordinate is assigned to present certain information in a meeting. In these situations, when speakers are hired or assigned to talk about a specific topic, they cannot decide to talk about something else.

Another constraint may occur when a speaker expects to speak for an hour, only to show up and find that the event is running behind schedule and their speech-time is reduced to thirty minutes. Having prepared a sixty-minute speech, the speaker now must determine what stays in and what must go. Both instances illustrate speaker constraint. Typically, we refer to four primary constraints: **purpose, audience, context, and time.**

Purpose

The first major constraint involves the speech's general purpose. As mentioned earlier, there are three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. If you've been assigned to give an informative speech, you are automatically constrained from delivering a persuasive or entertaining speech. In most public speaking classes, this is the first constraint students will encounter because generally teachers assign you your exact speech purpose.

Audience

The second major constraint to consider is audience type. As discussed in the audience analysis chapter, different audiences have different political, religious, and ideological leanings. As such, choosing a speech topic for an audience that has a specific mindset is tricky, so don't generalize. For example, you're going to speak at a local Democratic leaders' meeting. You may think that all Democrats are liberal or progressive, so you craft your topic to this group. But if you make this generalization, you will offend the conservative Democrats in your audience. Obviously, the best way to prevent yourself from picking a topic that is inappropriate for a specific audience is to really know your audience, which is why we recommend conducting an audience analysis.

Context

The third major constraint relates to context. For speaking purposes, context means the set of circumstances surrounding a particular speech. There are countless different contexts in which we may speak: in a college classroom, to a religious congregation, to corporate board members, in a retirement village, or in a political convention. In these different contexts, the speaker expectations are unique and different. Topics appropriate for a religious group may not be appropriate for corporate board members. And appropriate corporate boardroom topics may not be appropriate at a political convention.

Time Frame

The fourth major constraint is your speech's' time frame. For speeches given under ten minutes, you must

narrowly focus your topic to one major idea. For example, in a ten-minute speech, you cannot realistically discuss the entire US Social Security program. There are countless books, research articles, websites, and other media forms on this topic, so trying to crystallize all that information into ten minutes is not realistic.

Instead, narrow your topic to something that is more realistically manageable within your allotted time. For example, speak about Social Security disability benefits using one disabled person as an example. By focusing on information that can be covered within your time frame, you will accomplish your speech's goal.

Selecting a Broad Subject Area

Once you know your speech's basic constraints, think about a topic. The first aspect to consider is what subject area you are interested in examining. A **subject area** is a broad knowledge area. Art, business, history, physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, and education are all broad subject-area examples. When selecting a topic, first pick a broad subject area because each area has a range of subtopics, which will help you quickly limit and weed out topics. For example, if we take art as a broad subject area, break it down further into broad subtopics such as art galleries and how to create art. Then, break down these broad subtopics into narrower subtopics such as prehistoric art, Egyptian art, Grecian art, Roman art, Middle Eastern art, medieval art, Asian art, Renaissance art, modern art. As you can see, topic selection is a narrowing process.

Narrowing Your Topic

Narrowing your topic to something manageable for your speech's constraints takes time, patience, and experience. One of the biggest mistakes that new public speakers make is not narrowing their topics sufficiently. In the previous section, we demonstrated how the narrowing process works, but even in those examples, we only narrowed subtopics down to still broad areas. Think of narrowing as a funnel. At the wide funnel top are the broad subject areas, and your goal is to narrow your topic further and further down until just one topic can come out the funnel's small end. The more you narrow your topic, the easier it will be for you to research, write, and deliver your speech.

So, let's take one of the broad art subject areas and keep narrowing it down to a manageable speech topic. For example, for your constraints, let's say that your general purpose is to inform; you are delivering the speech in class to your peers; and you have five to seven minutes. Now, let's start narrowing our topic. The broad area to narrow in this example is Middle Eastern art. When examining the Middle Eastern art category, the first thing you'll find is that Middle Eastern art is generally grouped into four distinct categories: Anatolian, Arabian, Mesopotamian, and Syro-Palestinian. We'll select the subtopic Anatolian art, or the art of what is now modern Turkey.

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

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

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

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=45#h5p-44

Approaches to Finding and Developing a Topic

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. In this section, we discuss various ways to find the best topic.

Conduct a Personal Inventory

The first way to find the best topic is to conduct 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. Ask your family and friends to help you. They are a great resource, and they know you well! 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?
- What type of volunteer work have you done?
- What are your goals?
- What social issues 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 list of many interests that are unique to you and that you can realistically develop into a speech. If you're still quite stumped after conducting a personal inventory, the next recommendation we have is to use a finding aid. A **finding aid** is a tool that will help you find possible topic lists. Three finding aids include polling organizations that tally information, media outlets, and the Internet.

Polling Organizations

There are several polling organizations that regularly conduct American public research. Not only are these organizations good for finding interesting research, the most recent polls indicate what people are interested in understanding today. For example, The Gallup Organization regularly conducts polls to discover Americans' perceptions of current political issues, business issues, social issues, and other great interesting information. Browsing their website can help you find very interesting speech topics. The following is a list of websites that offer tallied information:

- The Gallup Organization
- US Census Bureau
- Polling Report
- Rasmussen Reports
- Zogby International
- Pew Research Center

Media Outlets

The next great way to find interesting speech topics is to watch television and listen to the radio. The evening news, the History Channel, and the National Geographic channel all provide numerous speech topic ideas. There are even a host of television shows that broadcast the latest and most interesting weekly topics, such as *Dateline*, *20/20*, and *60 Minutes*. Here are some recent *20/20* segment examples to use for interesting speech topics: 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.

Also, talk radio is full of interesting speech topic possibilities. Prominent talk radio shows must fill two to three hours airtime, five days a week, so show producers are always looking for interesting topics. Let those producers do the investigative work for you! If you're listening to talk radio and hear an interesting topic, write it down and think about using it for your next speech.

It's important to understand that your goal is not to use a given television or radio program as the basis for your speech, nor do you want to repeat the exact arguments that a talk radio host or caller has made. We are not advocating stealing someone's ideas—do your own thinking to hone in 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 from which you heard the topic by telling your audience the title, station, and air date.

The Internet

You can, of course, look for interesting speech topics online. While the Internet may not always provide the most reliable information, it provides a rich source of interesting topics. For example, to browse many interesting blogs, check out blogcatalog.com or findblogs.com. Both websites link 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 find speech topics. Yes, that's right! Some insightful individuals have posted long lists of possible speech topics right on the Internet. Here are some we recommend:

- Topic Selection Helper for Informative Speeches
- 509 Informative Speech Ideas and Topics
- Term Paper or Speech Topics

Using the Internet is a great way to find a topic, but you'll still need to put in the time and do your own thinking 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 poll your audience. For the first poll type, you can research **audience interests** and needs by either formally handing people a questionnaire or just asking people casually. When you ask potential audience members about their interests, it's not hard to quickly find that interest patterns exist in every group. 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 see a pattern develop. While you may not be an expert on the topic initially, do some research to see what experts have said on the topic, and pull together a speech using that research.

For the second poll type, conduct 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, 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 recommend conducting a more formal needs analysis method.

The **formal method** for conducting a needs analysis is threefold: (1) find a gap in knowledge, (2) figure out the cause, and (3) identify solutions. First, 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. If you find that they are lacking, you'll know that a possible need exists. Second, figure out what is causing the gap. One of the mistakes that people make is assuming that all gaps exist because people lack information. This is not necessarily true—it can also be because people lack 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 steering wheel, 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 need is informational, it's time to determine the best way to deliver that information.

Roma street steps, by Andrew Sutherland, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Stating the Specific Purpose

Once you have chosen your general purpose and topic, it's time to take your speech to the next phase and develop your **specific purpose**. A specific purpose starts with the following: one general purpose, your specific chosen topic, and your objective—what you hope to accomplish with your speech. Basically, answer the *who, what, when, where,* and *why* questions to find your speech's specific purpose.

Getting Specific

To get at your speech's core—the specific purpose—know whether your general purpose is to inform, persuade, or entertain, which will make picking an appropriate topic easier. Obviously, depending on the general purpose, you will have various topic types. For example, let's say you want to give a speech about hygiene. You could still give a speech about hygiene despite your general purpose, but the specific purpose would vary depending on whether the general purpose is to inform—discussing hygiene practices around the globe; to persuade—discussing why people need to adopt a specific hygiene practice; or to entertain—discussing some strange and unique hygiene practices that people have used historically. Notice that in each case, the general purpose alters the specific topic, but all three are still fundamentally about hygiene.

Now, when discussing your speech's specific purpose, you must answer who, what, when, where, why, and

how questions. Let's examine each separately. **First**, know *who* is going to be in your audience. Different audiences, as discussed in the audience analysis chapter, have differing desires, backgrounds, and needs. Keeping your audience first and foremost in your thoughts when choosing a specific purpose will increase the likelihood that you create a speech that your audience will find meaningful.

Second you must answer the *what* question, which is the topic description. When picking an effective topic, make sure that the topic is appropriate for your speech constraints and context limitations.

Third, you must answer the *when* question, which is when you deliver your speech. Different speeches may be better delivered at different times of the day. For example, explaining the importance of eating breakfast and providing people with cereal bars may be a great topic at 9:00 am, but may not have the same impact if you're speaking at 4:00 p.m.

Fourth, you must answer the *where* question, which is the speech's location. Are you giving a speech in a classroom? At a church? In an executive boardroom? Depending on your speech's location, different topics may or may not be appropriate.

Fifth, you must answer the *why question*, which is the reason your audience needs to hear your speech? If your audience doesn't care about your specific purpose, they are less likely to attend to your speech. If it's a topic that's a little more off-the-wall, you'll really need to think about why they should care.

Once you've answered your *who, what, when, where,* and *why* questions, it's time to create your actual specific purpose. First, a specific purpose, in its written form, should be a short, declarative sentence that emphasizes your main speech topic. Let's look at an example:

Topic	The military.
Narrower Topic	The military's use of embedded journalists.
Narrowed Topic	British reporter Rupert Hamer's 2010 death, along with five US Marines, in a roadside bombing in Nawa, Afghanistan.

In this example, we've quickly narrowed a topic from a more general topic to a more specific topic. Let's now look at that topic in terms of a general purpose and specific purpose:

General Purpose	To inform.
Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about embedded journalism's dangers by focusing on British reporter Rupert Hamer's death.
General Purpose	To persuade.
Specific Purpose	To persuade journalism students to avoid embedded journalism jobs by using British reporter Rupert Hamer's death as an example of what can happen.

For the purpose of this example, we used the same general topic area, but demonstrated how you could easily turn the topic into either an informative speech or a persuasive speech. In the first example, the speaker is going to talk about the danger embedded journalists face. In this case, the speaker isn't attempting to alter people's ideas about embedded journalists, just make them more aware of the dangers. In the second case, the specific purpose is to persuade a group of journalism students (the audience) to avoid jobs as embedded journalists.

Your Specific Statement of Purpose

To form a clear and succinct statement of the specific purpose of your speech, start by naming your general purpose (to inform, to persuade, or to entertain). Follow this by a capsule description of your audience (my peers in class, a group of kindergarten teachers, etc.). Then complete your statement of purpose with a prepositional phrase (a phrase using "to," "about," "by," or another preposition) that summarizes your topic. As an example, "My specific purpose is to persuade the students in my residence hall to protest the proposed housing cost increase" is a specific statement of purpose, while "My speech will be about why we should protest the proposed housing cost increase" is not.

Specific purposes should be statements, not questions. If you find yourself starting to phrase your specific purpose as a question, ask yourself how you can reword it as a statement. Table 6.3 "My Specific Purpose Is..." provides several more examples of good specific purpose statements.

My Specific Purpose Is...

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

Now that we've examined what specific purposes are, we are going to focus on a series of tips to help you write specific purposes that are appropriate for a range of speeches.

Audience, Audience, Audience

First and foremost, you always need to think about your intended audience when choosing your specific purpose. In the previous section, we talked about a speech where a speaker is attempting to persuade a group of journalism students to not take jobs as embedded journalists. Would the same speech be successful, or even appropriate, if given in your public speaking class? Probably not. As a speaker, you may think your topic is great, but you always need to make sure you think about your audience when selecting your specific purpose. For this reason, when writing your specific purpose, start off your sentence by including the words "my audience" or actually listing the name of your audience: a group of journalism students, the people in my congregation, my peers in class, and so on. When you place your audience first, you're a lot more likely to have a successful speech.

Matching the Rhetorical Situation

After your audience, the second most important consideration about your specific purpose pertains to the rhetorical situation of your speech. The **rhetorical situation** is the set of circumstances surrounding your speech (e.g., speaker, audience, text, and context). When thinking about your specific purpose, you want to ensure that all these components go together. You want to make sure that you are the appropriate speaker for a topic, the topic is appropriate for your audience, the text of your speech is appropriate, and the speech is appropriate for the context. For example, speeches that you give in a classroom may not be appropriate in a religious context and vice versa.

Make It Clear

The specific purpose statement for any speech should be direct and not too broad, general, or vague. Consider the lack of clarity in the following specific purpose: "To persuade the students in my class to drink more." Obviously, we have no idea what the speaker wants the audience to drink: water, milk, orange juice? Alcoholic beverages? Furthermore, we have no way to quantify or make sense of the word "more." "More" assumes that the students are already drinking a certain amount, and the speaker wants them to increase their intake. If you want to persuade your listeners to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day, you need to say so clearly in your specific purpose.

Another way in which purpose statements are sometimes unclear comes from the use of colloquial language. While we often use colloquialisms in everyday life, they are often understood only by a limited number of people. It may sound like fun to have a specific purpose like, "To persuade my audience to get jiggy," but if you state this as your purpose, many people probably won't know what you're talking about at all.

Don't Double Up

You cannot hope to solve the entire world's problems in one speech, so don't even try. At the same time, you also want to make sure that you stick to one specific purpose. Chances are it will be challenging enough to inform your audience about one topic or persuade them to change one behavior or opinion. Don't put extra stress on yourself by adding topics. If you find yourself using the word "and" in your specific topic statement, you're probably doubling up on topics.

Can I Really Do This in Five Minutes?

When choosing your specific purpose, it's important to determine whether it can be realistically covered in the amount of time you have. Time limits are among the most common constraints for students in a public speaking course. Usually speeches early in the term have shorter time limits, and speeches later in the term have longer time limits (five to seven minutes). While eight seven may sound like an eternity to be standing up in front of the class, it's actually a very short period of time in which to cover a topic. To determine whether you think you can accomplish your speech's purpose in the time slot, ask yourself how long it would take to make you an informed person on your chosen topic or to persuade you to change your behavior or attitudes. If you cannot reasonably see yourself becoming informed or persuaded during the allotted amount of time, chances

are you aren't going to inform or persuade your audience either. The solution, of course, is to make your topic narrower so that you can fully cover a limited aspect of it.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=45#h5p-45

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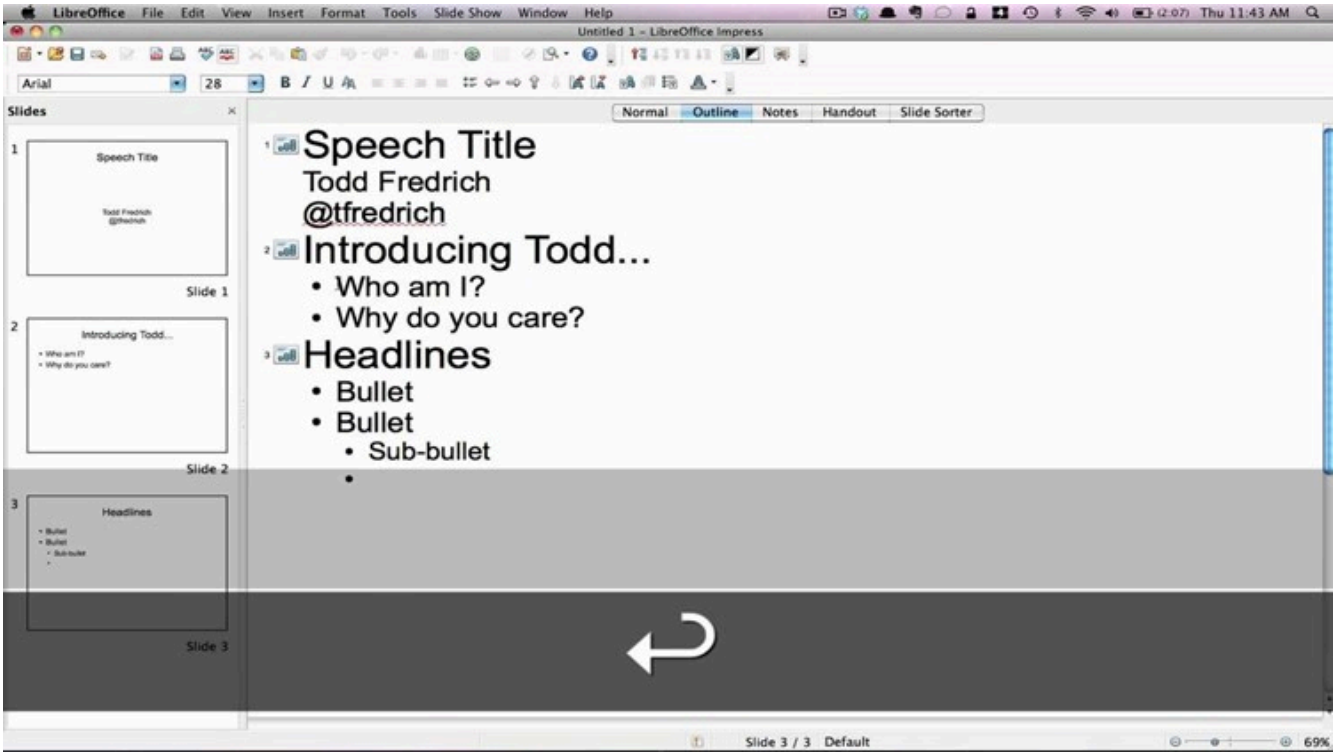
Chapter 14: Outlining

This chapter is adapted from Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Why is outlining important for a speech?



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Why Outlining Is Important for a Speech

For your presented speech to be as effective as possible, organize your information into logical patterns that your audience can understand. This especially applies if you already know much about your topic. Take careful steps to include pertinent information that your audience might not know and to explain relationships that might not be evident to them. Using a standard outline format helps you to make decisions about your main points, about choosing information to support those points, and about crafting the appropriate language to use. Without an outline, your message is liable to lose logical integrity. It might even deteriorate into a bullet-point list with no apparent cohesiveness,—except for the topic—leaving your audience relieved when your speech is finally over.

In this chapter, we discuss three outline types: a working outline, a full-sentence outline, and a speaking outline. For working outlines and full-sentence outlines, write in complete sentences; for speaking outlines, write in phrases We'll give detailed outline examples later in the chapter, but for this first section, we'll discuss general outlining principles.

An Outline Tests Your Specific Purpose's Clarity

A full-sentence outline lays a strong foundation. It compels you to have one clear and **specific purpose** and helps to frame a clear, concrete thesis statement. An outline helps you to exclude irrelevant information that does not directly focus on your thesis, and it reduces the research you must do because you will clearly identify the supporting evidence you need. And when presenting, an outline helps you remember your speech's central message.

Also, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand and remember your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Creating an outline is a task too often perceived as busywork, unnecessary, time consuming, and restrictive. However, students who carefully write a full-sentence outline characteristically give powerful presentations with excellent messages.

An Outline Tests Your Content's Scope

A clear, concrete thesis statement acts as your outline's compass. **Explicate** each main point, then, test your content's scope by comparing each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you've wandered outside your thesis statement's scope, as you will see in the example below.

Specific Purpose: To inform property owners about the *economics* of wind farms generating electrical energy.

1. Your first main point: modern windmills require a very small land base, making real estate cost's low. This is directly related to the *economics* thesis. Now, supply information to support your **claim** that only a small land base is needed.
2. Your second main point: you might be tempted to claim that windmills don't pollute in the ways other sources do. However, you will quickly note that this claim is unrelated to the *economics* thesis, so stay within this scope. A better second main point: once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the *economics* thesis. Now, supply information to support this claim.
3. Your third point: windmill-generated electrical energy is more profitable compared to other sources—many audience members will want to know this. This point is clearly related to the economics thesis, and you will easily find information from **authoritative sources** to support this claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test your content's scope because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

An Outline Tests Your Main Points' Logical Patterns

You have many topic choices, therefore, there are many ways to logically organize your content. In the example above, we simply list three main points that are important economics to consider about wind farms. You can also arrange a speech's main points into a logical pattern. We discuss these patterns in the Organizing the Speech Body section. Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at your outline's three main points, you will see the logical way in which they relate.

An Outline Tests Your Supporting Ideas' Relevance

When you create an outline, you clearly see that you need supporting **evidence** for each main point. For instance, your first main point claims that windmills require less land than other utilities. Therefore, provide supporting evidence about the acreage windmills require and the acreage other energy-generating sites require, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Use expert sources in economics, economic development, or engineering to support your claims. You can even include an expert's opinion, but not an ordinary person's opinion. The expert opinion provides stronger support for your point.

Similarly, the second point claims that once a windmill is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. To support this claim, provide annual windmill-maintenance costs and compare these to the alternative energy-generating sites' annual maintenance costs. If you compare nuclear power plants to support your first main point, compare nuclear power plants again to be consistent. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about windmill-generated energy's profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to nuclear power-generated energy's profitability. In this third main point, use just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to support you claims, and compare them to the other energy sources you've cited.

An Outline Tests Your Speech's Balance and Proportion

Writing a full-sentence outline is visually valuable. You immediately see whether each main point's importance is approximately equal. Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that your first main point has eight supporting points while the others only have three each, you have two choices: either choose the best three from the eight supporting points or strengthen the authoritative support for your other two main points. Remember, use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means conducting more research.

An Outline Serves as Your Speaking Notes

In addition to writing a full-sentence outline to prepare your speech, create a shortened outline to use as speaking notes to ensure a strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your speech, you would be reading too much, which limits your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, and it hurts your audience connection. For this reason, write a short-phrase outline on 4 × 6 notecards to use when you deliver your speech.

parallelism, by Tom706, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Within the speech-writing process, there exists commonly agreed upon principles for creating an outline. The following are important factors to consider when creating a logical and coherent outline:

Singularity

For clarity, make sure your thesis statement expresses one single idea. Use this single idea optimally as a guide to build your outline. The same holds true for your three main points: each must express one clear single idea. If many different ideas are required to build a complete message, present them in separate sentences using transitions such as "at the same time," "alternately," "in response to that event," or some other transition that clarifies the relationship between two separate ideas. As a reminder, for your audience's sake, maintain clarity.

Uniformity

A full-sentence outline readily shows whether you are giving equal time to each three main points. For example, are you providing each three main points with corresponding supporting evidence? Also, are you showing each main point's direct relationship to the thesis statement?

Consistency

Framing a thesis statement with one clear single idea will help you maintain consistency throughout your speech. Beyond the usual grammatical subject-verb agreement requirements, maintain a consistent approach. For instance, unless your speech has a chronological structure that begins in the past and ends in the future,

choose a consistent tense, past or present, to use throughout the speech. Similarly, choose a language and use it consistently, for example, use humanity instead of mankind or humans, and use that term throughout.

Adequacy

To ensure your audience understands your speech, do not assume that what is obvious to you is also obvious to your audience. Pay attention to using adequate language in two ways: how you define terms and how you support your main points. And use concrete language as much as you can. For instance, if you use the word community, you're using an abstract term that can mean many things. So, define for your audience what you mean by community. And when you use evidence to support your main points, use the right kind and the right weight. For instance, if you make a substantial claim, such as all printed news sources will be obsolete within ten years, you must use expert sources to support that claim.

Parallelism

Parallelism refers to the idea that the three main points follow the same structure or use the same language. Parallelism also allows you to check for inconsistencies and self-contradictory statements. For instance, does anything within your second main point contradict anything in your first main point? Examining your content's parallelism strengthens your message's clarity.

Hand holding blank index card stock photo, by Imageegaml, licensed by iStock photo

What are the three types of outlines?

Outlines are designed to evolve throughout your speech-preparation process, so in this section, we discuss the three types—a working outline, a full-sentence outline, and a speaking outline—and how you progress from each. Also, we discuss how using speaking-outline notecards help you as a speaker.

Working Outline

Use a working outline to develop your speech. This is the outline you use to lay out your speech's basic structure, so it changes many times before it is complete. A great strategy to begin your working outline is to type out labels for each element. Later, fill in the content. The following are the outline labels that you must have:

Working Outline Labels

Your Name
Topic
General Purpose
Specific Purpose
Main Ideas

1.
2.
3.

Introduction/Grabber
Thesis Statement
Preview
Transition
Main Point I

1. **supporting point**
2. **supporting point**

Transition
Main Point II

1. **supporting point**
2. **supporting point**

Transition
Main Point III

1. **supporting point**
2. **supporting point**

Transition
Conclusion
References

Also, a working outline allows you to work out your message's kinks. For instance, let's say you've made the claim that coal mining is a hazardous occupation, but you cannot find authoritative supporting evidence. Now, you must re-examine that main point to assess its validity. You might have to change that main point to be able to support it. If you do so, however, you must make sure that the new main point is a logical part of the thesis statement, the three main points, and the conclusion sequence. Don't think of your working outline as a rough copy, but as a careful step in developing your message. It will take time to develop, but is well worth it as it lays your speech's entire foundation. Here is a working outline example:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform college science students about smart dust's potential.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust can be used by the military—no. No—smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations. (That's better because it is clearer and precise).
3. Smart dust could also have daily life applications.

Introduction: (Grabber) (fill in later)

Thesis Statement: Thus far, researchers hypothesize that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking hospital patients, to early natural-disaster warnings, to defending against bioterrorism.

Preview: Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various near-future smart dust applications. To help us understand the small of it all, I will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. I will then examine some smart-dust military applications. And I'll end by discussing some smart dust-nonmilitary applications.

Transition: (fill in later)

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a robotics lab professor at the University of California, Berkeley, originally conceived the smart-dust idea in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

Transition: (fill in later)

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, smart-dust military uses have been widely theorized and examined.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

Transition: (fill in later)

Main Point III: According to the smart-dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

Transition: (fill in later)

Conclusion: (Bring your message full circle and create a psychologically satisfying closure.)

This working outline stage turns out to be a good place to go back and examine whether all the main points are directly related to the thesis statement and to each other. If so, your message has a strong potential for a unified focus. But if one main-point relationship is weak, this is the time to strengthen it. It will be more difficult to strengthen it later, for two reasons: first, the sheer amount of text on your pages will make the visual task more difficult, and second, it becomes increasingly difficult to change things in which you have invested much time and thought.

You can see that this working outline lays a strong foundation for the rest of your message. Its organization is visually apparent. Once you are confident in your basic message's internal unity, begin filling in the supporting points in descending detail—that is, from the general main points, to the particular supporting points, and then to greater detail. The outline makes it visually apparent where information fits and allows you to assess your supporting points to be sure they're authoritative and directly relevant to the main points they must support.

Now, let's discuss transitions. Sometimes, and not surprisingly, transitions seem troublesome to write because we often omit them in informal conversations. Our conversation partners understand what we mean because of our gestures and vocal strategies. And even when we do include transitions, we don't generally identify them as transitions. But in a speech, we must use effective transitions as a gateway from one main point to the next. The listener needs to know when a speaker is moving from one main point to the next.

In the next outline type—the full-sentence outline, take a look at the transitions and see how they make the listener aware of when you shift focus to the next main point.

Full-Sentence Outline

Write a full-sentence outline in full sentences only. There are several reasons why a full-sentence outline is important. First, this outline type includes a full plan of everything you intend to say to your audience so that you will not have to struggle with wordings or examples. Second, this outline type provides a clear idea of how much time it will take to present your speech. Third, a full-sentence outline showcases your ethical responsibility to your audience by detailing how fundamentally well-prepared you are. This is how a full-sentence outline looks:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform college science students about smart-dust's potential.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations.
3. Smart dust could also have daily life applications.

Introduction/Grabber: In 2002, famed science-fiction writer Michael Crichton released his book Prey, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it took over and killed its prey in its need for new resources. This nanotechnology-sophistication level is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, Kahn, Katz, and Pister, three electrical engineering and computer science professors at the University of California, Berkeley, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS; robots; or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On."

Thesis Statement: Thus far, researchers hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking hospital patients, to early natural-disaster warnings, to bioterrorism defense.

Preview: Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various near-future smart dust applications. To help us understand the small of it all, I'll first discuss what smart dust is and how it works. I'll then discuss some smart-dust military applications. And I'll end by discussing some smart-dust nonmilitary applications.

Transition: To help us understand smart dust, I'll begin by first examining what smart dust is.

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a robotics lab professor at the University of California, Berkeley,

originally conceived the smart-dust idea in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. According to a 2001 article by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in *Computer*, Pister's goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, a communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a one-cubic-millimeter package.
2. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled "Smart Dust" written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single rice grain's volume is five-cubic millimeters.
    1. Each individual dust piece, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers.
    2. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled "Smart Dust? Not Quite, But We're Getting There," smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

Transition: Now that we know what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some the smart-dust military applications.

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, smart-dust military uses have been widely theorized and examined.

1. According to the smart dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for "battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting" and other clear military applications.
    1. Probably, the number one smart-dust benefit in the military environment is its surveillance abilities.
        1. Major Scott Dickson, in a Blue Horizons paper written for the US Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology's Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness, homeland security, and identifying weapons of mass destruction.
        2. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications-jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones.
2. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in *New Scientist*, one of the first smart-dust benefits could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.

Transition: Now that we've explored some of smart-dust's military benefits, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to impact our daily lives.

Main Point III: According to the smart-dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. Everything from pasting smart-dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard, to inventory control, to product quality control have been discussed as possible smart-dust applications.
    1. Steve Lohr, in his 2010 *New York Times* article, wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."
2. Medically, according to the smart dust website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers.
    1. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which detects adverse body changes instantly and relays information to our physicians.
    2. Smart dust could detect microscopic center-cell formations or alert us when we've been infected by a bacterium or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all our lives.

Transition: Today, we've explored what smart dust is, how the US military could use smart dust, and how smart dust could impact all our lives in the near future.

Conclusion: While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that smart dust's full potential will probably not occur until 2025. Smart dust is definitely in our near future, but 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 related to smart dust. 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 greater 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."

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Warneke, B., Last, M., Liebowitz, B., & Pister, K. S. J. (2001). Smart dust: Communicating with a cubic millimeter computer. *Computer*, 31, 44–51.

When you prepare your full-sentence outline carefully, it may take as much as one- and one-half hours to complete the outline's first part from your name at the top through the introduction. When you've completed that part, take a break and do something else. When you return to the outline, complete your draft in another one- and one-half hours. After that, you only need to do a detailed check for completeness, accuracy, relevance, balance, omitted words, and consistency. If you find errors, instead of being frustrated, be glad you can catch these errors *before* you stand up in front of your audience.

You will notice that the various speech parts, for instance, the transitions and main points, are labeled. There are compelling reasons for these labels. First, as you develop your message, you will sometimes find it necessary to go back and look at your wording in another part of the outline. Your labels help you find particular passages easily. Second, the labels work as a checklist so that you can make sure you've included everything you intended. Third, the labels helps you prepare your speaking outline.

You'll also notice the full references at the outline's end. They match the citations within the outline. Sometimes, while preparing a speech, a speaker finds it important to go back to an original source to be sure the message will be accurate. If you type in your references as you develop your speech rather than afterward, they will be a convenience to you if they are complete and accurate.

Don't think of the references as busywork or drudgery. Although they're more time consuming than text, they are good practice for the more advanced academic work you will do in the immediate future.

Speaking Outline and The Advantages of Using Presentation Notes

Your full-sentence outline prepares you to present a clear and well-organized message, but your speaking outline will include far less detail. Resist the temptation to use your full-sentence outline as your speaking outline. The temptation is real for at least two reasons. First, once you feel that you've carefully crafted every word sequence in your speech, you might not want to sacrifice quality when you shift to vocal presentation. Second, if you feel anxious about how well you will do in front of an audience, you may want to use your full-sentence outline as a safety net. In our experience, however, if you have your full-sentence outline with you,

you will end up reading rather than speaking to your audience. Remember, do not read, instead, use carefully prepared notecards.

Your speech will probably have five main components: introduction, main point one, main point two, main point three, and the conclusion. Therefore, we recommend using five notecards—one for each component.

How will five notecards suffice in helping you produce a complete, rich delivery? Why can't you use the full-sentence outline you labored so hard to write? First, your full-sentence outline will make it appear that you don't know your speech's content. Second, the temptation to read the speech directly from the full-sentence outline is nearly overwhelming; even if you resist this temptation, you will find yourself struggling to remember the words on the page rather than speaking extemporaneously. Third, paper is noisier and more awkward than cards. Fourth, it's easier to lose your place using the full outline. Finally, cards just look better. Carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Use 4 × 6 cards. The smaller 3 × 5 cards are too small to provide space for visually organized notes. Number your cards, and write on one side only. Numbering is helpful if you happen to drop your cards, and writing on one side only means that while you are speaking, the audience is not distracted by your handwritten notes and reminders to yourself. Make sure that each card contains only key words and key phrases, but not full sentences.

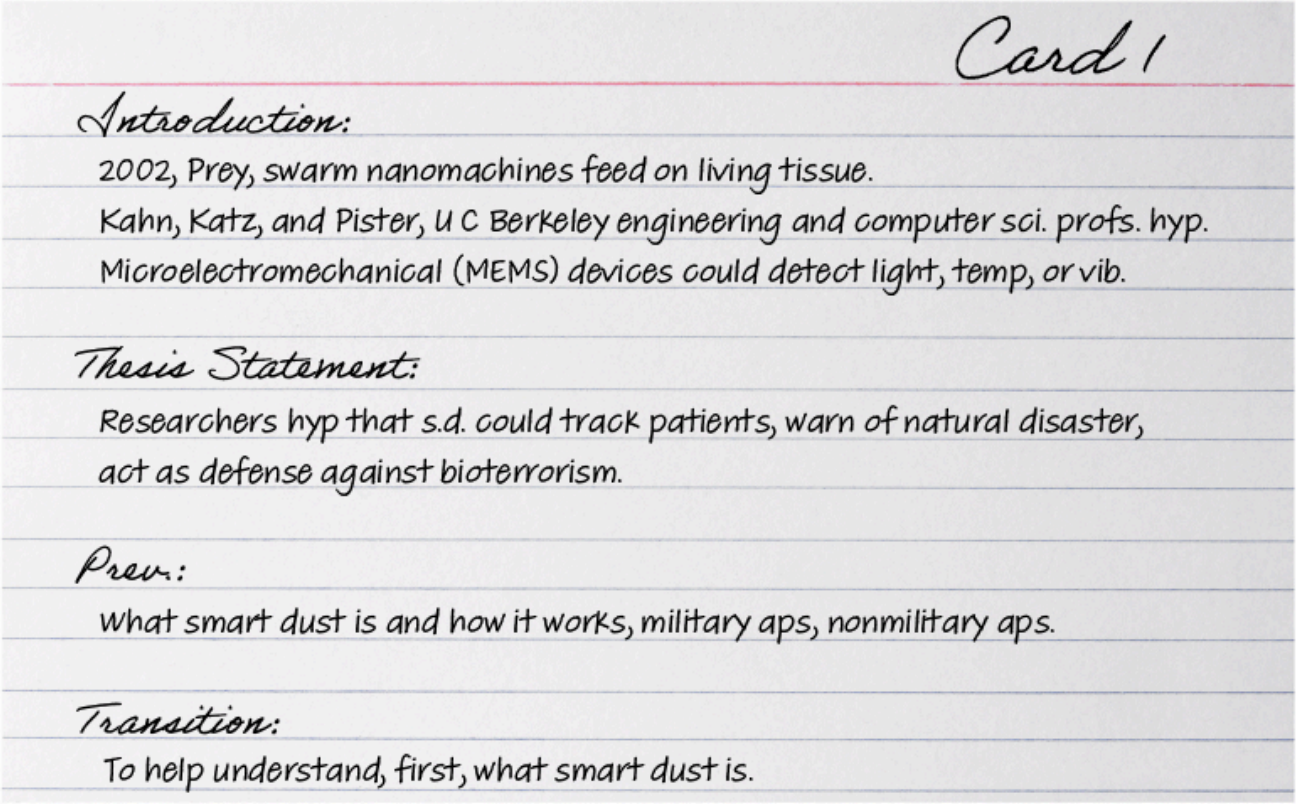
Some speeches will include direct or extended quotations from expert sources. These quotations might be highly technical or difficult to memorize, but they must be presented correctly. This is a circumstance in which you include a sixth card in your notecard sequence. This is the one time you may read fully from a card. If your quotation is important, and the exact wording is crucial, your audience will understand that.

How are notecards sufficient? When they are carefully written and then you practice your speech using them, *they* will reveal that they work. If, during practice, you find that one card doesn't work well enough, you can rewrite that card. Using carefully prepared, sparingly worded cards help you resist the temptation to rely on overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides to get you through the presentation as well. Although they will never provide your exact full-sentence outline word sequence, they'll keep you organized during your speech. The trick to selecting your cards' phrases and quotations is to identify the labels that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the phrase "more science fact" triggers connections between Crichton's science fiction events in the novel *Prey* versus real science developments, that card phrase will support you through a fairly extended part of your introduction.

Ultimately, you must discover what works for you and then select those words that best jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary five-card set written on one side only, and practice with them. Revise and refine them as you would an outline.

The following is a hypothetical card set for the smart-dust speech:

Notecards Transcript



Card 1

Introduction:

2002, Prey, swarm nanomachines feed on living tissue.
Kahn, Katz, and Pister, U C Berkeley engineering and computer sci. profs. hyp.
Microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices could detect light, temp, or vib.

Thesis Statement:

Researchers hyp that s.d. could track patients, warn of natural disaster,
act as defense against bioterrorism.

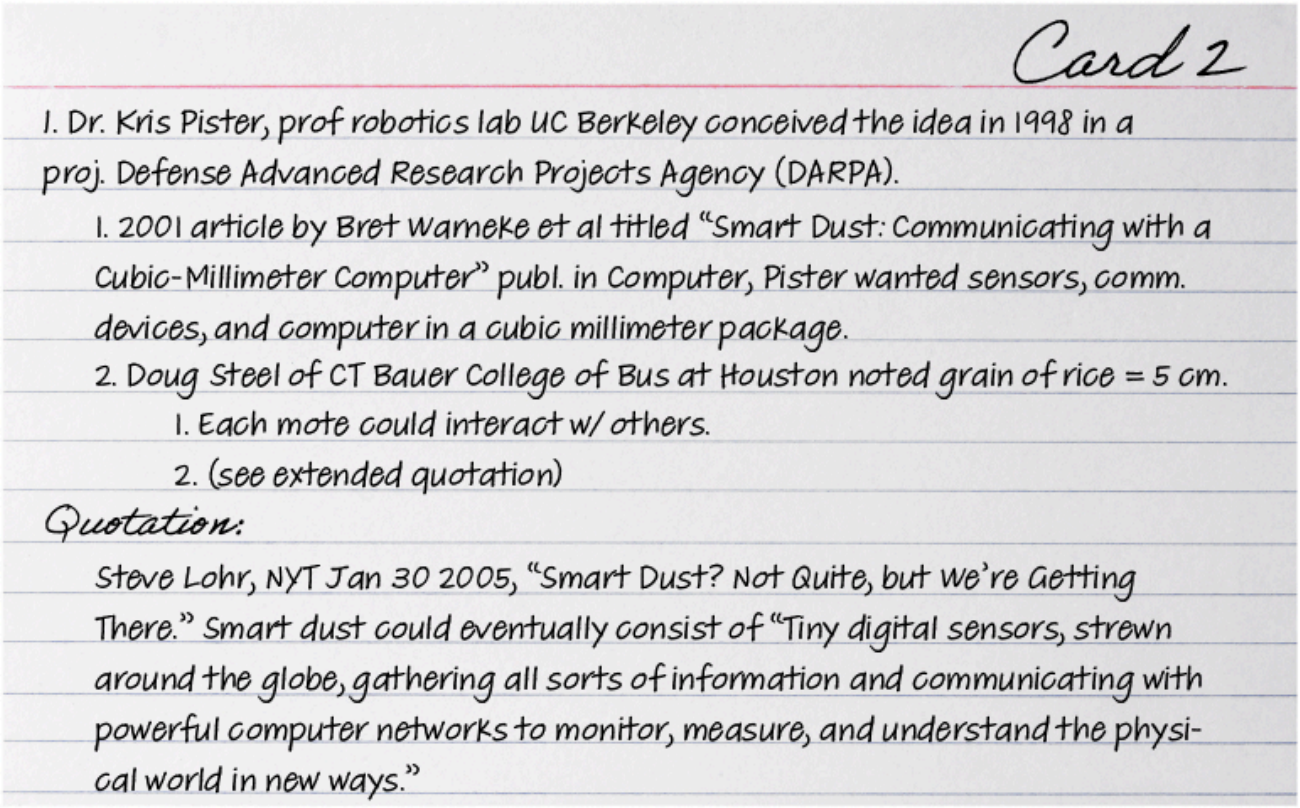
Prev.:

What smart dust is and how it works, military aps, nonmilitary aps.

Transition:

To help understand, first, what smart dust is.

Notecard 1, by Brian Powell, licensed under CC0.



Card 2

1. Dr. Kris Pister, prof robotics lab UC Berkeley conceived the idea in 1998 in a proj. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).
    1. 2001 article by Bret Wameke et al titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" publ. in Computer, Pister wanted sensors, comm. devices, and computer in a cubic millimeter package.
    2. Doug Steel of CT Bauer College of Bus at Houston noted grain of rice = 5 cm.
        1. Each mote could interact w/ others.
        2. (see extended quotation)

Quotation:

Steve Lohr, NYT Jan 30 2005, "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There." Smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

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Card 3

II. Orig conceptualized under DARPA, military uses theor. and examined.

I. Smart Dust website, battlefield surveill., treaty monitor., transp. monitor., + scud hunting.

1. benefit, surveill.

1. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.

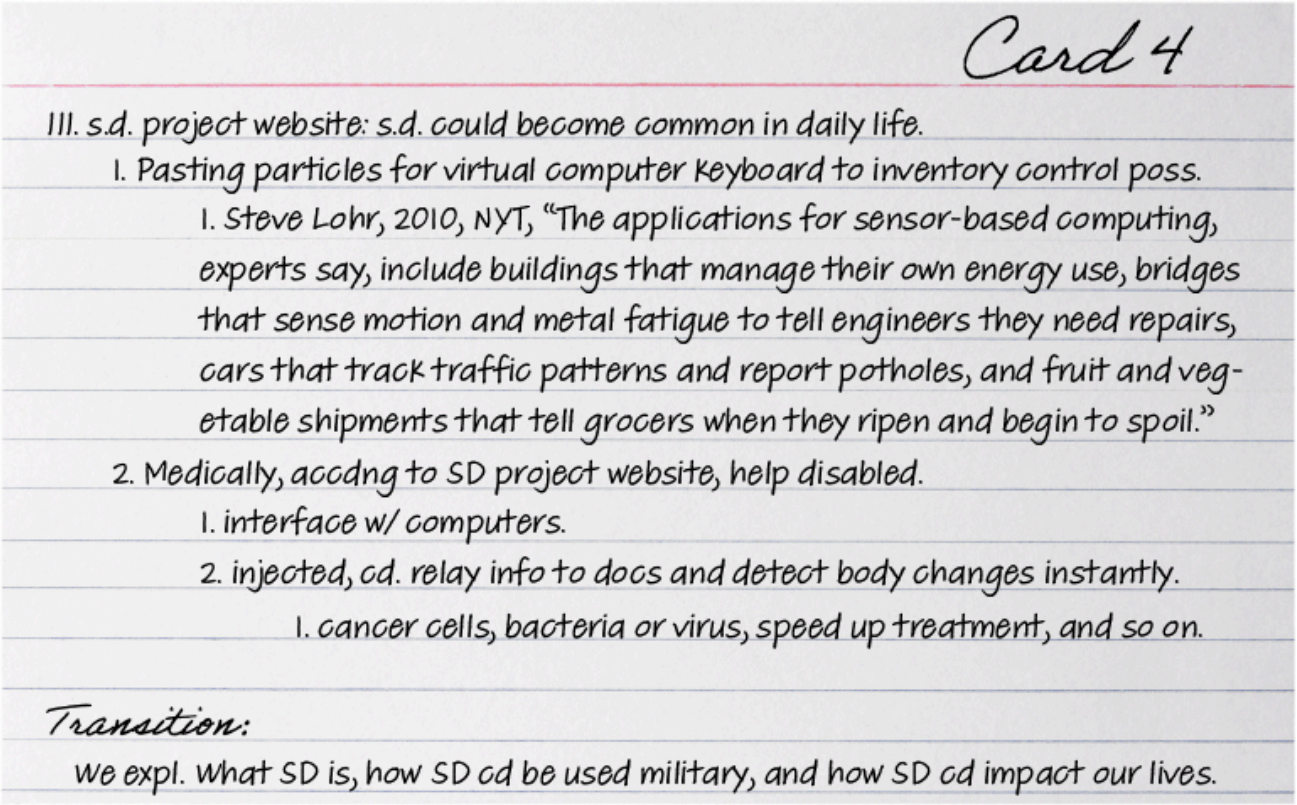
2. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.

2. 2010 article Jessica Griggs New Scientist, early defense, storms and debris.

Transition:

Switch gears to daily lives.

Notecard 3, by Brian Powell, licensed under CC0.



Card 4

III. s.d. project website: s.d. could become common in daily life.

1. Pasting particles for virtual computer keyboard to inventory control poss.

1. Steve Lohr, 2010, NYT, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."

2. Medically, accdng to SD project website, help disabled.

1. interface w/ computers.

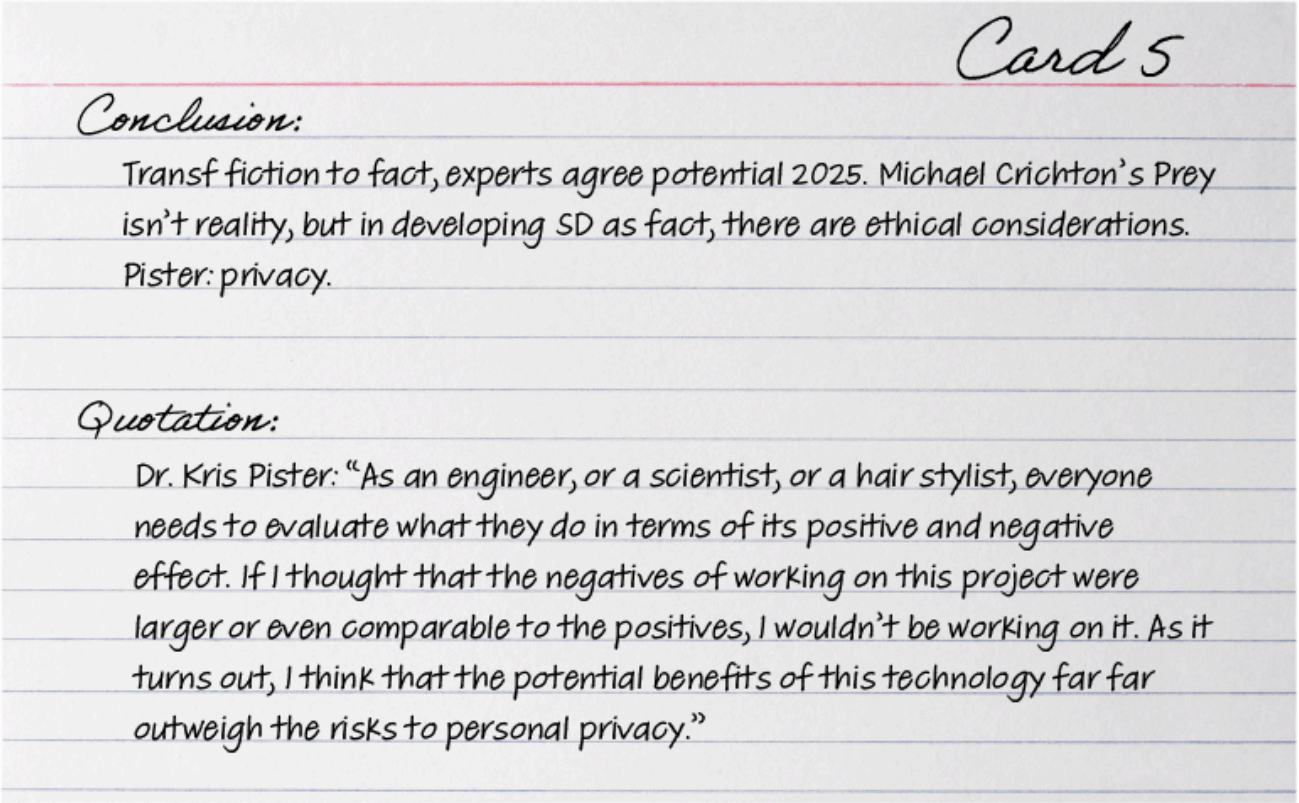
2. injected, cd. relay info to docs and detect body changes instantly.

1. cancer cells, bacteria or virus, speed up treatment, and so on.

Transition:

We expl. What SD is, how SD cd be used military, and how SD cd impact our lives.

Notecard 4, by Brian Powell, licensed under CC0.



Notecard 5, by Brian Powell, licensed under CC0.

Creating and using a card set similar to the examples will help you condense and deliver an impressive set of specialized information. But, what if you lose your place during a speech? With a card set, it will take less time to find your place than with a full-sentence outline. You will not be rustling paper, and because your cards are written on one side only, you can keep them in order without flipping them back and forth to check both sides. What if you go blank? Take a few seconds to recall what you've said and how it leads to your next points. There may be several seconds of silence in the middle of your speech, and it may seem like minutes to you, but you can regain your footing most easily with a small well-prepared card set. Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading word sequences to your audience instead of delivering a memorable message!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=47#h5p-58

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Chapter 15: Organizing

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How do I organize my main points?

Lightbulb!, by Matt Wynn, licensed under CC BY 2.0

How to Narrow Possible Points to Main Points

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

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

From Specific Purpose to Main Points

Once you've written down your specific purpose, think about the best way to turn that specific purpose into your main points. Main points are the key ideas you present to accomplish your speech's specific purpose

How Many Main Points Do I Need?

While there is no magic number for how many main points a speech should have, speech experts generally agree that the fewer the number the better. First and foremost, memory-subject experts have consistently shown that people tend not to remember very much after they listen to a message or leave a conversation (Bostrom & Waldhart, 1988). While many different factors affect a listener's ability to retain a speech's information, how the speech is organized is an important factor (Dunham, 1964; Smith, 1951; Thompson, 1960). We recommend you use two or three main points. If your speech is less than three minutes long, then two main points will work best. If your speech is between three and ten minutes long, then it makes more sense to use three main points. According to LeFrancois, people are more likely to remember information that is meaningful, useful, interesting, different or unique, organized, visual, and simple (LeFrancois, 1999). Two or three main points are much easier for listeners to remember than ten or even five. In addition, if you have two or three main points, you'll better develop each one with examples, statistics, or other support forms that make your speech more interesting and more memorable for your audience.

Narrowing Down Your Main Points

When you write your specific purpose and review the topic research you've compiled, we recommend taking a few minutes to brainstorm and develop a list of points. In brainstorming, your goal is simply to think of as many different points as you can, not to judge how valuable or important they are. Notice what information your audience needs to know to understand your topic and what information your speech needs to convey to accomplish its specific purpose. Consider the following example:

Specific Purpose	To inform school administrators about the various open-source software packages that their school districts could use.
Brainstorming List of Points	Define open-source software. Define educational software. List and describe the software school districts commonly use. Explain open-source software's advantages. Explain open-source software's disadvantages. Review open-source software's history. Describe open-source software's value. Describe some educational open-source software packages.

Now that you have brainstormed and developed a list of possible points, how do you go about narrowing them down to just two or three main ones? Remember, your main points are the key ideas that help build your speech. When you look over the preceding list, see that many of the points are related to one another. Your goal is to identify which minor points can be combined into main points. This process is called chunking because it involves taking smaller information chunks and putting them together with like chunks to create more fully

developed information chunks. Before reading the following chunking list, see if you can determine three large chunks from the preceding list—note that not all chunks are equal.

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

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

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

Uniting Your Main Points

Once you've generated a possible main-points list, ask yourself this question: When you look at your main points, do they fit together? For example, if you look at the three preceding main points—school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for school administrators to consider—ask yourself, Do these main points help my audience understand my specific purpose? Suppose you added a fourth main point about open-source software for musicians—would this fourth main point go with the other three? Probably not. While you may have a strong passion for open-source music software, that main point is extraneous information for the speech you are giving. It does not help accomplish your specific purpose, so toss it out.

Keeping Your Main Points Separate

The next question to ask yourself about your main points is whether they overlap too much. While some overlap may happen naturally because of a specific topic's singular nature, the information covered within each main point should be clearly distinct from the other main points. Imagine you're giving a speech with this specific

purpose: To inform my audience about the health reasons for eating apples and oranges. You could then have three main points: eating fruits is healthy, eating apples is healthy, and eating oranges is healthy. While the two points related to apples and oranges are clearly distinct, both of those main points would probably overlap too much with the first point—that eating fruits is healthy—so, eliminate the first point and focus on the second and third. On the other hand, keep the first point and then develop two new points giving additional support to why people should eat fruit.

Balancing Main Points

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

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

Creating Parallel Structure for Main Points

Another major question to ask yourself about your main points is whether or not they have a parallel structure. Parallel structure means to structure language so that it all sounds similar. When all your main points sound similar, your audience will remember and retain them for later. Let's look at our sample: School districts use software in their operations. What is open-source software? Name some specific open-source software packages that are appropriate for school administrators to consider. Notice that the first and third main points are statements, but the second one is a question. These main points are not parallel in structure. You can fix this in one of two ways, such as, make them all questions: What are some common school district software programs? What is open-source software? What are some specific open-source software packages that are appropriate for school administrators to consider? Or, turn them all into statements: School districts use software in their operations. Define and describe open-source software. Name some specific open-source software packages that are appropriate for school administrators to consider. Either example makes the main points' structure grammatically parallel.

Maintaining the Main Points' Logical Flow

The last question to ask about your main points is whether they make sense in the order you've placed them. In the next section we discuss common organizational speech patterns, but for now, think about your main points' logical flow. For instance, when you look at your main points, do they progress in a logical sequential order? Does it make sense to talk about one first, another one second, and the final one last? If not, rearrange them. Often, this process is an art and not a science. But let's look at a few examples.

School Dress Codes Example

Main Point 1 History of school dress codes.

Main Point 2 Problems with school dress codes.

Main Point 3 Eliminating school dress codes.

Rider Law Legislation

Main Point 1 Why should states have rider laws?

Main Point 2 What are the effects of no rider laws?

Main Point 3 What is rider law legislation?

When you look at these two examples, what are your immediate impressions? In the first example, does it make sense to talk about history, then problems, and finally how to eliminate school dress codes? Would it make sense to put history as your last main point? No. These main points are in a logical sequential order. What about the second example? Does it make sense to talk first about the solution, then the problem, and then define the solution? No! To rearrange a logical sequential order, explain the problem first: no rider laws; then, define your solution: what is rider law legislation; then argue for your solution: why states should have rider laws.

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Elements of Effective Organization

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Have you ever listened to a speech or a lecture and found yourself thinking, "I am so lost!" or "Where the heck is this speaker going?" Chances are you were confused because the speaker didn't effectively keep the speech moving. When we are reading and encounter something we don't understand, we have the ability to reread the paragraph to clarify. Unfortunately, we are not that lucky when it comes to listening to a speaker. We cannot pick up our universal remote and rewind the person. For this reason, you must think about how to keep your speech moving so that your audience can easily follow it. In this section, we discuss four specific techniques to guide your audience: transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

Transitions between Main Points

A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that indicates that a speaker is moving from one main point to another main point. To transition, the speaker summarizes what was said in one point and previews what is going to be discussed in the next point. Let's look at some examples, and pay attention to each sentence's first words:

- *Now that* we've seen the problems caused by no adolescent curfew laws, let's examine how curfew laws could benefit our community.

- *Thus far,* we've examined alcohol abuse's history and prevalence among Native Americans, but the greatest concern is alcohol abuse's impact on Native Americans' health.
- *Now that* we've thoroughly examined how these two medications are similar to one another, we can consider the many clear differences between the two medications.
- *While* he was one of the most prolific writers in Great Britain prior to World War II, Winston Churchill continued to publish during the war years as well.

Notice that in each example, the first few words are transition words: *now that, thus far, while*. Transition words are used to indicate a period of time concluding. See the Transition Words List, which contains many useful transitions to keep your speech moving.

Transition Words List

Addition	Also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, following this, further, furthermore, in addition, in the same way, additionally, likewise, moreover, similarly
Consequence	Accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, wherefore.
Generalizing	As a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually.
Exemplifying	Chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, markedly, namely, particularly, including, specifically, such as.
Illustration	For example, for instance, for one thing, as an illustration, illustrated with, as an example, in this case.
Emphasis	Above all, chiefly, with attention to, especially, particularly, singularly.
Similarity	Comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similarly, moreover, together with.
Exception	Aside from, barring, besides, except, excepting, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of, save.
Restatement	In essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently.
Contrast and Comparison	Contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast.
Sequence	At first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, in turn, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, the meantime, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion, with this in mind.
Common Sequence Patterns	First, second, third...
	Generally, furthermore, finally.
	In the first place, also, lastly.
	Pursuing this further, finally.
	To be sure, additionally, lastly.
	Just in the same way, finally.
	Basically, similarly, as well.
Summarizing	After all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, in the long run, on balance, to sum up, to summarize, finally.
Diversion	By the way, incidentally.
Direction	Here, there, over there, beyond, nearly, opposite, under, above, to the left, to the right, in the distance.
Location	Above, behind, by, near, throughout, across, below, down, off, to the right, against, beneath, in back of, onto, under, along, beside, in front of, on top of, among, between, inside, outside, around, beyond, into, over.

Internal Previews

In an internal preview, the speaker highlights what he or she is going to discuss within one specific main point. It works similarly to the introduction preview in which the speaker quickly outlines the speech's three main body points.

Ausubel was the first person to examine the effect that internal previews had on retaining oral information (Ausubel, 1968). Basically, when a speaker clearly informs an audience what he or she is going to be talking about in a clear and organized manner, the audience listens for those main points and retains more of the speaker's message. Let's look at a sample internal preview:

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

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

Internal previews are often given *after* the speaker has transitioned to a main topic. For example, below see the previous internal preview with the transition to that main point.

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

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

Internal Summaries

Whereas an internal preview helps an audience know from the beginning what you are going to talk about within a main point, an internal summary reminds an audience about what they just heard. In general, internal summaries are best used when the information within a specific main point is complicated. To write your own internal summaries, look at the summarizing transition words in the Transition Words List. Let's look at an example:

> To sum up, school bullying is a definite problem. Bullying in schools is detrimental to the victim's grades, the victim's standardized test scores, and the victim's future educational outlook.

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

> In this section, we have explored how bullying in schools is detrimental to the victim's grades, the victim's standardized test scores, and the victim's future educational outlook (internal summary). Therefore, schools need to implement campus-wide, comprehensive anti-bullying programs (transition).

Unlike the more traditional transition, this speaker uses an internal summary to help the audience summarize the main point's content. The sentence that follows then leads to the next major speech point, which is the importance of anti-bullying programs.

Signposts

Have you ever been on a road trip and watched the green rectangular mile signs pass you by? Fifty miles to go. Twenty-five miles to go. One mile to go. Speech signposts function the same way. A signpost is a guide a speaker gives the audience to help them navigate the speech's content. In the "common sequence patterns," of the Transition Words List, you'll see possible signpost options. In essence, we use these short phrases at the beginning of information to help audience members keep up with what we're discussing. For example, if you give a speech in which the main point is about the three credibility functions, use the following internal signposts:

- The first credibility function is competence.
- The second credibility function is trustworthiness.

- The final credibility function is caring or goodwill.

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

In addition to helping audience members navigate a speech, signposts highlight specific information the speaker thinks important. Where some signposts show the way, such as highway markers, signposts that call attention to specific information pieces are more like billboards. Look in the Transition Words List under the "emphasis" category for more useful words and phrases to highlight information. All these words are designed to help you call attention to what you are saying so that your audience will also recognize the information's importance.

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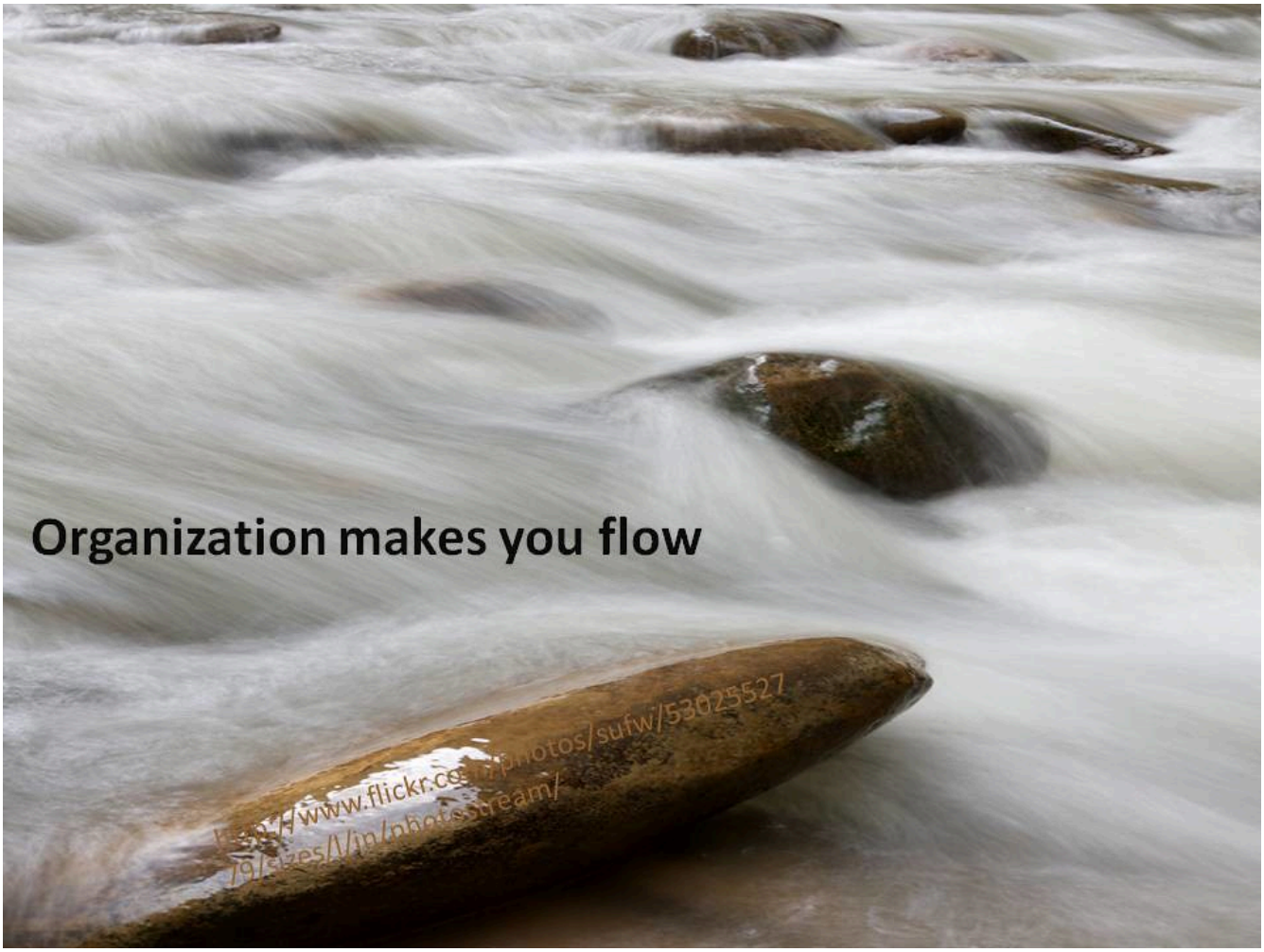
How can I use organizational patterns in my speech?



Organization makes you flow, by Twentyfour Students, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Organizational Patterns: Elements of Effective Organization

In this section we provide organizational patterns to help you create a logically organized speech. Keep in mind that some patterns are best for informative speeches, while other patterns better fit persuasive speeches. The first organizational pattern we'll discuss is topical categories.

Topical Categories Organizational Patterns

Topical categories are by far the most common speech organizational pattern. Topical categories function as a way to help the speaker organize the message consistently. To use this organizational pattern, create topic categories or information chunks that go together to help support your original specific purpose. Let's look at an example.

Specific
Purpose To inform college students about Internet dating's uses and misuses.
Main Points

1. Define and describe Internet dating.
2. Explain some strategies to enhance your Internet dating experience.
3. List some warning signs to look for in potential online dates.

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

Compare and Contrast Organizational Patterns

To compare and contrast is another speech organizational pattern. While this pattern clearly lends itself easily to two main points, you can also create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. Let's look at two examples: the first one will be a two-point example, and the second, a three-point example.

Specific
Purpose To inform physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y.
Main Points

1. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar.
2. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

Specific
Purpose To inform physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y.
Main Points

1. Explain both Drug X and Drug Y's basic purpose and use.
2. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar.
3. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

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

Comparative Advantages Organizational Patterns

Comparative advantages organizational patterns are used to compare items side-by-side and show why one of them is more advantageous than the other. For example, let's say that you're giving a speech on which e-book reader is better: Amazon's Kindle or Barnes and Nobles' Nook. Here's how you could organize this speech:

Specific

Purpose To persuade my audience that the Nook is more advantageous than the Kindle.
Main Points

1. The Nook allows owners to trade and loan books to other owners or people who have downloaded the Nook software, while the Kindle does not.
2. The Nook has a color touch-screen, while the Kindle's screen is black and grey and noninteractive.
3. The Nook's memory can be expanded through microSD, while the Kindle's memory cannot be upgraded.

As you can see from this speech's organization, the simple speech's goal is to show why one thing has more positives than something else. Obviously, when you are demonstrating comparative advantages, the items you are comparing need to be functional equivalents—or, as the saying goes, you cannot compare apples to oranges.

Spatial Organizational Patterns

Spatial organizational patterns place information according to how things fit together in physical space. This pattern is best used when your main points are oriented to different locations that can exist independently. The basic reason to choose this format is to show that the main points have clear locations. We'll look at two examples: one involving physical geography and one involving a different spatial order.

Specific
Purpose To inform history students about the states that seceded from the United States during the Civil War.
Main Points

1. Locate and describe the Confederate states just below the Mason-Dixon Line, which are Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.
2. Locate and describe the Confederate states in the deep South, which are South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida.
3. Locate and describe the western Confederate states, which are Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas.

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

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

Specific
Purpose To explain to college biology students how the urinary system works.
Main Points

1. Locate and describe the kidneys and ureters.
2. Locate and describe the bladder.
3. Locate and describe the sphincter and urethra.

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

Chronological Organizational Patterns

Chronological organizational patterns place the main idea's points in a timeline in which items or events appear or occur—whether backward or forward. Here's a simple example.

Specific
Purpose To inform my audience about the books written by Winston Churchill.

Main Points

1. Examine Winston Churchill's writings, style, and content prior to World War II.
2. Examine Winston Churchill's writings, style, and content during World War II.
3. Examine Winston Churchill's writings, style, and content after World War II.

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

Biographical Organizational Patterns

As you might guess, biographical organizational patterns are generally used when a speaker wants to describe a person's life—either their own, or someone they know personally, or a famous person. Biographical speeches by nature tend to be informative or entertaining; they are usually not persuasive. Let's look at an example.

Specific
Purpose To inform my audience about the early life of Marilyn Manson.

Main Points

1. Describe Brian Hugh Warner's early life and his beginning feud with Christianity.
2. Describe Warner's stint as a music journalist in Florida.
3. Describe Warner's decision to create Marilyn Manson and the Spooky Kids.

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

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

Causal Organizational Patterns

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

Specific
Purpose To inform my audience about the problems associated with drinking among Native American tribal members.

Main Points

1. Explain the history and prevalence of Native Americans drinking alcohol.
2. Explain the effects that alcohol abuse has on Native Americans and how this differs from other populations' experiences.

In this case, the first main point is about the history and prevalence of Native Americans drinking alcohol (the cause). The second point then examines the effects that alcohol abuse has on Native Americans and how it differs from other population groups (the effect).
However, a causal organizational pattern can also begin with an effect and then explore one or more causes. In the following example, the effect is the number of domestic violence arrests.

Specific
Purpose To inform local voters about the domestic violence problem in our city.

Main Points

1. Explain that there are significantly more domestic violence arrests in our city than in comparably sized cities in our state.
2. List possible causes for the arrest statistics, which may be unrelated to the actual domestic violence incidents.

In this example, the possible causes for the difference might include stricter law enforcement, greater likelihood that neighbors report an incident, and police training that emphasizes arrests as opposed to other outcomes. Examining these possible causes may suggest that despite the arrest statistics, the actual number of domestic violence incidents in your city may not be greater than in other comparably sized cities.

Problem-Cause-Solution Organizational Pattern

Problem-cause-solution organizational patterns first present a problem, then identify what is causing the problem, and then recommend a solution to correct the problem. Let's look at an example.

Specific
Purpose To persuade a civic group to support a citywide curfew for individuals under age eighteen.

1. Main Points
   Demonstrate that youth committing vandalism and violence is having a negative effect on our community (problem).
2. Show how youth committing vandalism and violence goes up after 10:00 pm in our community (cause).
3. Explain how instituting a mandatory curfew at 10:00 pm would reduce youth committing vandalism and violence within our community (solution).

In this speech, the speaker wants to persuade people to pass a new curfew for people under eighteen. To help persuade the civic group members, the speaker first shows that vandalism and violence are community problems. Once the speaker has shown the problem, the speaker then explains to the audience that this problem's cause is youth outside after 10:00 pm. Lastly, the speaker provides the mandatory 10:00 pm curfew as a solution to the vandalism and violence problem within the community. The problem-cause-solution format for speeches generally lends itself to persuasive topics because the speaker is asking an audience to believe in and adopt a specific solution.

Psychological Organizational Patterns

Psychological organizational patterns arrange your main ideas by a logical sequence: "a" leads to "b" and "b" leads to "c." This organizational pattern is designed to follow a logical argument, so this format lends itself to persuasive speeches very easily. Let's look at an example.

Specific
Purpose To persuade nurses to use humor in healing the patient.

Main Points

1. How laughing affects the body.
2. How the body's response to laughing can help healing.
3. Strategies for using humor in healing.

In this speech, the speaker starts by discussing how humor affects the body. If a patient is exposed to humor (a), then the patient's body actually physiologically responds in ways that help healing (b). For example, it reduces stress, decreases blood pressure, bolsters one's immune system, etc. Because of these benefits, nurses should use humor that helps with healing (c).

Monroe's Motivated Sequence Organizational Pattern

Monroe's Motivated Sequence organizational pattern provides sequential steps for the speaker to follow in presenting information and the subsequent reaction a speaker desires from his or her audience. These sequences are attention, need, problem, satisfaction, solution, visualization, results, action or approval. Alan H. Monroe's motivated sequence is one of the most commonly cited and discussed organizational patterns for persuasive speeches. The purpose of Monroe's motivated sequence is to help speakers "sequence supporting materials and motivational appeals to form a useful organizational pattern for speeches as a whole" (German et al., 2010).

Monroe's Motivated Sequence List provides Monroe's basic motivated sequence steps.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence List

Steps	Audience Response
Attention—Getting Attention	I want to listen to the speaker.
Need—Showing the Need, Describing the **Problem**	Something needs to be done about the problem.
Satisfaction—Satisfying the Need. Presenting the **Solution.**	To satisfy the need or fix the problem, this is what I need to do.
Visualization—Visualizing the **Results**	I can see myself enjoying the benefits of taking action.
Action—Requesting Audience **Action** or **Approval**	I will act in a specific way or approve a decision or behavior.

Let's look at an example of how Monroe's Motivated Sequence organizational pattern works for a speech.

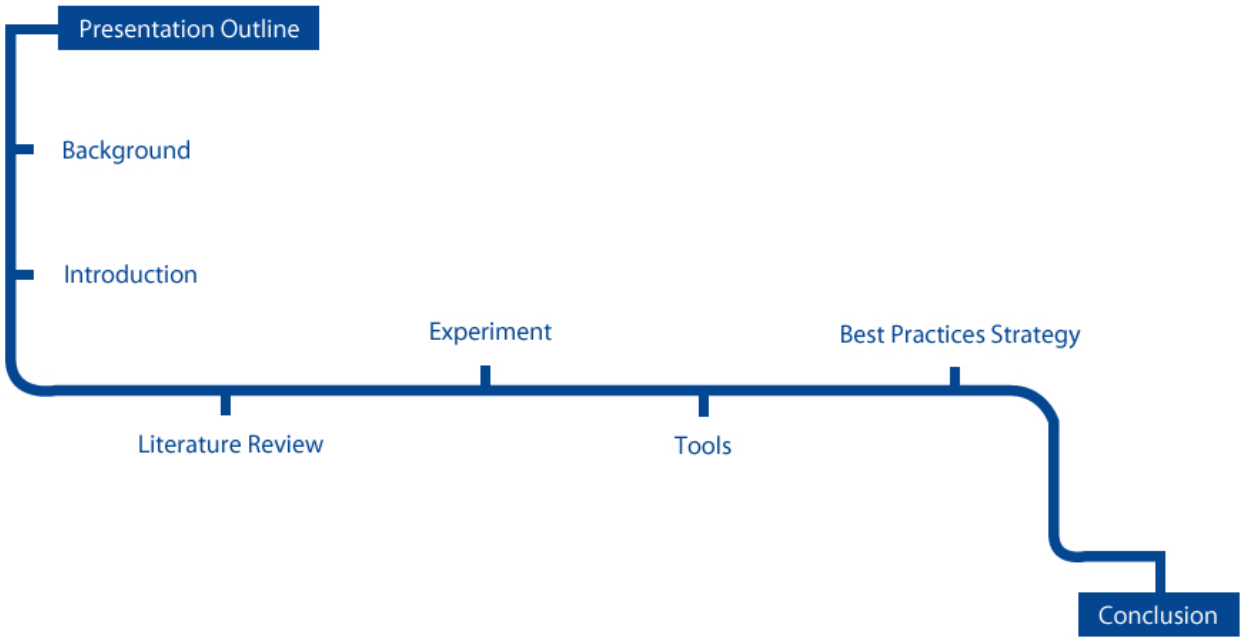
Specific Purpose To persuade my classroom peers that the United States should have stronger laws governing for-profit medical experiments.

Main Points Attention: Want to make nine thousand dollars for just three weeks work lying around and not

doing much? Then be a human guinea pig. Admittedly, you'll have a tube down your throat most of those three weeks, but you'll earn three thousand dollars a week.

1. Need: Every day, many uneducated and lower socioeconomic-status citizens are preyed on by medical and pharmaceutical companies to participate in for-profit medical and drug experiments. Do you want one of your family members to fall prey to this unethical scheme?
2. Satisfaction: The United States should have stronger laws governing for-profit medical experiments to ensure that uneducated and lower-socioeconomic-status citizens are protected.
3. Visualization: If we enact tougher experiment oversight, we can ensure that medical and pharmaceutical research is conducted in a way that adheres to basic American decency and values. If we do not enact tougher experiment oversight, we could find ourselves in a world where the lines between research subject, guinea pig, and patient become increasingly blurred.Action: To prevent the atrocities associated with for-profit medical and pharmaceutical experiments, please sign this petition asking the US Department of Health and Human Services to pass stricter regulations on this out-of-control preying industry.

This example shows how you can take a basic speech topic and use Monroe's motivated sequence to clearly and easily outline your speech efficiently and effectively.



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Selecting an Organizational Pattern

The preceding organizational patterns are potentially useful for organizing your speech's main points. However, not all organizational patterns work for all speeches. For example, as we mentioned earlier, the biographical pattern is useful when you are telling someone's life story. And the compare and contrast, problem-cause-

solution, and psychological organizational patterns are well-suited for persuasive speaking. Your challenge is to choose the best pattern for the particular speech you are giving.

Be aware that it is also possible to combine two or more organizational patterns to meet your specific speech goals. For example, you can discuss a problem and then compare and contrast several different possible solutions. Such a speech combines elements of the compare and contrast and problem-cause-solution patterns. When considering which organizational pattern to use, keep in mind your specific purpose, your audience, and the actual speech material itself to decide which pattern you think will work best.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=49#h5p-48

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Chapter 16: Introduction

What is the appropriate length of an introduction?

Generally, a speaker spends only 10 to 15 percent of their entire speech giving the introduction. This means that if your speech is five minutes long, your introduction is forty-five seconds long. So, your introduction is enormously important—it can either instantly grab your audience's attention or cause them to tune you out before you've really gotten started.

What are the functions of an introduction?

Gain Audience Attention and Interest

An introduction's first major function is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. One of the biggest mistakes that novice speakers make is to assume that people will naturally listen to them merely because they are speaking. While many audience members politely do not talk while you're speaking, many are not really processing what you're saying. Getting them to listen is a completely different challenge! If you do not get the audience's attention at the outset, it will only become more difficult to do so as you continue to speak.

Attention-getters are devices speakers use in an introduction to capture an audience's attention and interest in the speech topic. Further in this chapter we discuss eleven attention-getting devices.

State the Purpose of Your Speech: The Thesis

An introduction's second major function is to reveal your speech's purpose or thesis to your audience. Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speaker was talking about? An introduction is important because it forces the speaker to be mindfully aware of explaining the speech topic to the audience. If the speaker doesn't know what her or his topic is and cannot convey that topic to the audience, that's a big problem. The thesis is the one idea that you want to be clear in your introduction and that you want your audience to remember when you conclude.

Establish Credibility

An introduction's third major function is to establish your credibility with your audience. One of the most researched areas within the communication field is Aristotle's concept of ethos, or credibility. First and foremost, the credibility concept must be understood as a perception of receivers. You may be the most competent,

caring, and trustworthy speaker in the world on a given topic, but if your audience does not perceive you as credible, then your expertise and passion will not matter. As a public speaker, make sure that you explain to your audience why you are a topic-credible speaker. How are you—the speaker—related to the topic? Explain this to your audience.

For an example, if someone is speaking about different volleyball types and their function, they might say: "I have been playing volleyball for twenty years, both indoor and outdoor, on courts, on sand, and grass."

Provide Reasons to Listen

An introduction's fourth major function is to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience. One of the most effective means of establishing a connection with your audience is to provide them with reasons why they should listen to your speech. The idea of establishing a connection is an extension of the notion of caring and goodwill. Instead of assuming the audience will make their own connections to your material, explicitly state how your information is useful to them. Tell them directly how to use your information themselves. Build a bridge to the audience by explicitly connecting your topic to their possible needs. One example:

> "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, you are telling the audience that you understand their possible views and are not trying to attack their intellect or their opinions.

Preview Main Ideas

An introduction's fifth major function is to preview your speech's main ideas. A preview establishes the direction your speech will take. We sometimes call this process signposting because you're establishing signs for audience members to look for while you're speaking. In the most basic speech format, speakers generally have three to four major points they make. During the preview, a speaker outlines what these points are, which demonstrates to the audience that the speaker is organized. A study by Baker found that individuals who are unorganized while speaking are perceived as less credible than those individuals who are organized (Baker, 1965). Solidly previewing your speech's information and then following that preview, definitely helps a speaker's credibility. It also helps your audience keep track of where you are if they momentarily daydream or get distracted.

What are the attention-getting devices?

Now, let's look at attention-getters. Miller (1946) discovered that speakers tend to use one of eleven attention-

getting devices in an introduction. In this section we examine these eleven attention-getters and give examples of how to employ them within a speech. But first, consider these four elements before choosing one:

1. The appropriateness or relevance to your specific audience
2. Your speech's basic purpose
3. Your speech topic
4. Your speech occasion

First, consider the *appropriateness and relevance to your specific audience*. When selecting an attention-getting device, remember that different audiences will have different backgrounds and knowledge, so use your audience analysis to determine whether specific information you plan to use is audience appropriate. For example, if you're giving a speech on family units to individuals over age sixty-five, referencing the television show *Gossip Girl* is not be the best idea because the television show is not relevant to that audience.

Second, consider *your speech's basic purpose*. 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, select one that corresponds with your basic purpose. If your goal is to entertain an audience, starting a speech with a quotation about how many people are dying in Africa each day from malnutrition is not the best way to get your audience's attention. Remember, one basic introduction goal is to prepare your audience for your speech. If your attention-getter differs drastically in tone from your speech—such as discussing dying in Africa when you want your audience to laugh—the disjointedness may cause your audience to become confused or tune you out completely.

Third, consider *your speech topic*. When picking an attention-getting device, it must be relevant to your speech topic. For example, imagine in an economics-topic introduction, the speaker pulls condoms out of his pocket, yells "Free sex!" and throws the condoms at the audience. While this may clearly get the audience's attention, this isn't a good way to prepare them for a speech about bull and bear markets. Not every attention-getter is appropriate for a given topic. Instead, start this speech by explaining that "According to a 2004, 60 Minutes episode, adults in the United States spend approximately $10 billion annually on adult entertainment, which is roughly equivalent to amounts they spend attending professional sporting events, buying music, or going out to the movies" (Leung, 2004). Notice how effective the shocking statistic is in clearly introducing the adult entertainment industry's economic monetary value.

Fourth, consider *your speech occasion*. Different occasions will necessitate different tones or particular styles or speaking manners. 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 it sets the speech's tone.

Eleven Attention-Getting Devices

Reference to Subject

The first attention-getting device to consider is to directly reference your speech's subject. Here's an example:

> We are surrounded by statistical information in today's world, so understanding statistics is becoming paramount to citizenship in the twenty-first century.

This sentence explicitly tells an audience that the speech is about the importance of understanding statistics. While this isn't the most entertaining or interesting attention-getter, it is very clear and direct.

Attentive Audience, by Dave Dugdale, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Reference to Audience

The second attention-getting device to consider is to directly reference the audience. In this case, the speaker clearly understands the audience and points out that there is something unique about the audience that should make them interested in the speech's content. Here's an example:

> As human resource professionals, you and I know the importance of talent management. In today's competitive world, we need to invest in getting and keeping the best talent for our organizations to succeed.

In this example, the speaker reminds the audience of their shared status as human resource professionals and uses this common ground to acknowledge the importance of talent management in human resources.

Quotations

The third attention-getting device to consider is to use the words of another person that relate directly to your topic. Probably the most famous quotation book of all time is *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations,* now in its seventeenth edition. Here are some other websites that contain useful quotation databases for almost any topic:

- The Quotations Page
- Quotations at Bartleby
- Movie Quotes
- The Essence of Quotations

- Quoteland

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

The fourth attention-getting device to consider is to reference a current event that relates to your topic. This reference 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 jail's roof using a makeshift bed-sheet ladder. 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 introduction, the speaker highlights a news event that illustrates what a frivolous lawsuit is and sets up the speech topic: a need for change in how such lawsuits are handled.

Historical Reference

The fifth attention-getting device to consider is to refer to an historical event related to your topic. For example, if you are giving a speech on the Iraq War that began in 2003, refer back to the Vietnam War to make a comparison:

> During the 1960s and '70s, 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 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 evokes Vietnam War memories in the audience to raise awareness of similarities to the Iraq war.

Anecdote

The sixth attention-getting device to consider 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. We emphasize the word "brief." One anecdote type is a real story that emphasizes a speech's basic message. For example, here is an anecdote about 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 a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, Longueira took a step and fell right into an open manhole (Whitney, 2009).

A second anecdote type is a parable or fable. A **parable or fable** is an allegorical anecdote designed to teach general life lessons. The most widely known parables are from the Bible, and the best-known fables are

from Aesop's Fables. For the same speech on how disconnected people are with the real world because of technology, the speaker can also use The Boy and the Filberts fable, for example:

> 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 technology in our society leads us to try to do too many things at once.

Startling Statement

The seventh attention-getting device to consider is to surprise your audience with startling topic information. Often, startling statements are formed as statistics and strange facts. A good startling statistic surprises the audience and gets them engaged in your topic.

> For example, start a speech on dream psychology by noting, "The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year."

A strange fact is a statement that does not involve numbers but is equally surprising to most audiences.

> For example, start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any casinos in Las Vegas." These examples come from a great website – StrangeFacts.com for strange facts.

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, your startling statement must be factual. The Internet is full of startling statements and claims that are simply not factual, so when you find a statement that you'd like to use, you have an ethical duty to ascertain its truth before you use it. Second, your startling statement must be relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value. We've all heard startling claims made in the media that are clearly made for shock or fear mongering. As speakers, we have an ethical obligation to avoid playing on people's emotions in this way.

Question

The eighth attention-getting device to consider is to ask audience members a question. There are two types of questions commonly used as attention-getters: response questions and rhetorical questions. A **response question** requires the audience to answer in some manner.

> For example, ask your 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 cases, the speaker wants the audience to respond.

A **rhetorical question,** on the other hand, does not require an actual reply.

> For example, a speaker talking about the importance of HIV testing starts 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 answer, but rather to think about the questions as the speech progresses.

Humor

The ninth attention-getting device to consider is humor. Humor is an amazing tool—when used properly, it is a double-edged sword. If you do not wield the sword carefully, your audience will turn against you very quickly. When using humor, know your 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.

> For example, think about how incompetent the Michael Scott character seems on *The Office* television program, due in large part because he ineffectively uses humor.

Always test out any humor on a potential audience sample prior to actually using it during a speech. Humor can be incorporated into several of the attention-getting devices mentioned, such as a humorous anecdote, quotation, or current event. When looking for humorous attention-getters make sure that the humor is not offensive to your audience and relevant to your speech.

Personal Reference

The tenth attention-getting device to consider is to refer to a story about yourself that is relevant for your topic. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience. If you are an expert or have firsthand experience related to your topic, sharing this information with your audience is also a great way to show that you are credible.

For example, if you had a gastric bypass surgery and wanted to give an informative speech about the procedure, introduce your speech in this way:

> In the fall of 2008, I decided that it was time that I took my life into my own hands. After suffering for years with obesity, I decided to take a leap of faith and get a gastric bypass in an attempt to finally beat the disease.

If you use a personal example, don't get carried away with the focus on yourself and your own life. Your 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 you to maintain your 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, avoid any material that gets you overly choked up while speaking. When speakers have an emotional breakdown while speaking, audience members become very uncomfortable and stop listening to the message.

Reference to Occasion

The eleventh attention-getting device to consider is to refer directly to the speaking occasion. This attention-getter is only useful if the speech is 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 many other special occasions.

Speech Examples

The following YouTube videos show numerous different speeches. While watching these videos, ask yourself the following questions: How have they used various attention-getting devices? Have they clearly used all aspects of an introduction? Do they have a strong thesis and preview? How could you have made the introduction stronger?

- Animal Experimentation
- Life after Having a Child
- Pros and Cons of Cholesterol
- On Being a Hero
- LASIK Eye Surgery

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=51#h5p-49

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Chapter 17: Conclusion

What are the benefits of a strong conclusion?

"OK, I'm done; thank God that's over!" Or, "Thanks. Now what? Do I just sit down?" It's understandable to feel relief as you end your speech, but remember that as a speaker, your conclusion is the last chance you have to drive home your ideas. When you opt to end the speech with an ineffective conclusion—or no conclusion at all—your speech loses the energy you created, and the audience is left confused and disappointed. Just as a good introduction helps bring an audience into your speech's world, and a good speech body holds the audience in that world, a good conclusion helps bring that audience back to reality. So, plan ahead to ensure that your conclusion is an effective one. While a good conclusion will not rescue a poorly prepared speech, a strong conclusion signals to your listeners that the speech is over and helps them remember your topic. Now, let's examine the functions fulfilled by a speech conclusion.

Signals the End

The first function of a good conclusion is to signal the speech's end. You may be thinking that telling an audience that you're about to stop speaking is a "no brainer," but many speakers really don't prepare their audience to conclude. When a speaker just suddenly stops speaking, the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead, make sure that you leave your audience knowledgeable and satisfied.

Aids Audience's Memory

The second function of a good conclusion stems from some very interesting research reported by the German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus in his 1885 book *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology* (Ebbinghaus, 1885). Ebbinghaus proposed that humans remember information in a linear fashion, which he calls the serial position effect. He found that an individual's ability to remember information in a list, such as a grocery list, a chores list, or a to-do list depends on the item's location on the list. Specifically, he found that items toward the list's beginning and items toward the list's end tended to have the highest recall rates. In Ebbinghaus' serial position effect, he calls information at the list's beginning—primacy, and information at the list's end—recency, and shows that information in these positions are easier to recall than information in the list's middle.

So, what does this serial position effect have to do with speech conclusions? A lot! Ray Ehrensberger wanted to test Ebbinghaus' serial position effect in public speaking. Ehrensberger created an experiment that rearranged a speech topic's order to determine the audience's information recall (Ehrensberger, 1945). Ehrensberger's study reaffirmed primacy and recency's importance when listening to speeches. In fact, Ehrensberger found that the information delivered during a speech conclusion—recency, had the highest recall level overall.

What should I include in a strong conclusion?

A strong conclusion restates the thesis, reviews the main points, and uses a concluding device.

Restate the Thesis

The first step in a powerful conclusion is to restate your thesis statement. When you restate the thesis statement as you conclude, you're re-emphasizing your speech's overarching main idea. For example, suppose your thesis statement is, "I will analyze how Barack Obama uses lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" At the conclusion, restate the thesis in this fashion: "In the past few minutes, I have analyzed how Barack Obama uses 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 your conclusion reminds the audience of your speech's major purpose or goal, helping them to better remember it.

Review the Main Points

The second step in a powerful conclusion is to review the main points after restating the speech's thesis. A big differences between written and oral communication is oral communication's need to repeat. So, you increase the likelihood that the audience retains your main points after the speech is over when you do the following: preview your main points in the introduction, effectively discuss and make transitions to your main points during the speech's body, and finally, review your main points in the conclusion,

In a speech's introduction, deliver a *preview* of the main body points, and in the conclusion, deliver a *review*. Let's look at a sample preview:

> To understand the gender and communication field, I will first differentiate between the terms biological sex and gender. I will then explain gender research in communication's history. Lastly, I will examine some important findings related to gender and communication.

In this preview, you have three clear main points. Let's see how you can review them at your speech's conclusion:

> Today, we have differentiated between the terms biological sex and gender, examined gender research in communication's history, and analyzed some topic research findings.
>
> In the past few minutes, I have explained the difference between the terms biological sex and gender, discussed the communication field's rise in gender research, and examined some groundbreaking topic studies.

Notice that both conclusions review the main points originally set forth. Both variations are equally effective main point reviews, but you might like the linguistic turn of one over the other. Remember, while there is a lot of science to help us understand public speaking, there's a lot of art as well, so you are always encouraged to choose the wording that you think is most effective for your audience.

Concluding Devices

The final step in a powerful conclusion is to employ a concluding device. A concluding device is essentially the final thought you want to impart to your audience when you stop speaking. It also provides a definitive sense

of closure to your speech. Just as a gymnast dismounting the parallel bars or balance beam wants to stick the landing and avoid taking two or three additional steps, a speaker wants to stick their speech ending with a concluding device instead of with, "Well, umm, I guess I'm done." Miller observed that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices when ending a speech (Miller, 1946). Let's examine these ten concluding devices.

Conclude with a Challenge

The first way to conclude a speech 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 fund raising's necessity, conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. Audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves *their* effort.

Conclude with a Quotation

The second way to conclude a speech is by reciting a quotation relevant to the speech topic. When using a quotation, think about whether your goal is to end on a persuasive note or an informative note. Some quotations will have a clear call-to-action, while other quotations summarize or provoke thought. For example, let's say you are delivering an informative speech about dissident writers in the former Soviet Union. End by citing this quotation from Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "A great writer is, so to speak, a second government in his country. And for that reason, no regime has ever loved great writers" (Solzhenitsyn, 1964). Notice that this quotation underscores the writers-as-dissidents idea, but it doesn't ask listeners to put forth effort to engage in any specific thought process or behavior. If, on the other hand, you are delivering a persuasive speech urging your audience to participate in a very risky political demonstration, use this quotation from Martin Luther King Jr.: "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live" (King, 1963). In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with these messages: that great risks are worth taking, that they make our lives worthwhile, and that the right thing to do is to take that great risk.

Conclude with a Summary

The third way to conclude a speech is to end with a summary. To do this, the speaker simply elongates the main point's review. While this may not be the most exciting concluding device, it can be useful for information that is highly technical or complex or for speeches that last longer than thirty minutes. Typically, for short speeches, such as student-given speeches, avoid this summary device.

Conclude by Visualizing the Future

The fourth way to conclude a speech is to visualize the future. This device helps your audience imagine the future that you believe can occur. For example, if you are giving a speech on developing video games for learning, conclude by inviting your audience to visualize a future classroom where video games are perceived as true learning tools and how those tools are used. More often, speakers use future visualization to depict how society *would be*, or how an individual listener's life *would be* different, if the speaker's persuasive attempts work. For example, if in your speech you propose that hiring more public-school reading specialists will solve

illiteracy, ask your audience to imagine a world without illiteracy. In using this visual, your goal is to persuade your audience to adopt your view point. By showing that your future vision is a positive one, this conclusion further persuades your audience to help create this future.

Conclude with an Appeal-for-Action

The fifth way to conclude a speech, and probably the most common persuasive 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 to change their 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 appeal type is the immediate call-to-action. Whereas some appeals ask for people to engage in future behavior, 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. Here are more immediate call-to-action examples:

- In a speech on eating more vegetables, pass out raw veggies and dip at the speech conclusion.
- In a speech on petitioning a lawmaker for a new law, provide audience members with a prewritten email they can send to the lawmaker.
- In a speech on hand sanitizer's importance, pass out little hand sanitizer bottles and show audience members how to correctly apply the sanitizer.
- In a speech on charity donations, send a box around the room asking for donations.

These are just a few different examples we've actually seen students use to elicit an immediate change in behavior. The immediate call-to-action may not lead to long-term change, but can be very effective at increasing the likelihood that an audience will change behavior in the short term.

Conclude by Inspiration

The sixth way to conclude a speech is to inspire someone. By definition, the word inspire means to affect or arouse someone. Both affect and arouse have strong emotional connotations. The ultimate goal of employing an inspirational 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 domestic violence's prevalence in our society today. That speaker could end the speech by reading Paulette Kelly's powerful poem, "I Got Flowers Today," which is a poem that evokes strong emotions because it's about an abuse victim who receives flowers from her abuser every time she is 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 seventh way to conclude a speech is to end with your advice. This 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 must be a really good reason your opinion—and therefore your advice—should matter to your audience. If, for example, you are a nuclear physics expert, conclude an energy speech by giving advice about nuclear energy's benefits.

Conclude by Proposing a Solution

The eighth way to conclude a speech is to offer a powerful solution to the problem discussed within your speech. For example, perhaps you have been discussing the problems associated with art education's disappearance in the United States. Propose a solution to create more community-based art experiences for school children as a way to fill this gap. Although this can be an effective conclusion, consider discussing the solution in more depth as a stand-alone main point within the speech's body so that you can address your audience's concerns about the proposed solution.

Conclude with a Question

The nineth way to conclude a speech is to ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea. Maybe you are giving a speech on the environment's importance, so you end the speech by saying, "Think about your children's future. What kind of world do you want them raised in? A world that is clean, vibrant, and beautiful—or one that is filled with smog, pollution, filth, and disease?" Notice that you aren't actually asking the audience to verbally or nonverbally answer the question—the question's goal is to force the audience into thinking about what kind of world they want for their children.

Conclude with a Reference to Your Audience

The tenth way to conclude a speech is to refer to your audience. As discussed by Miller (1946), this concluding device is useful when a speaker attempts to answer a basic question *for* the audience, such as, "What's in it for me?" The goal of this concluding device is to spell out the direct benefits a behavior or thought-change has for audience members. For example, a speaker talking about stress reduction techniques concludes by clearly listing all the physical health benefits that stress reduction offers, such as improved reflexes, improved immune system, improved hearing, and lowered blood pressure. In this case, the speaker is clearly spelling out why audience members should care—so what? What's in it for me!

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=53#h5p-50

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Chapter 18: Persuasive Speaking

This chapter is adapted from Chapter 17 of Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 and Chapter 13 of Exploring Public Speaking: 4th Edition, by Kristin Barton, Amy Burger, Jerry Drye, Cathy Hunsicker, Amy Mendes and Matthew LeHew, licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

What are the theories of Persuasion?

Persuasion Introduced: Theories of Persuasion

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Persuasion Today

In his text, *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century,* Richard Perloff notes that studying persuasion today is extremely important for five basic reasons:

1. Persuasive communications have grown exponentially in sheer numbers.
2. Persuasive messages travel faster than ever before.

3. Persuasion has become institutionalized.
4. Persuasive communication has become more subtle and devious.
5. Persuasive communication is more complex than ever before (Perloff, 2003).

In essence, persuasive communication's nature has changed over the last fifty years due to the influx of various technology types. People are bombarded by persuasive messages in today's world, so thinking about how to create persuasive messages effectively is very important for modern public speakers. A century, or even half a century ago, public speakers contended only with printed words on paper for attracting and holding an audience's attention. Today, public speakers must contend with laptops, netbooks, iPads, smartphones, smartboards, television sets, and many other tools to send various persuasive messages immediately to a target audience.

Defining Persuasion

Persuasion is an attempt to get a person to behave in a manner or to embrace a viewpoint related to values, attitudes, and beliefs that he or she would not do otherwise. If you think this describes your informative speech, you are partially right. Think of it like this: information + persuasion = change.

Change a View Point: Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

The first persuasive public speaking type involves changing someone's attitudes, values, and beliefs. An **attitude** is defined as an individual's general predisposition toward something as being good or bad, right or wrong, or negative or positive. Maybe you believe that local curfew laws for people under twenty-one are a bad idea, so you want to persuade others to adopt a negative attitude toward such laws.

You can also attempt to persuade individuals to change their value toward something. **Value** refers to an individual's perception of something's usefulness, importance, or worth. We can value a college education or technology or freedom. Values, as a general concept, are fairly ambiguous and tend to be very lofty ideas. Ultimately, what we value in life actually motivates us to engage in various behaviors. For example, if you value technology, you are more likely to seek out new technology or software on your own. On the contrary, if you do not value technology, you are less likely to seek out new technology or software unless someone or some circumstance requires you to.

Lastly, you can attempt to persuade people to change their personal beliefs. **Beliefs** are propositions or positions that an individual holds as true or false without positive knowledge or proof. Typically, beliefs are divided into two basic categories: core and dispositional. **Core beliefs** are beliefs that people have actively engaged in and created throughout their lives, for example, a belief in a higher power or a belief in extraterrestrial life forms. **Dispositional beliefs**, on the other hand, are beliefs that people have not actively engaged in and created, but rather judgments that they make based on their related subject knowledge when they encounter a proposition. For example, imagine that you are asked the question, "Can stock cars reach speeds of one thousand miles per hour on a one-mile oval track?" Even though you may never have attended a stock car race or even seen one on television, you can make split-second judgments about your automobile-speed understanding and say fairly certainly that you believe stock cars cannot travel at one thousand miles per hour on a one-mile track.

When it comes to persuading people to alter core and dispositional beliefs, persuading audiences to change core beliefs is more difficult than persuading them to change dispositional beliefs. For this reason, you are very unlikely to persuade people to change their deeply held core beliefs about a topic in a five- to seven-minute

speech. However, if you give a persuasive speech on a topic related to an audience's dispositional belief, you may have better success. While core beliefs may seem to be exciting and interesting, persuasive topics related to dispositional beliefs are generally better for novice speakers with limited time allotments.

Change Behavior

The second type of persuasive speech is one in which the speaker attempts to persuade an audience to change their behavior. Behaviors come in various forms, so finding one you think people should start, increase, or decrease shouldn't be difficult at all. Speeches encouraging audiences to vote for a candidate, sign a petition opposing a tuition increase, or drink tap water instead of bottled water are all behavior-oriented persuasive speeches. In all these cases, the goal is to change an individual listener's behavior.

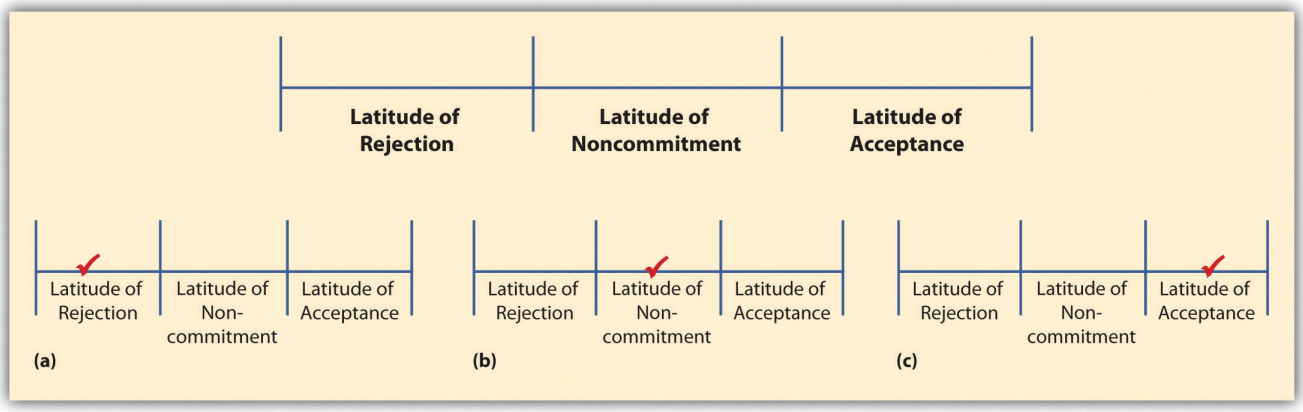
Persuasion Theories

Understanding how people are persuaded is very important to a public speaking discussion. Thankfully, many researchers have created theories that help explain why people are persuaded. While there are numerous theories, we are only going to examine three: social judgment theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and the elaboration likelihood model.

Social Judgment Theory

Social judgment theory asks that you think of persuasion as a continuum or line going both directions. Your audience members, either as a group or individually, are sitting somewhere on that line in reference to your thesis statement—your **proposition**. Also, the word "claim" is used for a proposition or thesis statement in a persuasive speech because you are *claiming* an idea is true or an action is valuable, which the audience may not find true or acceptable. To be an effective persuasive speaker, after determining your topic, determine where your audience "sits" on the continuum.

Muzafer Sherif and Carl Hovland created social judgment theory to determine what message types and under what conditions communicated messages lead to changing someone's behavior (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). In essence, they found that people's perceptions of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors exist on a continuum that they call **latitude of rejection, latitude of noncommitment,** and **latitude of acceptance** (Figure 17.2 "Latitudes of Judgments").



Latitudes of judgments diagram, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA-4.0

Sherif and Hovland theorized that persuasion is a matter of knowing how great the discrepancy or difference is between the speaker and the audience's viewpoint. If the speaker's viewpoint is similar to audience members' viewpoint, then persuasion is more likely. If the discrepancy between the two is too great, then persuasion decreases dramatically.

To describe this theory in more detail, imagine that you plan to persuade your peers to major in a foreign language. Some peers will disagree with you right off the bat, which is latitude of rejection, part (a). Other peers will think majoring in a foreign language is a great idea: latitude of acceptance, part (c). Still others will have no opinion either way: latitude of noncommitment, part (b). Now, in each latitude there is a range of possibilities. For example, one listener may accept the idea of minoring in a foreign language, but when asked to major or even double major in a foreign language, he or she ends up in the latitude of noncommitment or even rejection.

Persuasive messages are the most likely to succeed when they fall into an individual's latitude of acceptance. For example, people who are in favor of majoring in a foreign language are more likely to positively evaluate your message, assimilate your advice into their own ideas, and engage in desired behavior. On the other hand, people who reject your message are more likely to negatively evaluate your message, not assimilate your advice, and not engage in desired behavior.

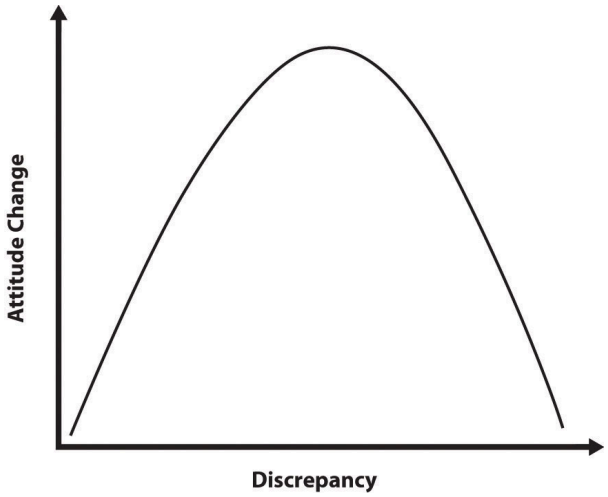
We often find ourselves in situations where we are trying to persuade others to change attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors with which they may not agree, so think about the range that exists. For example, in our foreign language case, see the following possible opinions from the audience's perspective:

1. Complete agreement: Let's all major in foreign languages.
2. Strong agreement: I will major in a foreign language; I will double major in a foreign language.
3. Agreement in part: I won't major in a foreign language, but I will minor in a foreign language.
4. Neutral: While I think studying a foreign language can be worthwhile, I also think a college education can be complete without it. I really don't feel strongly one way or the other.
5. Disagreement in part: I will only take the foreign language classes required by my major.
6. Strong disagreement: I don't think I should have to take any foreign language classes.
7. Complete disagreement: Majoring in a foreign language is a complete waste of a college

education.

These seven possible opinions on the subject do not represent the full spectrum of choices, but give us various degrees of agreement with the general topic.

Sherif and Hovland theorized that persuasion was a matter of knowing how great the discrepancy or difference was between the speaker's viewpoint and that of the audience. If the speaker's point of view was similar to that of audience members, then persuasion was more likely. If the discrepancy between the idea proposed by the speaker and the audience's viewpoint is too great, then the likelihood of persuasion decreases dramatically.



Discrepancy and attitude change, by University of Minnesota, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA-4.0

Sherif and Hovland also suggest that there is a threshold for most people where attitude change isn't possible. These people slip from the latitude of acceptance into the latitude of noncommitment or rejection. The "Discrepancy and Attitude Change" graph represents this process. The area covered by the curve's left side represents options a person agrees with, even if there is an initial discrepancy between the speaker and audience member at the speech's start. However, there comes a point where the discrepancy between the speaker and audience member becomes too large, which moves into the options that the audience member automatically rejects. In essence, it's essential for you to know with which options you can realistically persuade your audience and which options will never happen. Maybe there is no way for you to persuade your audience to major or double major in a foreign language, but perhaps you can get them to minor in a foreign language. While you may not be achieving your complete end-goal, it's better than getting nowhere at all. This is called **baby steps**—we want to bring the audience as close as we can to our persuasive goal without moving them into the disagree category.

Those who disagree with your proposition but are willing to listen are called the **target audience.** These are the audience members you want to target to persuade. At the same time, another audience cluster are those who are extremely opposed to your position to the point that they probably will not give you a fair hearing. Finally, some audience members may already agree with you, although they don't know why.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Why is persuasion hard? Persuasion is hard mainly because we have a bias against change. As much as we hear statements such as, "The only constant is change" or "Variety is the spice of life," research evidence shows that in reality, people do not like change. For example, recent risk-aversion research points to how we are more concerned about *not* losing something than about gaining something. Change is often seen as a loss rather than a gain, or a gamble, or a step into the unknown (Vedantam & Greene, 2013).

Additionally, psychologists point to how we protect our beliefs, attitudes, and values by **selectively exposing** ourselves to messages that we already agree with, rather than those that confront or challenge us. This selective exposure is especially evident in an individual's mass media choices, such as which TV, radio, podcast, or Internet sites they chose to listen to and read. Not only do we selectively expose ourselves to information, we selectively attend to, perceive, and recall information that supports our existing viewpoints. These behaviors are referred to as selective attention, selective perception, and selective recall.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory arose from the selective exposure notion. In 1957, Leon Festinger proposed a theory for understanding how persuasion functions, called cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). **Cognitive dissonance** is an aversive motivational state that occurs when an individual entertains two or more contradictory attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors simultaneously. For example, maybe you know you should be working on your speech, but you really want to go to a movie with a friend. In this case, practicing your speech and going to the movie are two cognitions that are inconsistent with one another. To successfully persuade your audience, you must induce enough cognitive dissonance in listeners so that they will change their attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

For cognitive dissonance to work effectively there are three necessary conditions: aversive consequences, freedom of choice, and insufficient external justification (Frymier & Nadler, 2007). **Aversive consequence** means there is strong enough punishment for *not* changing one's attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. For example, you give a speech on why people need to eat more apples. If your aversive consequence for *not* eating apples is that your audience will not get enough fiber, most people will simply not be persuaded because the punishment isn't severe enough. Instead, the punishment associated with *not* eating apples needs to be significant enough to change their behavior. If you convince your audience that without enough fiber in their diets they are at higher risk for heart disease or colon cancer, they might fear the aversive consequences enough to change their behavior.

Freedom of choice, the second condition necessary for cognitive dissonance to work, means that people must feel they have the freedom to make their own choice. If listeners feel they are being coerced into doing something, then dissonance will not be aroused. They may alter their behavior in the short term, but as soon as the coercion is gone, the original behavior will reemerge. It's like the person who drives more slowly when a police officer is nearby but ignores speed limits once officers are no longer present. As a speaker, if you want to increase cognitive dissonance, make sure that your audience doesn't feel coerced or manipulated, but rather that they can clearly see that they have a choice to be persuaded.

External and internal justifications are the final condition necessary for cognitive dissonance to work. **External justification** refers to identifying reasons outside of one's own control to support one's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. **Internal justification** refers to someone voluntarily changing a behavior, belief, or attitude to *reduce cognitive dissonance*. When it comes to creating change through persuasion, external justifications are less likely to produce change than internal justifications (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959).

For example, you give a speech with the specific purpose to persuade college students to use condoms whenever they engage in sexual intercourse. Your anonymous survey audience analysis indicates that many listeners do not consistently use condoms. Which is the more persuasive argument: (a) "Failure to use condoms inevitably results in unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including AIDS,"or (b) "If you think of yourself as a responsible adult, you'll use condoms to protect yourself and your partner"? With the

first argument, you have provided external justification for using condoms, such as the terrible things that will happen if you don't use condoms. Listeners who reject this external justification because they don't believe these dire consequences are inevitable are unlikely to change their behavior. With the second argument, however, if your listeners think of themselves as responsible adults, and they don't consistently use condoms, the conflict between their self-image and their behavior elicits *cognitive dissonance*. To reduce this cognitive dissonance, they are likely to seek internal justification because they want to view themselves as responsible adults and change their behavior by using condoms more consistently. In this case, according to cognitive dissonance theory, the second persuasive argument—internal justification—is the one more likely to lead to a behavior change.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The **elaboration likelihood model,** created by Petty and Cacioppo (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), is the last of the three persuasion theories discussed here. The basic model has a continuum from high elaboration or thought to low elaboration or thought. Petty and Cacioppo refer to the term **elaboration** as the amount of thought or cognitive energy someone uses to analyze a message's content. *High elaboration* uses the central route and is designed for analyzing a message's content. As such, when people truly analyze a message, they use cognitive energy to examine the arguments set forth within the message. In an ideal world, everyone processes information through this **central route** and actually analyzes arguments presented to them. Unfortunately, many people often use the **peripheral route** when processing persuasive messages, which results in low elaboration or thought. *Low elaboration* occurs when people attend to messages but do not analyze the message or use cognitive energy to ascertain the message's arguments.

For persuasion researchers, the question then becomes how do people select one route or the other when attending to persuasive messages? Petty and Cacioppo noted that there are two basic factors that determine whether someone centrally processes a persuasive message: ability and motivation. *Ability* means that audience members must *be able* to process the persuasive message. If the language or message is too complicated, then people will not highly elaborate on it because they will not understand the persuasive message. *Motivation*, on the other hand, refers to whether the audience member chooses to elaborate on the message.

Frymier and Nadler discussed five basic factors that can lead to high elaboration: personal relevance and personal involvement, accountability, personal responsibility, incongruent information, and need for cognition (Frymier & Nadler, 2007).

Personal Relevance and Personal Involvement

Personal relevance and personal involvement are the first reason people are motivated to take the central route or to use high elaboration when listening to a persuasive message. Personal relevance refers to whether the audience member feels that he or she is actually directly affected by the speech topic. For example, if someone is listening to a speech on why cigarette smoking is harmful, and that listener has never smoked cigarettes, he or she may think the speech topic simply isn't relevant. Obviously, as a speaker, always think about how your topic is relevant to your listeners and make sure to drive this home throughout your speech. *Personal involvement,* on the other hand, asks whether the individual is actively engaged with the issue at hand. For example, does the listener send letters of support, give speeches on the topic, have a bumper sticker, and so forth. If an audience member is an advocate who is constantly denouncing tobacco companies for their harm to society, then he or she is highly involved and engages in high elaboration during a persuasive speech about cigarette smoking's harmfulness.

Accountability

Accountability, the second condition under which people are likely to process information using the central route, occurs when they feel that they will be held accountable for the information after the fact. With accountability, there is the perception that someone or a group of people will be watching to see if the receiver remembers the information later on. We've all witnessed this phenomenon when one student asks the question, "Will this be on the test?" If the teacher says, "No," you can almost immediately see students' eyes glaze over as they tune out the information. As a speaker, it's often hard to hold your audience accountable for the information given within a speech.

Personal Responsibility

Personal responsibility refers to when people feel that they are going to be held responsible for evaluating a message or for a message's outcome. If this is the case, and if there is not a clear external accounting involved, listeners are more likely to critically think through the message using the central route. For example, you've been asked to evaluate your public speaking peers. Research shows that if only one or two students are asked to evaluate any one speaker at a time, the speaker evaluations are better quality than if everyone in the class is asked to evaluate every speaker. When people feel that their evaluation is important, they take more responsibility and are more critical of the message.

Incongruent Information

Incongruent information refers to how people are motivated to centrally process information when it does not adhere to their own ideas. For example, you're a highly progressive liberal, and one of your peers delivers a speech on the Tea Party movement's importance in American politics. The information presented during the speech will most likely be in direct contrast to your personal ideology, which causes incongruence because the Tea Party ideology is opposed to a progressive liberal ideology. As such, you are more likely to pay attention to the speech, specifically looking for flaws in the speaker's argument.

Need-for-Cognition

Need-for-cognition refers to some people who centrally process information because of a personality characteristic. **Need-for-cognition** refers to a personality trait characterized by an individual's internal drive or need to engage in critical thinking and information processing. People who are high in need-for-cognition simply enjoy thinking about complex ideas and issues. Even if the idea or issue being presented has no personal relevance, high need-for-cognition people are more likely to process information using the central route.

What are the types of persuasive claims?

Maya Angelou, by Boston College, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Obviously, there are many different, interesting persuasive claims or speech topics to select for a public speaking class. For instance, to change a specific college or university policy, or to increase U.S. enforcement against trafficking women and children. Notice in the first sentence that we used the word claims to refer to speech topics. This is because when we attempt to persuade others, we are making a claim, and we use evidence and logic to support our claim. Below, we discuss three common claim types used to persuade: factual claims, policy claims, and value claims.

Factual Claims

Factual claims set out to argue an assertion's truth or falsity. Some factual claims are simple to answer: Barack Obama is the first African American President; Robert Wadlow, the tallest man in the world, was eight feet and eleven inches tall; Facebook wasn't profitable until 2009. All these factual claims are well documented by evidence and can be easily supported with a little research.

However, many factual claims cannot be answered absolutely. For some factual claims it is hard to determine whether they are true or false because the final answer on the subject has not yet been discovered. For example, when is censorship good? What rights should animals have? When does life begin? Probably the

most historically interesting and consistent factual claim is whether a higher power, God, or other religious deity exists. The issue is that there is not enough evidence to clearly answer this factual claim in any specific direction, which is where the concept of faith must be involved.

Predictions, which may or may not happen, are other factual claims that may not be easily answered using evidence. For example, you give a speech on climate change's future or U.S. terrorism's future. While there may be evidence that something *possibly* will happen in the future, unless you're a psychic, you don't actually know.

When thinking about factual claims, pretend that you're putting a specific claim on trial, and as the speaker, your job is to defend your claim as a lawyer would defend a client. Ultimately, your job is to be more persuasive than your audience members, who act as both opposition attorneys and judges.

Policy Claims

Policy claims make a statement about a problem and offer the solution to implement. **Policy claims** are probably the most common persuasive speaking form because we live in a society surrounded by problems and people who have ideas about how to fix these problems. Let's look at a few possible policy claims examples:

- The United States should end capital punishment.
- Human cloning for organ donations should be legal.
- Nonviolent drug offenders should be sent to rehabilitation centers and not prisons.
- The United States needs to invest more in preventing poverty at home and less in feeding starving people around the world.

Each policy claim has a clear perspective for which to advocate: they always present a clear and direct opinion about what should occur and what needs to change. When presenting policy claims, there are two different persuasive goals to examine: to gain passive agreement and to gain immediate action.

To Gain Passive Agreement

To gain passive agreement means to persuade your audience to agree with what you are saying about a specific policy without asking them to do anything to enact the policy. For example, you speak on why the Federal Communications Commission should regulate violence on television like it does foul language, and you advocate for no violence on TV until after 9 pm. Your goal is to get your audience to agree that it is in our best interest as a society to prevent violence from being shown on television before 9 pm, but, you are not seeking to have your audience run out and call their senators or congressmen or even sign a petition. Often, the first step in larger political change is simply getting a massive number of people to agree with your policy perspective.

Let's look at a few more passive agreement claims:

- Racially profiling individuals suspected of belonging to known terrorist groups is a way to make America safer.
- Colleges and universities should voluntarily implement a standardized testing program to ensure student learning outcomes are similar across different institutions.

In each of these claims, the goal is to sway one's audience to a specific attitude, value, or belief, but not necessarily to get the audience to enact any specific behaviors.

To Gain Immediate Action

To gain immediate action means to persuade your audience to start engaging in a specific behavior. This is the alternative to gain passive agreement. Many passive agreement topics can become immediate action-oriented topics as soon as you tell your audience what behavior to engage in, such as to sign a petition, to call a senator, or to vote. While it is much easier to gain passive agreement than to get people to do something, always try to get your audience to act and do so quickly. A common mistake that speakers make is telling people to enact a behavior that will occur in the future. The longer it takes for people to engage in the action you desire, the less likely it is that your audience will engage in that behavior.

Here are some examples of good claims with immediate calls-to-action:

- College students should eat more fruit, so I am encouraging everyone to eat the apple I have provided you and start getting more fruit in your diet.
- Teaching a child to read is one way to ensure that the next generation will be more literate than those who have come before us, so please sign up right now to volunteer one hour a week to help teach a child to read.

Each example starts with a basic claim and then tags on an immediate call-to-action. Remember, the faster you can get people to engage in a behavior, the more likely they actually will.

Value Claims

Value claims advocate making a judgment about something. For example, it's good or bad, it's right or wrong, it's beautiful or ugly, moral or immoral.

Let's look at three value claims. We've italicized the evaluative term in each claim:

- Dating people on the Internet is an *immoral* dating practice.
- It's *unfair* for pregnant women to have special parking spaces at malls, shopping centers, and stores.

Each value claim could be made by a speaker, and other speakers could say the exact opposite. When making a value claim, it's hard to ascertain why someone has chosen a specific value stance without understanding her or his criteria for making the evaluative statement. For example, if someone finds all forms of technology immoral, then it's really no surprise that he or she would find Internet dating immoral as well. As such, you must clearly explain your criteria for making the evaluative statement. Ultimately, when making a value claim, make sure that you clearly label your evaluative term and provide clear criteria for how you came to your evaluation.

What is reasoning and what are errors in reasoning?

Recall that in previous chapters, we discussed the three rhetorical appeals known as ethos, pathos, and logos. In this chapter, we discuss the second part of logos, or logical argument, which includes using critical thinking to fashion and evaluate persuasive appeals. When giving a persuasive speech, in addition to providing fresh evidence, present your audience with a logical speech and arguments that they understand and to which they can relate. Logos involves composing a speech that is logically structured and easy-to-follow. Logos also involves using correct logical reasoning and avoids using fallacious reasoning, or logical fallacies.

First, let's start by *thinking* about *critical thinking*, which is a term with many meanings. One meaning is the traditional ability to use formal logic. To do so, you must first understand the two reasoning types: inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning.

Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning, also called induction, is probably the reasoning form we use more regularly. *Induction* is sometimes referred to as "reasoning from example or specific instance," and indeed, that is a good description. Induction is also referred to as "bottom-up" thinking. And *inductive* reasoning is sometimes called "the scientific method." 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 inductive reasoning types that we discuss below: generalization, causal reasoning, sign reasoning, and analogical reasoning. Each is based on different evidence and logical moves or jumps.

Generalization is a form of inductive reasoning that draws conclusions based on recurring patterns or repeated observations. One must observe multiple instances and find common qualities or behaviors and then make a broad or universal statement about them. For example: if every dog I see chases squirrels, then I would probably generalize that all dogs chase squirrels. Another example: if you are a coffee drinker, you might hear news reports about coffee being bad for your health, and then six months later, another study shows that coffee has positive health effects. Scientific studies are often repeated or conducted in different ways to obtain more and better evidence and to make updated conclusions. Consequently, the way to disprove inductive reasoning is to provide contradictory evidence or examples.

Causal Reasoning seeks to make cause-effect connections instead of looking for patterns the way generalization does. Causal reasoning is a form of inductive reasoning, and we use it all the time without even thinking about it. For example: 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.

Sign Reasoning 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. For example: 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. Ice cream and crime 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 involves comparison. For it to be valid, the two things being compared—schools, states, countries, businesses—must be essentially truly alike in many important ways. For example, although Harvard University and your college are both higher education institutions, 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 is 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.

A popular argument structure that comes from informal logic or inductive reasoning is the Toulmin Model.

For more information see the Toulmin Argument from the OWL at Purdue.

Deductive

Deductive reasoning, or deduction, is a reasoning type 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. 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.

For example: All men are mortal.

1. Major premise: something everyone already agrees on. Socrates is a man.
2. Minor premise: an example taken from the major premise. Socrates is mortal.
3. Conclusion: the only conclusion that can be drawn from the first two sentences. All men are mortal.

In this reasoning type, see how easy it is to create a reasoning error. Look at the following example, and pick out the reasoning error or logical fallacy.

1. Major Premise: Nobody's perfect.
2. Minor Premise: I'm nobody.
3. Conclusion: I'm perfect.

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 ancient Greeks. It is not the flipside of inductive but a separate logic method. While enthymemes—an argument in which one premise is not explicitly stated—are not always errors, listen carefully to arguments that use them to be sure that something incorrect is not being assumed or presented.

Reasoning Errors: Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are reasoning mistakes, which happen when you get one of the formulas wrong, such as inductive or deductive. There are actually dozens upon dozens of fallacies. To achieve a logical speech, avoid logical fallacies. The Owl at Purdue offers explanations of some of the most common ones to know to avoid poor speech logic and to become a better critical thinker.

Logical Fallacies – The Owl at Purdue

As you know now, it is a good idea to understand logical fallacies so that you don't use them in your own persuasive speech and so that you become a better critical information consumer when someone is trying to persuade you!

Adapted from "Chapter 14: Logical Reasoning," by Tucker, B., Barton, K., Burger, A., Drye, J., Hunsicker, C., Mendes, A., & LeHew, M., In *Exploring Public Speaking* (4th ed., pp. 286–304). 2019, Communication Open Textbooks. Creative Commons.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=55#h5p-51

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Chapter 19: Team Speeches

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What are the advantages and disadvantages of group decision-making?

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Dragon Boat Races, by Marc Dalmulder, licensed under CC BY 2.0

Groups can overcome social loafing—or an impediment to performance—through teamwork. A group may

include many talented individuals, but they must learn how to pool their individual abilities and energies to maximize the team's performance. Team goals must be set, work patterns structured, and a group identity developed. Individual members must learn how to coordinate their actions, and any strains and stresses in interpersonal relations need to be identified and resolved (Salas et al., 2009).

Group decision-making has the advantage of drawing from the experiences and perspectives of various individuals. Hence, ideas have the potential to be more creative and to lead to more effective decisions. In fact, groups can achieve results beyond what they could have done as individuals. Groups also make the task more enjoyable for members. Finally, when the group—rather than a single individual—makes a decision, implementing it is easier because group members are invested in the decision. If the group is diverse, they make better decisions because different group members have different ideas based on their backgrounds and experiences. Research shows that for top management teams, groups that debate issues and that are diverse make decisions that are more comprehensive and better for profitability and sales (Simons et al., 1999).

Below are various ways groups come to a group decision.

Delegate to an Expert

Delegate to an expert means that when a group cannot agree they turn to an expert for help. For instance, a group is not ready to make a decision at a given time either because it lacks sufficient information or is experiencing unresolved conflict among members with differing views. If the group does not want to drop the matter and move on, it can make a **decision by expert:** turning to a member who everyone feels has the expertise to choose wisely among the group's alternatives. The group may also turn to an outside expert who is external to the group and is able to provide guidance. The group can ask the expert to come back later with a final proposal or allow the expert to make the decision alone after gathering whatever further information is necessary.

Averaging

Averaging means that group members may shift their individual stances regarding a question by splitting the difference to reach a middle ground. This technique works easily if numbers are involved. For instance, a group trying to decide how much money to spend on a departing member's gift asks everyone for a preferred amount and agrees to spend whatever is computed by averaging those amounts.

Voting

Voting is probably the best method when groups need to make quick and definitive decisions. Everyone in mainstream American society is familiar with the process, and its outcome is clear and obvious. A majority vote requires that more than half the members vote for a proposal. A two-thirds vote requires that twice as many members show support for a proposal as those who oppose it, or it will not pass.

Voting is essentially a win/lose activity. Remember a time when you or someone else in a group were the strong and passionate minority whose desires were thwarted because of voting results. How committed did you feel about supporting that vote?

Voting does offer a quick and simple way to reach decisions if group members see no other way to overcome a deadlock. Likewise, very large groups and those facing serious time constraints may see advantages to voting.

Finally, voting's efficiency is appealing when it comes to making officially approved routine or noncontroversial decisions.

Consensus

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Consensus is another decision-making rule that groups use to gain an idea or plan of action's support. While consensus tends to take longer initially, it makes sense to use to enact a plan: members discuss the issues, generate a proposal, call for consensus, and discuss concerns. If concerns still exist, the proposal is modified to accommodate them. These steps are repeated until consensus is reached. Thus, this decision-making rule is inclusive, participatory, cooperative, and democratic. Research shows that consensus can lead to better accuracy (Roch, 2007), and it helps members feel more satisfied and accepting about decisions (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2001). However, reaching consensus can take longer, and groups that cannot reach consensus become frustrated (Peterson, 1999).

We are better when we are united, by Clay Banks, licensed under Unsplash License

Note that consensus should not be confused with unanimity, which means that no one has explicitly stated objections to a proposal or decision. Although unanimity can certainly accurately convey a group's views at times, groupthink, as discussed below, can lead to unanimous decisions. Therefore, it's wise to be cautious when diverse people seem to have formed a totally unified bloc about controversial choice alternatives.

When all parties to a discussion fully exchange views, reach a consensus, and then adopt the decision in good faith, it can energize and motivate a group. Besides avoiding the win/lose elements intrinsic to voting, each member is invested in the decision and has a stake in preserving and promoting the decision after it has been agreed upon.

Guidelines for Seeking Consensus

How can a group actually go about working toward consensus? Here are some guidelines:

- **First, be sure everyone knows the definition of consensus and is comfortable observing it.** For many group members, this means suspending judgment and trying something they've never done before. Remind people that consensus requires that the group is jointly dedicated to moving forward.
- **Second, endeavor to solicit every group member to participate.** Even the quietest person's perspective should be actively polled from time to time. Take special pains to ask for varied viewpoints when a discussion seems to be stalled or contentious.
- **Third, listen honestly and openly to each group member's viewpoints.** Attempt to seek and gather information from others. Subdue your emotions and your tendency to judge and evaluate.
- **Fourth, be patient.** Reaching consensus takes more time than voting. A premature agreement reached because people give in to speed things up or to avoid conflict weakens or falls apart later.
- **Fifth, always look for mutually acceptable ways to navigate challenging circumstances.** Don't resort to chance mechanisms like flipping a coin, and don't trade decisions arbitrarily just so that things come out equally for people who remain committed to opposing views.
- **Sixth, resolve gridlock earnestly.** Stop and ask, "Have we really identified every possible feasible way that our group might act?" If group members simply can't agree on one alternative, see if they can all find and accept the next-best option. Then, request an explicit statement from them that says they are prepared to genuinely commit themselves to that option.

One consensus decision-making variation calls upon a group's leader to ask its members, before initiating a discussion, to agree to a *deadline* and a *safety valve*. The deadline is a time by which everyone in the group feels they need to reach a decision. The safety valve is a statement that says any member can veto the group's will to act in a certain way, but only if he or she takes responsibility for moving the group forward in some other positive direction.

Although consensus entails full group participation and assent, it usually can't be reached without a leader's guidance. For example, imagine a college president who is a master at escorting his executive team to consensus. Without coercing or rushing them, he regularly involves them all in discussions and leads their conversations to a point at which everyone is nodding in agreement, or at least conveying that they accept a decision. Rather than leaving things at that point, however, the president generally says, "We seem to have reached a decision to do XYZ. Is there anyone who objects?" Once people have this last opportunity to add their own further comments, the group moves forward with a sense that it has a common vision in mind.

Consensus decision-making is easiest within groups whose members know and respect each other, whose authority is more or less evenly distributed, and whose basic values are shared. Some charitable and religious groups meet these conditions and have long been able to use consensus decision-making as a matter of principle. The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, began using consensus as early as the seventeenth

century. Its affiliated international service agency, the American Friends Service Committee, employs the same approach. The Mennonite Church has also long used consensus decision-making.

Groupthink

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Challenger flight 51-I crew, by NASA, Public Domain

Have you ever been in a decision-making group that you felt was heading in the wrong direction, but you didn't speak up and say so? If so, you were a groupthink victim. **Groupthink** is a group pressure phenomenon that increases the group's risk of making flawed decisions by leading to reduced mental efficiency, reduced reality testing, and reduced moral judgment. According to Janis (1972), groupthink is characterized by the following eight symptoms:

1. *Illusion of invulnerability* shared by most or all group members, which creates excessive optimism and encourages them to take extreme risks.
2. *Collective rationalizations, which is* where members downplay negative information or warnings that might cause them to reconsider their assumptions.
3. *An unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality,* which may incline members to ignore their actions' ethical or moral consequences.
4. *Stereotyped out-group views occur, which is* when groups discount rivals' abilities to make effective responses.
5. *Direct pressure occurs,* which is placed on any member who expresses strong arguments against the group's stereotypes, illusions, or commitments.
6. Self-censorship occurs, which is when group members minimize their own doubts and counterarguments.
7. *Illusion of unanimity occurs, which is* based on self-censorship and direct group pressure; the lack of dissent is viewed as unanimity.be a b
8. *Self-appointed mindguards emerge, which is* where one or more members protect the group from information that runs counter to the group's assumptions and course of action.

Groups that are large and that have members who like each other and are cohesive tend to suffer more from groupthink symptoms (Esser, 1998; Mullen et al., 1994). The assumption is that the more frequently a group displays one or more of the eight symptoms, the worse their decision-making quality is. However, if your group is cohesive, it is not necessarily doomed to engage in groupthink.

Recommendations for avoiding groupthink

The following are strategies for groups, individuals, and group leaders to avoid groupthink:

Groups:

- Discuss the groupthink symptoms and how to avoid them.
- Assign a rotating devil's advocate to every meeting.
- Invite experts or qualified colleagues who are not part of the core decision-making group to attend meetings, get reactions from outsiders regularly, and share these ideas with the group.
- Encourage a difference-culture where different ideas are valued.
- Debate the decisions' ethical implications and the potential solutions being considered.

Individuals:

- Monitor your own behavior for groupthink signs and modify the behavior if needed.
- Check yourself for self-censorship.
- Carefully avoid mindguard behaviors.
- Avoid putting pressure on other group members to conform.
- Remind members about the avoiding-groupthink-ground-rules if they get off track.

Group Leaders:

- Break the group into two subgroups from time to time.
- Have more than one group work on the same problem if time and resources allow it. This makes sense for highly critical decisions.
- Remain impartial and refrain from stating preferences at the decision's outset.
- Encourage members to critically evaluate deliberations throughout.
- Create an anonymous feedback channel where all group members can contribute if desired.

How do we use the Nominal Group Technique to choose our team name and team speech topic?

For this section, we'll discuss a decision-making process called the **Nominal Group Technique**, which includes ways a group can choose a team name or a team speech topic. The following guidelines relate to choosing a team name, but they can be modified to choose a team speech topic as well.

Each member privately writes down a list of all team names they like.

Choose a person to record name findings.

When everyone has finished writing, all members share their entire list. This is more helpful than group brainstorming because it prevents group members from accidentally criticizing another member's ideas before he or she has a chance to voice them.

The recorder writes down a master list with all the team names suggested.

Now, begin group brainstorming. Remember, do not criticize ideas at this stage. You can modify names or piggy back one name on another. Maybe someone's suggestion triggers an idea for a new name. The recorder writes down all the ideas.

When the team has exhausted ideas, it is time to evaluate the possible team-name choices and ways to vote: either by secret ballot or openly. Does majority rule? Do you want two-thirds of the group to be in favor? Do you want full consensus? It's up to the group.

When you use this same technique to choose your **Team Speech Topic**, decide on a great resource that you would like the group to use, such as a library, a specific database, or a certain search engine. What will it be? There are so many great resources—some obvious and some almost hidden. Find the resource that the group feels greatly benefits them all.

Not Helpful Task Roles

Not all task roles are created equally. Some are much more helpful than others. Here are some to stay away from.

- Dominator: talks and does not allow anyone else to talk
- Blocker: negative resistant behavior, groundless disagreement
- Avoider: non-involvement, does not contribute ideas or communicate
- Recognition Seeker: calls attention to self
- Distractor: goes off on tangents, irrelevant
- Slider: does little or no work, procrastinates

Helpful Relationship Roles

- Harmonizer: helps settle differences
- Sensor: expresses group mood and feelings
- Tension Reliever: creates fun and uses humor to diffuse tense situations
- Listener: hears content and feeling

Not Helpful Relationship Roles

- Clown: distracts from task with self-focused play
- Captain Oblivious: disconnected
- Disconbobulator: keeps group in upheaval
- Criticizer: attacks persons, not issues

How do we use the Nominal Group Technique to choose our Team Name and Topic?

We are going to teach you two great ways to make decisions in your team. The first one you are going to use to make a decision as to what your team name should be. This decision making process is call the **Nominal Group Technique**.

1. Each member privately writes down a list of all team names they like.
2. When everyone has finished writing, all members share their entire list. (This is more helpful than brainstorming as a group right away because it prevents group members from accidentally criticizing another member's ideas before they have a chance to be seen.
3. The Recorder writes down a master list with all the team names suggested.
4. Now as a group brainstorming can begin. Remember, no criticism of ideas at this stage. You can modify names, piggy back one name on another. Maybe someone's suggestion triggers an idea for a new name. All these ideas are written down by the Recorder.
5. When the team has exhausted ideas, the team can choose a team name. Now is the time you can evaluate the possible choices. You can decide to vote either by secret ballot or openly. Does majority rule? So you want 2/3rd of the group to be in favor. Do you want full consensus? Up to you.

You can use this same technique to choose your **Team Speech Topic**. You need to decide on a great resource here at SLCC that you would like to persuade your fellow students to use. What will it be? There are so many great resources, some obvious and some almost hidden. Find one you feel would be a great benefit to your fellow students.

What is the Reflective Thinking Process?

The next most valuable group problem-solving process is called the **Reflective Thinking Process.** This process is

useful for groups who want to create a team speech topic. It requires that the group first decides what research to use and who does what part.

Begin OER Small Group Communication: Chapter 11 Engaging in Group Problem-Solving Press Books

The Reflective Thinking Process: A Group Problem-Solving Framework

The **reflective thinking process** is a problem-solving framework proposed by American scholar John Dewey in which individuals or groups actively, persistently, and carefully consider a belief or knowledge, the grounds that support that knowledge, and the conclusions formed from that knowledge. (Bormann & Bormann, 1988). There are several similar problem-solving variations based on Dewey's model. As you read through the following process, think about how to apply these steps to organize your group's speech. Some steps are straightforward, and they offer strategies that one would logically use anyway when faced with a problem. However, taking a deliberate and systematic approach to problem-solving has been shown to benefit group functioning and performance. A deliberate approach is especially beneficial for groups who do not have an established working history and who only meet occasionally. Although it is suggested that a group attend to each step, caution suggests that group leaders or other group problem-solving facilitators do not dogmatically follow each process element or force a group along. Such inflexibility will limit group-member input and negatively affect the group's cohesion and climate.

Step 1: Define the Problem

During step one, the group defines the problem by considering three elements shared by every problem: the current undesirable situation, the goal or more desirable situation, and obstacles (Adams & Galanes, 2009). At this stage, group members share what they know about the current situation without proposing solutions or evaluating the information. Here are some good questions to ask during this stage:

- What is the current difficulty?
- How did we come to know that the difficulty exists?
- Who/what is involved?
- Why is it meaningful/urgent/important?
- What have the effects been so far?
- What, if any, difficult elements require clarification?

At the end of this stage, the group will compose a single sentence that summarizes the problem, called a problem statement. Avoid wording or questions that hint at potential solutions.

For example, a small group formed to investigate city officials' ethical violations creates the following problem statement:

- Our state does not currently have a mechanism for citizens to report city officials who are suspected of ethical violations.

Here's another simple example:

- Poor: How can I find a podium? This is poor because it indicates the solution is a podium in the problem statement. We need to ask what do we need the podium for? If it is to put my notes on, could there be

another solution?
- Better: What can hold my notes? Now, a lot more solutions are available: a table, a stack of books, a student could hold my notes, an upside down garbage can works too, etc.

Step 2: Analyze the Problem

During step two, the group analyzes the problem and the group's relationship to the problem. Whereas the first step involved exploring the "what" related to the problem, this step focuses on the "why." At this stage, group members discuss the potential causes—why the problem is happening. This is a good time for members to create an agenda or timeline for their problem-solving process by looking ahead to the other steps.

Here are two examples of "why" questions that the example group formed to address ethics violations:

- Why doesn't our city have an ethics reporting mechanism? Do similar-sized cities have such a mechanism?

Once the problem has been analyzed, the group poses a "how" problem question that will guide the group as it generates possible solutions.

- How can citizens report suspected city officials' ethical violations and how will such reports be processed and addressed?

As you can see, the problem question is more complex than the problem statement, and the group has moved on to a more in-depth problem discussion.

Step 3: Generate Possible Solutions

During step three, group members generate possible solutions to the problem. This is where brainstorming techniques to enhance creativity may be useful to the group. Again, don't evaluate solutions at this point, only propose and clarify. Ask questions about what "*could*" we do to address this problem, not what "*should*" we do to address it. It is perfectly OK for a group member to question another person's idea by asking, "What do you mean?" or "Could you explain your reasoning more?" Discussions at this stage may reveal a need to return to previous steps to better define or more fully analyze a problem. Since many problems are multifaceted, group members must generate solutions for each problem's part separately, making sure to have multiple solutions for each part. Stopping the solution-generating process prematurely can lead to groupthink.

Woman in black coat, by Christina Morillo, licensed under Pexels License

For the problem question previously posed, the group generates solutions for the problem's three parts included in the question. For example,

- For the first problem part—How can citizens report ethical violations? Possible solutions are to use online reporting systems, e-mail, report in-person or anonymously, report on-the-record, and so on.
- For the second problem part—How will reports be processed? Possible solutions are daily, by a newly appointed ethics officer; weekly, by a nonpartisan non-government employee; and so on.
- For the third problem part—How will reports be addressed? Possible solutions are by a newly appointed ethics commission, by the accused's supervisor, by the city manager, and so on.

Step 4: Evaluate Solutions

During step four, groups critically evaluate solutions based on their credibility, completeness, and worth. Once the potential solutions are narrowed based on more obvious differences in relevance and/or merit, the group analyzes each solution based on its potential effects—especially negative effects. Groups that are required to report the rationale for their decision or whose decisions may be subject to public scrutiny are wise to make a criteria list to use to evaluate each solution. Additionally, groups can evaluate solutions based on how well they fit with the group's mission and the groups' abilities. To do this, group members ask the following:

- Does this solution live up to the group's original purpose or mission?
- Can we actually implement the solution with our current resources and connections?
- How is this solution supported, funded, enforced, and assessed?

Often, group members conflict during this problem-solving step and must employ effective critical thinking and listening skills. For example, to narrow the proposed solutions list, group members can decide to do the following:

- Vote by majority, by weighing the pros and cons, or by discussing until a consensus is reached.
- Implement the six-hats method, which is a more complex decision-making model that we discuss later in this chapter.

Once the final decision is reached, the group leader or facilitator confirms that the group is in agreement. It is beneficial for the group to break for a while or even to delay the final decision until a later meeting to allow people time to evaluate it outside of the group context.

Step 5: Implement and Assess the Solution

Long exposure, single image, by Tsvetoslav Hristov, licensed under Unsplash license

During step five, the group implements the solution, which requires some advanced planning. Do not rush

this process unless the group is operating under strict time restraints or unless a delay leads to some harm. Although some solutions can be implemented immediately, others may take days, months, or years. As noted earlier, it is beneficial for groups to poll those who are affected by the solution about their opinion, or even do a pilot test to observe the solution's effectiveness and how people react to it.

Before implementing the solution, groups must determine how and when they will assess the solution's effectiveness by asking the following:

- How will we know if the solution is working or not?"

Since solution assessments vary based on whether or not the group is disbanded, groups must also consider the following questions:

- If the group disbands after we implement the solution, who is responsible for assessing the solution?
- If the solution fails, will the same group reconvene? Or, will a new group be formed?

Certain solution elements must be delegated out to various people inside and outside the group. Group members may be assigned to implement a particular solution part based on their decision-making role or because the solution part connects to their area of expertise. Likewise, group members may be tasked with publicizing or "selling" the solution to a particular stakeholder group. Last, the group must consider its future. In some cases, the group can decide if it will stay together and continue working on other tasks or if it will disband. In other cases, outside forces determine the group's fate.

Six-Thinking-Hats Method

Edward de Bono developed the **Six-Thinking-Hats** method in the late 1980s, and it has since become a regular feature in business and professional problem-solving and decision-making training contexts (de Bono, 1985). The method's popularity lies in its ability to help people get out of habitual thinking and to allow group members to play different roles and see problems or decisions from multiple viewpoints. The premise is that each hat represents a different way to think, and when we figuratively switch hats, we switch the way we think. The hats and their thinking style are as follows:

- **White hat.** Objective—focuses on seeking information, such as data and facts, and then neutrally processes that information.
- **Red hat.** Emotional—uses intuition, gut reactions, and feelings to judge information and suggestions.
- **Black hat.** Critical—focuses on potential risks, points out possible failure, and evaluates information cautiously and defensively.
- **Yellow hat.** Positive—is optimistic about suggestions and future outcomes; gives constructive and positive feedback; points out benefits and advantages.
- **Green hat.** Creative—tries to generate new ideas and solutions; thinks outside the box.
- **Blue hat.** Process—uses metacommunication to organize and reflect on the groups' thinking and communication; facilitates who wears what hat and when group members change hats.

Use specific sequences or hat combinations to encourage strategic thinking. For example, the group leader wears the blue hat and suggests that the group start their decision-making process with some "white hat thinking" to process facts and other available information. During this stage, the group also processes the decisions and solutions of other groups who have faced similar problems.

Next, the leader begins an evaluation sequence starting with two minutes of "yellow hat thinking" to identify

potential positive outcomes, then "black hat thinking" to allow group members to express reservations about ideas and point out potential problems, then "red hat thinking" to get people's gut reactions to the previous discussion, then "green hat thinking" to identify other possible solutions that are more tailored to the group's situation or that are completely new approaches. At the end of a sequence, the "blue hat" leader summarize what was said and begins a new sequence.

To successfully use this method, the person wearing the blue hat must be familiar with different sequences and plan some of the thinking patterns ahead of time based on the problem and the group members. Limit each thinking round to a certain time, such as two to five minutes, to keep the discussion moving.

This problem-solving method has been praised because it allows group members to switch thinking gears and to allow for role-playing, which lets people express ideas more freely. Here are some questions to consider when using the six-hat method.

1. How does this method help to enhance critical thinking?
2. Which hat combination do you think would be best for a critical thinking sequence?
3. What hat combinations are useful if the leader wants to break the larger group up into pairs, and why? For example, what thinking results from putting yellow and red hats together, or black and white hats together, or red and white hats together, and so on?
4. Based on your preferred thinking process and your personality, which hat is the best fit for you? Which is the most challenging? Why?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=57#h5p-52

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Chapter 20: Virtual Speaking

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How do I Prepare for Online Speaking?

Computer Apple Office Social Media Flowers, by unknown, licensed under CC0

Energize

Virtual speaking is different from in-person public speaking in that you are completely reliant on your voice, technology, and visuals, such as slides, etc.

We know that monotone and monorate speaking is horrible for face-to-face speaking, but it is truly the "kiss of death" for web speaking. To deliver a successful virtual presentation, you must appear and sound energetic—an energetic voice has variety and interest to it. Since we tend to have a lower energy level when we sit, some experts suggest that web conference speakers stand to approximate the real speaking experience. This suggestion makes sense.

As we have mentioned repeatedly through this text, it is important to prepare ahead for your speech. Preparing means to practice your speech orally and physically many times. A good first step is to audio-record yourself on your smartphone or other device during your practice, followed by critically and honestly thinking about whether your voice sounds listless, flat, low-energy, or likely to put your audience to sleep.

Visuals

Take great care in creating your visuals. Most of us are tempted to put far too much text and too many graphics on our slides, and since the slides are the primary visual the audience will see rather than your full body, the temptation is even stronger. If your workforce presentation is likely to be graph, data, and information-heavy because it is information that your audience must know, send the information in a report ahead of time. We've mentioned before: speeches are not the occasion to dump much information on an audience.

Therefore, keep your visuals simple. You do not have to have lots of clip art and photographs to maintain your audiences' attention. One rule business speakers like to use is the "10-20-30 rule: no more than 10 slides, no more than 20 words on the slides, and no font smaller than 30 point." Using 30-point font will definitely minimize the text amount. Inserting short videos and planning interactivity, such as polls, which the software supports, are also helpful.

Appearance

Also to prepare, be mindful about your appearance. If your physical appearance will be visible, be sure your background is appropriate. Many people perform webinars in their offices, and let's be honest, some office backgrounds are less than optimal, such as being messy and disorganized or having distracting decorations. And, pay attention to what you are wearing. You don't want to wear a white shirt with a neutral, blank, or white wall behind you because you will seem to disappear against this background.

Technology

Additionally, it goes without saying that the web speaker must master the technology, not be mastered by it. It is a fact of life that technology messes up. For example, included in this text's appendix is an archived webinar given by an expert web speaker. During the webinar, the speaker's Internet connection was lost! Even if your connection is strong, you must know what software buttons to push. For this reason, we advise that you have an assistant on hand to handle the technology and to make sure it works so that you can focus on your communication.

Here are a few more preparation tips:

1. **Interruptions.** Make sure you will not be interrupted during the web conference. This can be extremely embarrassing as well as ineffective. You have probably seen the priceless BBC video in which the speaker is interviewing an expert on Korea. The interviewer's children photobombed the interview and then their mother tried to clean up the damage. It is hilarious, but the same situation won't be for you. Lock the door with a big do-not-disturb sign and turn off the phones.
2. **Notes.** Place your notes and anything else you need right at hand.
3. **Appearance.** 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.

Humor

Finally, in preparing a live webinar presentation, think humor—it is a great attention-getter! Keep in mind that there is a limit to how much humor you use, and it must also be tasteful and relevant. Cartoons, short videos, funny anecdotes, and visual humor help you work against the audience's temptation to multitask or daydream during your virtual speech. Plus, humor increases your own energy level and sense of fun. Indeed, humor is one of your best allies!

What Do I Do During the Web Speech?

Timing

First, it goes without saying that as the speaker, *you* must be logged in and online well before the meeting begins to ensure that the technology is ready to go and that your ancillary presentation materials are available and accessible.

And, you must start on time. This might seem obvious, but if you have ever attended an online meeting or webinar, it's harder said than done–mainly because participants log on at the meeting's start, and it sometimes takes a while for the technology to kick in. Therefore, one suggestion is to prepare a soft introduction for your punctual audience and a hard opening for the late-comers. Make the soft intro fun and attention-getting, such as an interactive video. Make the hard intro the "this is why the topic matters, so let's get down to business" opening.

Web speaking is often scheduled for a longer time period than a face-to-face speech, which is not necessarily conducive to the audiences' attention level. For this reason, your presentation must include time for questions and audience input. However, plan for this Q and A session at intervals, perhaps between main speech sections so that you are not being interrupted at inconvenient times.

Purpose

Going deeper, let's address the first and most fundamental speech-preparation question: what is your purpose. What is your purpose in presenting your webinar speech? To educate? To persuade/sell? To contribute to or facilitate a decision? Something else? Everything you do to prepare for this virtual speech must come from the perspective of your specific intent or purpose, just like your face-to-face speech comes from your speech's specific purpose. Ask yourself, what do you really want to accomplish from this meeting?

Audience

The other fundamental question concerns your audience. Who are they? Where are they? In some cases, the audience is in a different time zone! And that really matters to how a listener responds.

More suggestions to be aware of:

1. **Smile.** Along with standing up for your presentation, smile. People can hear a smile even when they don't see you.

2. **Anxiety.** Your anxiety does not go away just because you cannot see everyone in your web audience or because you don't know the people to whom you are speaking. Be aware of anxiety's likelihood—it might not hit until you are live and on the air. As Ron Ashkenas says, "Anxiety in speaking is like static on the radio." Plan ahead how to manage yours.
3. **Questions.** When asking 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 and to articulate their questions. Even saying, "What questions do you have?" is better, but even better is to ask specific questions about what you've been addressing. Many times, you can forecast possible questions, and use those.
4. **Pauses.** The issue of a question-and-answer period brings up a logistical question. Some participants will question orally through the webcam set-up. Others, with limited technology, will use the chat feature. It takes time to type in the chat feature. Be prepared for pauses.
5. **Transitions.** Remember the power of transitions. Many people think that slides don't need transitions because, well, they change. This isn't so. The speaker must tie the slides' messages together.
6. **Silence.** Verbal pauses are helpful. Since a continual, non-stop flow of words will put audiences to sleep, silence, or a verbal pause actually gets attention.
7. **Gaze.** Look at the camera, not the screen. You will appear more professional if the audience can see you.

Ending

As mentioned before, web conferences and webinars can go on and on—don't let this happen. End on time. Allow participants to email you questions if needed, but don't take advantage of people's time by entertaining questions longer than the scheduled time. Software allows you to record and archive your presentation, so let the audience know how to access the recording.

How Do I Speak for an Online Class?

Many educators teach online courses. These instructors usually prefer the presentation to be given in front of a live audience of a prescribed number of people and/or in a venue like a classroom, not the student's living room. Many public speaking instructors do not believe this option is as good as an in-class speech. If, for whatever reason you are compelled to give a virtual speech, here are some tips.

1. **Filming.** Film your whole body—not just your head and shoulders.
2. **Technology.** Do tech walk-throughs to make sure your camera and audio are working well.
3. **Record.** Make sure to record your presentation and to supply your audience, including your instructor, with the link to the recording. You may not be able to send it through an email if the file is too big. Instead, post it to the cloud or to your learning-management system in some manner.
4. **Clothing.** Wear appropriate clothing. Not being in class may tempt you to wear something too informal. This is an opportunity to go a step beyond in your clothing. Make sure, also, that it looks good on camera in terms of color, lighting, and setting. Some patterns do not look good on camera.
5. **Lighting.** Since you probably won't have professional lighting, get the room as bright as you possibly can, but do not point the camera in the direction of a bright light. The light should be coming from behind the camera.

Conclusion

As mentioned before, the nuances of virtual speaking are evolving. These tips and tactics should help you to avoid major problems and to successfully cross your effective presentation's finish line!

Links that might help with this topic:

- Ten tips for giving great online presentations
- How to give a killer online presentation
- Great online presentation
- Five guidelines for effective online presentations
- How to bypass the 5 worst mistakes in online presentations
- 10 tips giving effective virtual presentations
- Presenting the perfect online presentation

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Chapter 21: Special Occasion

Birthday Speech, by M+MD, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Chris Hoy – Acceptance speech, by Chris Hill, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

What is the purpose of the entertaining or special occasion speech?

Entertaining speeches are almost always **special occasion speeches,** both of which are 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 communicate a clear message, but the speaking manner used in an entertaining speech is typically different. Entertaining speeches are often delivered on special occasions, such as for a wedding toast, an awards banquet acceptance speech, or a conference motivational speech, 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 them emotionally in some way. Remember, when we use the word entertain, we are referring not just to humor but also to drama. An entertaining speech's goal is to stir the audience's emotions.

Of all the speech types we come in contact with during our lives, the bulk probably fall into the entertainment category. If you spend just one evening watching a major awards show, such as the Grammys, the Tonys, or the Oscars, you'll see dozens of acceptance speeches. While some acceptance speeches are good and others terrible, they all belong in the speaking-to-entertain category.

Entertaining or special occasion speeches are definitely very common, but that doesn't mean they don't require effort and preparation. A frequent speech-making trap is that people often think entertaining speeches are 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 entertaining, the speech falls flat. To help us think through how to effectively deliver entertaining speeches, let's look at four key ingredients: prepare, adapt to the occasion, adapt to the audience, and mind the time.

Prepare

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 to prepare throughout this text, so just because you're giving a wedding toast or a eulogy doesn't mean you do not 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.

Adapt to the Occasion

Not all content is appropriate for all occasions. If you are asked to deliver a speech commemorating the first anniversary of a school shooting, then obviously using humor and telling jokes wouldn't be appropriate. But some decisions about adapting to the occasion are less obvious. Consider the following examples:

- You are the maid of honor giving a toast at your younger sister's wedding.
- You are receiving a Most Valuable Player award in your favorite sport.
- You are a sales representative speaking to your client group 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 call for different social appropriateness levels. One big mistake that entertaining speakers make is to deliver one generic speech to different groups without adapting the speech to the specific occasion. In fact, professional speakers always make sure that their speeches are tailored for different occasions and get information about the occasion from their hosts in advance.

Adapt to Your Audience

Once again, we cannot stress enough how important it is to adapt to your audience. Different audiences respond differently to speech material, so the more you know about your audience, the more likely your speech succeeds

Mind the Time

The last key ingredient to consider for delivering entertaining speeches successfully is to mind your time. Different entertaining speech situations have their own conventions and rules regarding time. Acceptance speeches and toasts, for example, are relatively short—typically under five minutes. An introduction speech is 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 run ten to twenty minutes.

It's also important to recognize that special occasion audiences expect speech lengths to vary. For example, although it's true that graduation commencement speakers generally speak for ten to twenty minutes, the longer the speech, the more fidgety the audience becomes. To hold the audience's attention and to be entertaining, a commencement speaker must make the speech's closing minutes the most engaging and inspiring. If you're not sure about the speech's expected time frame, 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.

What are the different entertainment types or special-occasion speeches?

Entertaining or special-occasion speeches are given to mark a particular event's significance. Common events include weddings, bar mitzvahs, awards ceremonies, funerals, and political events. In each different occasion, speakers are asked to deliver speeches relating to the event. For simplicity purposes, we've broken special-occasion speeches into three different entertainment types: ceremonial speaking, inspirational speaking, and Keynote speaking.

Ceremonial Speaking

Ceremonial speeches are given during a ceremony or a ritual marked by observing formality or etiquette. These ceremonies tend to be very special for people, so it shouldn't be surprising that they are opportunities for speech making. Let's examine the eight ceremonial speaking types: introductions, presentations, acceptances, dedications, toasts, roasts, eulogies, and farewells.

Introductions

An **introduction speech** is a mini speech given by a ceremony host who introduces another speaker and his or her speech. Few things are worse than when the introduction speaker stands up and says, "This is Joe Smith,

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 Smith's speech.

Just like any other speech, an introduction speech is a complete speech, and it must have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion—all of which you give in under two minutes. This brings up another "few things are worse" scenario: this occurs when an introduction speaker rambles on for too long or talks about himself or herself instead of focusing on the person being introduced.

For an introduction, think of a hook that will make your audience interested in the upcoming speaker. Did you read a news article related to the speaker's topic? Have you been impressed by a past presentation you've heard the speaker give? Find something that grabs the audience's attention and make them excited about hearing the main speaker.

Devote the introductory speech's body to telling the audience about the speaker's topic, the speaker's qualifications, and why the audience should listen—notice we now have our three body points. First, tell your audience in general terms about the overarching speech topic. Usually, an introducer will only have a speech title and maybe a paragraph to help guide this speech part. That's all right. You don't need to know all the main speaker's speech ins and outs; you just need to know enough to whet the audience's appetite. Next, tell the audience why the speaker is topic credible. Has the speaker written books or articles on the subject? Has the speaker had special life events that make him or her qualified? Lastly, briefly explain to the audience why they should care about the upcoming speech.

The conclusion is a good introduction's final part, which is generally designed to welcome the speaker to the lectern. Many introducers will conclude by saying something such as, "I am looking forward to hearing how Joe Smith's advice and wisdom can help all of us today, so please join me in welcoming Mr. Joe Smith." We've known some presenters who will even add a notation to their notes to "start clapping" and "shake the speaker's hand" or "give the speaker a hug" depending on the speech circumstances.

Now that we've walked through an introductory speech's basic parts, let's see one outlined:

> *Specific Purpose:* To entertain the audience while preparing them for Janice Wright's rituals speech.
>
> *Introduction:* Mention some common rituals people in the United States engage in, such as Christmas, sporting events, legal proceedings.
>
> *Main Points:*
>
> 1. Explain that the topic was selected because understanding how cultures use ritual is important in understanding what it means to be human.
> 2. Janice Wright is a cultural anthropologist who studies the impact that everyday rituals have on communities.
> 3. All of us engage in rituals, and we often don't take the time to determine how these rituals were started and how they impact our daily routines.
>
> *Conclusion:* I had the opportunity to listen to Dr. Wright at the regional conference in Springfield last month, and I am excited that I get to share her with you all tonight. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Wright (start clapping, shake the speaker's hand, exit the stage).

Presentations

A **presentation speech** is a brief speech given to accompany a prize or honor. Presentation speeches can be as simple as saying, "This year's Schuman Public Speaking prize recipient is Wilhelmina Jeffers," or it could last up to five minutes as the speaker explains why the honoree was chosen for the award.

When preparing a presentation speech, always ask how much time you have to give the speech. Once you

know the time limit, create the speech itself. First, explain what the award or honor is and why the presentation is important. Second, explain what the recipient has accomplished to be bestowed the award. Did the person win a race? Did the person write an important literature piece? Did the person mediate conflict? Whatever the recipient has done, clearly highlight his or her work. Lastly, if the race or competition was conducted in a public forum and numerous people didn't win, recognize those people for their efforts as well. While you don't want to steal the show from the winner, as Kanye West did to Taylor Swift during the 2009 MTV Music Video Awards, highlight the other competitors or nominee's work.

Acceptances

An **acceptance speech** is given by a prize or honor recipient, and is the complement to a presentation speech. For example, at the 2009 MTV Music Video Awards, Taylor Swift starts by expressing her appreciation, gets interrupted by Kanye West, and ends by saying, "I would like to thank the fans and MTV, thank you." While obviously not a traditional acceptance speech because she was interrupted, she managed to get in the important parts.

An acceptance speech includes three typical components: thank the award or honor givers, thank those who helped you achieve your goal, and put the award or honor into perspective. First, thank the people who have given you the award or honor and possibly those who voted for you. We see this done every year during the Oscars: "First, I'd like to thank the academy and all the academy voters." Second, give credit to those who helped you achieve the award or honor. No person accomplishes things in life completely by themselves. We all have families, friends, and colleagues who support us and help us achieve what we do in life; an acceptance speech is a great time to graciously recognize those individuals. Lastly, put the award in perspective. Tell the people listening to your speech why the award is meaningful to you.

Dedications

A **dedication speech** 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 project's importance and possibly those to whom the project has been dedicated. Maybe your great-uncle died and left your college tons of money, and the college is renaming one dorm after him. In this case, you may be asked to speak at the dedication.

When preparing a dedication speech, start by explaining how you are involved in the dedication. If the person to whom the dedication is being made is a relative, tell the audience that the building is being named after your great-uncle who bestowed a gift to his alma mater. Second, explain what is being dedicated. If the dedication is a new building or a preexisting building, explain what is being dedicated and the structure's importance. Then, explain who was involved in the project. If the project is a new structure, talk about the people who built or designed it. If the project is a preexisting structure, talk about the people who decided on the dedication. Lastly, explain why the structure is important for the local community. 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 hospital wing, talk about the potential patients to be served and the advances in medicine the new wing will provide the community.

Toasts

A **toast** is a speech designed to congratulate, to appreciate, or to remember someone. And, at one time or another, almost everyone is asked to deliver one. First, toasts can be delivered for congratulating someone for an honor, a new job, or getting married. You can also toast someone to show your appreciation for something they've done. Lastly, we toast people to remember them and what they have accomplished.

Toasts are generally given during the festivities' middle, such as a wedding, retirement party, or farewell party. When preparing a toast, always keep your remarks brief, and don't let your toast take away from those festivities for too long. Second, a toast's goal is to focus attention on the person or persons being toasted—not on the speaker. As such, while you are speaking, focus your attention to the people being toasted, both by physically looking at them and by keeping your message about them. Also, avoid any inside jokes between you and the people being toasted because toasts are public and accessible for everyone who hears them. To conclude a toast, simply say something such as, "Please join me in recognizing Joan for her achievement" and lift your glass. When you lift your glass, this will signal to others to do the same, and then you all take a drink, which signals that your speech is over.

Roasts

The **roast** speech is a very interesting and peculiar speech because it is designed to both praise and good-naturedly insult the person being honored. Generally, roasts are given at a banquet's conclusion in honor of someone's life achievements. Television's Comedy Central conducts various celebrity roasts. Half a good roast's fun is watching the roastee's reactions during the roast, so it's important that the audience can clearly see the roastee.

How does one prepare for a roast? First, really think about the person being roasted. Do they have any strange habits or amusing stories in their past that you can discuss? When you think through these things, make sure that you cross anything off your list that is truly private information or that will really hurt the person. Your goal is to poke fun at them, not massacre them. Second, when selecting which aspects to poke fun at, make sure that the items you choose are widely known by your audience. Roasts work when the audience's majority relate to the jokes being made. If you have an inside joke with the roastee, bringing it up during the 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 a roast's fun part, leave the roastee 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. Don't confuse eulogy with elegy, which is a poem or song of mourning. Unless you are a minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or other religious leader, you'll probably not deliver too many eulogies in your lifetime. However, when the time comes to deliver a eulogy, it's good to know what you're doing and to adequately prepare your remarks. When preparing a eulogy, know as much information about the deceased as possible. The more information you have about the person, the more personal you can make the eulogy. While you can rely on your own information, if you were close to the deceased, ask friends and relatives for their memories as well, as these add important facets. Of course, if you were not very close to the deceased, ask friends and family for information. Second, although eulogies are delivered on a funeral or memorial service's serious and sad occasion, look for at least one point to be lighter or humorous. In some cultures, in fact, friends and family attending a funeral expect the eulogy to be highly

entertaining and amusing. While eulogies are not roasts, humor or lighter aspects relieve the tension that is created by the occasion's serious nature. Lastly, remember to tell the deceased's story. Tell the audience about who this person was and what the person stood for in life. The more personal you can make a eulogy, the more touching it will be for the deceased's friends and families. The eulogy reminds the audience to celebrate the person's life as well as mourn their death.

Farewells

A **farewell speech** allows someone to say good-bye to one part of their life as they move on to the next life adventure. Maybe you've accepted a new job and are leaving your current job, or you're graduating from college and entering the work force. Whatever the case, transition periods are often marked by farewell speeches. Watch Derek Jeter's 2008 speech clip in which he says farewell to Yankee Stadium, built in 1923, before the New York Yankees moved to the new stadium that opened in 2009.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=61#oembed-2

Derek Jeter's Farewell Speech, by PeteThaSkeet, Standard YouTube License. https://youtu.be/SXwYlJuZvXo

In this speech, Jeter is not only saying goodbye to Yankee Stadium but also thanking the fans for their continued support.

When preparing a farewell speech, the goal is to thank the people in your current position and let them know how much you appreciate them as you make the move to your next life position. In Jeter's speech, he talks about the 1923 Yankee Stadium's history and then thanks the fans for their support. Second, express to your audience how much the experience has meant to you. A farewell speech is a time to commemorate and think about the good times you've had. As such, avoid negativity during this speech. Lastly, make sure that you end on a high note. Jeter concludes his speech by saying, "On behalf of this entire organization, we just want to take this moment to salute you, the greatest fans in the world!" At this point, Jeter and the other players take off their ball caps and hold them up toward the audience.

Inspirational Speaking

An **inspirational speech's** goal is to elicit or arouse an emotional state within an audience. Although some inspirational speeches are sometimes tied to ceremonial occasions, there are also other speaking contexts that call for inspirational speeches. For our purposes, we'll discuss two inspirational speech types: goodwill and commencement speeches.

Goodwill Speeches

Goodwill speeches are given in an attempt to get audience members to view a person or organization and their reputation more favorably. Although goodwill speeches are clearly persuasive, they try not to be obvious

about the persuasive intent and are often delivered as information-giving speeches that focus on an individual or organization's positive attributes. There are three basic goodwill speech types: public relations, justification, and apology.

1. Public Relations Speeches

A public relations speech is crafted to enhance one's own image or the image of his or her organization. Think of them as cheerleading speeches because the ultimate goal is to get people to like the speaker and what he or she represents. For example, when British Petroleum's CEO spoke to reporters about what his organization did during the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, he emphasized what his company was doing to fix the problem. Every speech part was orchestrated to make BP look caring and to illicit goodwill from the viewing public.

2. Justification Speeches

Justification speeches are given when someone attempts to defend why certain actions were taken or will be taken. In these speeches, speakers have already enacted or decided to enact a certain behavior and are now justifying why the behavior is or was appropriate. See the clip in which President Bill Clinton discusses his decision to bomb key Iraqi targets after uncovering a plot to assassinate former President George H. W. Bush.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=61#oembed-1

Clinton Orders Missile Attack (1993), by pitythefool, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mpWa7wNr5M

In this speech, President Clinton outlines to the American people and the globe his reasons for bombing Iraq. Again, this speech's goal is to secure US and world goodwill for President Clinton's decisions.

3. Apology Speeches

Frankly, apology speeches have become more and more commonplace. Every time we turn around, a politician, professional athlete, musician, or thespian is doing something reprehensible and getting caught. In fact, the apology speech has quickly become fodder for humor as well. Let's take a look at golf professional Tiger Woods's real apology speech.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=61#oembed-3

CNN: Tiger Woods' full apology speech, by CNN, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs8nseNP4s0

When you make an apology speech, there are three elements to include: be honest and responsible, say you're sorry, and offer restitution. First, be honest and admit to your wrongdoing. The worst apology speeches are those in which the individual tries to sidestep the wrongdoing. Even if you didn't do anything wrong, it is often best to take responsibility from a public perception perspective. Second, say that you are sorry. People want to know that you are remorseful for what you've done. Tiger Woods's apology speech is problematic—he doesn't look remorseful at all. While the words coming out of his mouth are appropriate, he looks like a robot forced to read from a manuscript written by his press agent. Lastly, offer restitution. Restitution can come in the form of fixing something broken or of promising not to engage in such future behavior. People in society are very willing to forgive and forget when they are asked.

Commencement Speeches

A commencement speech is designed to recognize and to celebrate a graduating class or other group's achievements. The most typical commencement speech occurs when someone graduates from school. Nearly all of us have attended commencement speeches at some point in our lives. And if you're like us, you've heard good ones and bad ones. Numerous celebrities and politicians have been asked to deliver commencement speeches at colleges and universities. One famous and well-conceived commencement speech was given by famed Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling at Harvard University in 2008.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=61#oembed-4

JK Rowling Harvard Commencement Speech Part 1 – June 5 2008, by TheDailySnitcher, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkREt4ZB-ck

Rowling's speech is a perfect balance between humor and inspiration, which are a great commencement speech's two main ingredients.

If you're ever asked to deliver a commencement speech, carefully think through the following bullet points when crafting your speech's content.

- If there is a specific graduation theme, make sure that your commencement speech addresses that theme. If there is no specific theme, create one for your speech. Some common commencement speech themes are commitment, competitiveness, competence, confidence, decision making, discipline, ethics, failure, 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 to embrace life's advantages. Think about how your life may inspire graduates in their future endeavors.
- Make the speech humorous. Great commencement speeches are entertaining—make your 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, and families are there to watch their graduates walk across the stage.
- Remember, while you may be the speaker, you've been asked to impart wisdom and advice for the graduates who are moving on with their lives, so focus on them.
- Place the commencement speech into the graduates' lives broader context. Show them how to use the advice and wisdom you offer to make their own lives better.

Overall, make sure that you have fun when delivering a commencement speech. Remember, it's a huge honor and responsibility to be asked to deliver one, so take the time to really think through and prepare your speech.

Keynote Speaking

A **keynote speech** sets the underlying tone and summarize an event's core message. Keynote speeches are often given at an event's end, and several people may deliver keynote speeches throughout a longer event that

lasts for several days. People who deliver keynote speeches are typically subject, topic, or field experts who are invited to speak at a conference, convention, banquet, meeting, or other event and who set a specific tone for the occasion. Some keynote speakers will actually work for a speaker's bureau, which is an agency that represents celebrity and professional speakers. The National Speaker's Association (NSA) is one very important organization for all aspiring keynote speakers. NSA also publishes a widely respected professional speakers' magazine called Speaker Magazine, which is accessed for free from their website.

In the professional public speaking world, there are **two common keynote speech types: after-dinner speeches and motivational speeches.**

After-Dinner Speeches

After-dinner speeches get their name because, historically, these speeches follow a meal. After-dinner speakers are generally asked or hired to speak because they have the ability both to speak effectively and to make people laugh. First and foremost, after-dinner speeches are speeches—not stand-up comedy routines. All basic public speaking conventions previously discussed in this text apply to after-dinner speeches, but these speeches' overarching goal is to entertain and to create an amusing atmosphere.

After-dinner speaking is probably the hardest speaking type to do well because it is an entertaining speech that depends on successfully delivering humor. People train for years to develop **comic timing,** which is to verbally and nonverbally deliver and enhance a message's comedic value.

Motivational Speaking

Motivational speeches are designed not only to make an audience experience emotional arousal, such as fear, sadness, joy, excitement, etc. but also to motivate the audience to do something with that emotional arousal. Whereas a traditional persuasive speech encourages listeners to purchase product X or to agree with ideology Y, a motivational speech helps to inspire people in a broader fashion, often without a clearly articulated end result in mind. As such, motivational speaking is a highly specialized form of persuasive speaking commonly delivered in schools, businesses, religious settings, and club or group contexts. *The Toastmasters International Guide to Successful Speaking* lists four motivational speech types: hero, survivor, religious, and success (Slutsky & Aun, 1997).

1. Hero Speech

The **hero speech** is a motivational speech given by someone who is considered a hero in society, for example, military speakers, political figures, and professional athletes. Just type "motivational speech" into YouTube and you'll find many motivational speeches given by individuals who are considered heroes or role models.

2. Survivor Speech

The **survivor speech** is a motivational speech given by someone who has survived a personal tragedy or who has faced and overcome serious adversity. In the following clip, cancer survivor Becky M. Olsen discusses her life as a cancer survivor.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=61#oembed-5

Becky M. Olson Speech, by beckymolson, Standard YouTube License. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuo1u_C9_3g

Olsen travels the country talking with and motivating cancer survivors to beat the odds.

3. Religious Speech

The **religious speech** is a fairly self-explanatory motivational speech: it is designed to incorporate religious ideals into a motivational package to inspire an audience into thinking about or changing aspects of their religious lives. One highly sought-after US religious speaker is Joel Osteen, head minister at Houston, Texas' Lakewood Church. In one speech, Osteen discusses finding and retaining joy in life; the crux of which is learning how to take responsibility for one's own life and letting others take responsibility for their lives.

4. Success Speech

The **success speech** is a motivational speech that is given by someone who has succeeded in some life aspect and is giving back by telling others how they too can be successful. For example, Xerox CEO Anne Mulcahy spoke before a Dartmouth College student group discussing the entrepreneurship spirit. In her speech, Mulcahy shares the leadership lessons she learned as Xerox's CEO.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://slcc.pressbooks.pub/comm1020/?p=61#h5p-53

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Glossary

abstract

existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence

Books

A long written or printed literary composition.

chronological order

the arrangement of things following one after another in time

concrete

existing in a material or physical form; not abstract

explicate

to develop the implications of : analyze logically

jargon

special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand

multiple identities

When you have a multiple identity you have different cultural outlooks in your life. You may also have different values and beliefs in your family. People in your family may also have different ancestry i.e. from different countries.

Non Academic

Not of or relating to formal study.

presentation software

software used to create a sequence of text and graphics, and often audio and video, to accompany a speech or public presentation