

MASTER'S PROGRAM

Curricula for M.Ed.

ENG063 TEXT ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH ESSAY PROGRAM

This is required reading for all M.Ed. students. Read through the reports and highlight key points in **yellow** as you analyze the strategies of teaching. *(Alternatively, you can copy the key points and paste them into a separate file.)* Draw on the findings of applied neuroscience and reflect on how this can be projected into a classroom or teaching/learning setting. After reading each thesis and highlighting key points, send the highlighted thesis (or separate file with the points you gathered) to your tutor by email. Additionally, you will need to write an 80-page (double space, size 12 font) thesis using the key points that support the theme of your thesis.

Note: ENG063 reflects personal quality thinking and excellent research skills; this serves as a foundation course before you complete your 80-page analytical thesis. Your thesis will be evaluated and graded by an assigned university mentor.

THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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2. **PREFACE**

2.1 **SUBJECT OF INVESTIGATION:**

Academic lecture methodology. In particular, techniques to improve oral dissemination of knowledge when speaking publicly and in the classroom for better audience and student retention.

Needs, Interests and Problems Detected

The speech or lecture is one of the most direct methods for conveying knowledge publicly and in the classroom, but unfortunately it is often the most boring and ineffectual as well. Students and audiences tune out and vital information remains unabsorbed. Speeches do not have to be dry and dull, however. Teachers and professors can employ tested techniques to energize their public speaking and invigorate lectures so audiences and students alike will take notice and benefit.

2.2 **JUSTIFICATION OF THE THESIS THEME:**

Most teaching professionals are called upon to give speeches and also to spend at least part of their classroom time disseminating course material by means of lectures. However, the oral transmission of knowledge is effective only if it is received by the listener, and sadly it is no secret that the majority of speakers fail to keep the attention of their audience. Their presentations are often dry, rambling and dull. Nevertheless, problems of listener boredom and retention failure can be greatly ameliorated if academic professionals learn to apply the powerful and persuasive speaking techniques used by skilled, successful public speakers. This thesis distills the most effective of these methods for instructors to apply to their individual teaching styles.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this thesis is to empower educators to improve the quality of their lectures with the application of proven public-speaking techniques.

3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Educators are often called upon to give speeches and presentations and much of the information they teach their students is presented in the lecture format. However, in today=s world of fast-paced entertainment and commercial messages, audiences, including students, are no longer accustomed to sitting and listening to someone talk for an extended length of time. Speeches delivered in a dry, lifeless manner cause audiences to become bored and their thoughts to wander to other concerns. In contrast, when educators employ effective speaking techniques in their lectures, they can capture the minds and even the hearts of their audiences with presentations not soon forgotten.

3.2 SPECIFICATIONS

This thesis will examine the most effective communication techniques used by public-speaking experts and demonstrate how to apply them in academic settings. Each method will be described, and its application demonstrated with specific examples.

3.3 GOALS

My goal for this thesis is to move instructors to improve the quality of their speeches and lectures by applying the art of public speaking to their delivery. I hope that this will help educators find pleasure in giving dynamic speeches that touch their listeners.

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INTRODUCTION

Powerful speeches often move audiences to more than resounding applause. Great speeches can change lives and at times even alter the flow of history. Imagine yourself on stage, and by your words causing thousands of people to change their attitudes and actions. Such is the potential power of public speaking as employed by famous orators from Aristotle to Abraham Lincoln to Martin Luther King.

We educators, people dedicated to the transmission of ideas and molding of minds, can only benefit from learning to give compelling speeches. The success, for example, of former Secretary of Education William Bennett was due in part to skillful public speaking. Writer Joshua Green says: “Like him or hate him, William Bennett is one of the few public figures with a proven ability to influence public policy by speaking out.”¹

Unfortunately, people usually cannot imagine their speeches achieving such results, and little wonder, since the majority of speeches to which we are exposed are deficient in both substance and presentation. As one news columnist observed: “Over the years there have been many, many more bad speeches than good speeches.”² Most educators will agree that dry and dusty speeches are too common in the academic community as well. Sandy Linver, speech consultant to celebrities and corporations, notes: “[For a professor to be] asked to >read a paper= ...is usually a coveted honor. But hearing someone read a paper is usually a mind-numbing experience.@³ However, no one is locked into poor speaking ability. Apply the time-tested speaking methods outlined here, and you too will become a successful public speaker.

Chapter 1

ESSENTIALS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Experts agree that with a little training and hard work, everyone can become a good public speaker.⁴ So if everyone has potential—why are there so many poor speeches? One reason is that many presenters are often fearful and self-conscious about speaking. Their only objective is to get through the speech so that the next speaker can take the attention away from them. In fact, according to researchers, glossophobia, or fear of public speaking, is the foremost fear of Americans, affecting as many as 75%,⁵ and education professionals are not immune. Many cope with their fear by avoiding situations that require public speaking. Is this wise? For educators, avoidance is not only unwise, it is the antithesis of how to pursue their educational objectives and plan their careers. According to Diana Carlin, author of the book *Public Speaking Today*, education is one of the careers “in which public speaking is an essential skill...[a career] in which the role of public speaking is obvious.”⁶

The need for effective speaking ability in the classroom is obvious, of course, but educators (and administrators) have further need for public-speaking skills because they are often asked to share ideas or read papers at conferences, to lead seminars, and to serve as facilitators, keynote speakers, and spokespersons. Many are interviewed in the local media and are invited to give speeches to business and other professional groups. Therefore, with all these needs and opportunities for speaking, it is far better to improve one’s public-speaking skills than to practice avoidance. “The more vocal you are, the more willing you are to speak out, the faster you will advance,[@] says Linver.⁷ Public-

speaking skills, then, are essential, yet experts say that most professionals, including educators, receive very little public-speaking instruction. Joan Detz, speech coach and author of *How to Write and Give a Speech*, states that even published professors lack the training to turn their dry technical papers into effective presentations.⁸

Nevertheless, the good news is that if you want to improve your public-speaking ability you can do so. Professional speaker Iain Ewing says, “Nobody is born a great public speaker. It is something we can all learn to do if we are willing to work hard to gain the specific skills we need.”⁹ A wealth of advice on public-speaking skills is available in books, and on tapes, videos, and the internet. However, some of the guidance is contradictory and confusing. So I have used the results of extensive research and the benefit of my 45 years of public-speaking experience to weed out unnecessary and at times inaccurate advice, and to select from the rest the key techniques that most experts agree are essential for successful speeches. These techniques have been time-tested by seasoned speakers, many of whom make a living by their words. With practice, the methods will also help you to become the confident, inspiring speaker you wish to be. As Ewing affirms, “Anyone, including you, can become a great public speaker.”¹⁰

A quick look at deficient speeches can start us on the road to what it takes to give a successful speech. Obviously, discourses that are rambling, slow to come to the point, or poorly organized are painful for listeners to sit through. Other negative qualities in the development of a speech, according to communication instructors at the University of Kentucky (UKY), include poor adaptation and application of material to the audience; support materials that lack “authority, relevance,...[and] interest level”; and faulty

reasoning. Poor delivery qualities include vocal problems and lack of modulation; insufficient eye contact; and body movements that were either stiff or excessive.¹¹

Successful speeches, on the other hand, are relevant to the audience; are organized in logical order; have interesting and strong supporting materials; use an extemporaneous delivery style that is natural and confident; and are free from distracting mannerisms.¹² Audiences also want speakers to be energetic and enthusiastic. They appreciate variety in speech and body language, and enjoy effective illustrations and anecdotes that help them remember important points.

Converting poor speeches into excellent ones does not have to be complicated. The basic techniques that will be discussed here are easy to apply and have been selected and sequenced with the needs of education professionals in mind. In the following chapters you will learn how to choose a message that will interest your audience; how to organize your material logically so that it makes sense; and how to support your statements with solid proof and engaging illustrations. You will also learn proven presentation techniques for dynamic delivery of your speech to an audience. Practice these public-speaking skills and you will see dramatic improvement in your speaking ability.

As you study the suggestions, you will undoubtedly notice certain areas in which you are strong and others in which you are weak. For instance, you may have no problem speaking loudly enough so that everyone can hear you, but may be afraid to look at the audience while speaking. You will improve much faster if you give special attention to those weak points and work hardest on them. In fact, the whole process of becoming a

successful public speaker will be much less daunting to contemplate if you concentrate on one speech quality at a time, work on it until you are comfortable with it, and then proceed to the next. Later, you can review your progress and work again on areas that still need improvement.

Since a speech based on seriously flawed material will likely fail even if skillfully delivered, this paper first discusses proven ways to develop material into a compelling speech and then explains techniques for presenting the speech effectively. The examples and illustrations provided for each suggestion given will help you see how to apply the techniques to your own speeches.

Chapter Two examines the heart of every speech—the audience, for without an audience, a speech is pointless. Aspects discussed include how to assess audience demographics and attitudes and how to establish rapport and interact with listeners. Techniques for better speech preparation are featured in Chapter Three, including how to choose a theme, organize the body of the talk, and use an outline effectively. Finally, Chapter Four presents a number of effective delivery tips regarding such aspects as audience contact, vocal control, gestures and poise. Once you have absorbed and practiced these techniques for successful public speaking, you will be equipped to skillfully present your ideas to others

Chapter 2

THE AUDIENCE

“The essence of public speaking is this: give your audience something of value,” states Morton C. Ormond, author of the book, *How to Conquer Public Speaking Fear*. “If people in your audience walk away with something (anything) of value, they will consider you a success.”¹³ If your speech leaves the audience with a better view of themselves, their family, their work or their lives, or even just entertains them, “they will consider their time with you worthwhile.”¹⁴ As long ago as Aristotle, rhetoricians (orators) recognized the importance of the audience to public speaking. According to historian Stephen Fournier, Aristotle “believed that a speech was effective only if it stirred up emotions in its audience.”¹⁵ Audiences must benefit in some way from a speech or there is scarcely reason to give it.

However, as one authority points out, “the majority of people communicate in a way that is fundamentally flawed...[Speakers decide] what they want to say and how they want to say it, with little or no regard for the characteristics or needs of their audience.”¹⁶ Speaker egocentrism not only loses the audience, but also heightens the speaker’s fear and nervousness, because the speaker is thinking of himself or herself (“How am I doing? What will they think of me? What if I mess up?”) instead of the audience. On the other hand, focusing on the audience and its needs can help speakers forget themselves and their apprehension.

Furthermore, centering speeches on the audience is vital because *they* are egocentric; so wise speakers always look for what is important to their listeners.

Audiences put a high premium on their time and have short attention spans. According to researchers, most information on television is given “within 7-second ‘sound bytes.’” They say that “constantly listening to such short messages makes it difficult to pay attention to lengthy speeches.”¹⁷ People have been conditioned from *Sesame Street* onward to expect learning to be entertaining, fast-moving and colorful. Knowing this, successful speakers adapt their speeches in ways (explained later) that will capture and hold their listener’s attention.

The first step to securing the attention of your audience is to tailor your speech to their interests and needs, and the time to begin learning what those interests and needs are is when you first receive notice that you will be speaking to that audience. Speech trainer Ron Kurtus advises: “Before you speak—and even before you prepare your speech—you should know what sort of audience you will have.”¹⁸

Why should you learn as much as you can about your audience even before preparing your speech? An important reason is that audiences are diverse, composed of people from many different backgrounds, work situations, attitudes and interests. Know your particular audience and you can save time searching for material. You can select what will be of most interest to your listeners instead of researching everything available on your topic.

To illustrate: the research necessary for talking about a health topic to second-grade children would be quite different from that required for talking to graduate students. Today’s diverse audiences, according to Gregory Hamilton, author of *Public Speaking for College and Career*, are likely to be “men and women of different ages,

racess, nationalities, ethnic groups, religions, economic levels, and physical abilities.” In addition, “your listeners’ level of knowledge about your material...[and] your subject matter, their needs and desires, and their attitudes towards the goal, the speaker and the occasion” may differ greatly.¹⁹ These differences are just as important to consider as are those between small children and adults.

So when preparing your speech, think about the composition of your audience and tailor your material to them. Ask yourself how familiar they are with your topic and what additional information they will want to know. If you don’t know the answers, find out. To do so, you might interview typical members of the group or call the organization sponsoring the speech. Remember the egocentric nature of most audiences: they want to know ‘what’s in it for them’ to listen to you. So choose material that they will recognize as beneficial. As one source says, “Knowing your audience should affect every aspect of speech preparation and delivery.”²⁰

Staying aware of your audience as you prepare the speech will also help you when you deliver it. Few people enjoy speeches that sound like lectures or sermons. Successful speakers deliver their material in a conversational manner and involve the audience in what they are saying. But, as Marshall Breeze and Rick Rudd, who coach and judge speakers, point out, that might “seem like a contradiction in terms: how can there be a *conversation* when the speaker is doing all the talking?” Their solution? “Build audience responses into the speech itself.”²¹

One way to do that is to include rhetorical questions—“Would you parents want your children to attend a school racked with violence?” Rhetorical questions involve

audiences because they answer mentally and thus participate silently in the discussion. Audiences also appreciate when you acknowledge how they feel or think about your topic, as in: “Some of you are probably wondering, as I did, how these budget cuts will affect our health plans.” Having researched your audience, you should know something about their beliefs and attitudes concerning your topic. You can use this knowledge to incorporate statements and questions into your speech that interact with listeners and show your understanding and appreciation of their viewpoints. Then, when you deliver the talk, the audience will feel that you are talking *with* them instead of *at* them. So as you examine the methods for preparing and delivering speeches in the following chapters, remember the importance of considering your audience at all times.

Chapter 3

PREPARING THE SPEECH

How you prepare your speech has more to do with its success than how it is delivered. Polished delivery techniques won't be able to shine up boring, disjointed, irrelevant material any better than the best car wax can shine up an old rust-bucket auto. In fact, many speech problems that appear to be delivery problems are actually the result of faulty development of the speech itself. For example, material that is poorly organized contributes to rambling, incoherent deliveries, and a lack of illustrations and interesting supporting points is often the cause of boring, dry presentations. So the effort invested in good preparation is worth it. Well-prepared speeches are easier to deliver and more likely to interest the audience and give them something of value, which, in turn, increases speaker confidence and reduces fear.

Preparing a speech does not have to be complicated. Time-consuming, endless research is not only unnecessary, but works against constructing a focused speech. Once you understand and apply the principles discussed in this chapter, you will be able to focus your preparation efforts to produce better-quality speeches with less work. In this chapter you will learn how to choose a theme; how to select and organize the main points that support it; how to introduce and conclude a speech; how to illustrate it; and how to use an outline effectively.

These aspects of speech preparation are arranged according to how most speakers develop their talks, but the order is not important. For example, many speakers decide on

the theme of their speech before beginning their research, as that helps narrow their focus and save them time and effort. Sometimes, however, ideas for a theme come during the research. As long as you understand the principles, you can use them in any order with which you feel comfortable.

Choosing a Theme

Usually, the very first step in preparing a speech is selecting its theme, which is the one idea around which the entire speech is focused. Each point in the speech develops and supports that one idea. Speeches without clearly defined themes are disjointed, confusing and hard to follow. On the other hand, by sticking closely to a theme, speakers can keep their audiences focused on their message and avoid irrelevant tangents that lose the attention of their listeners. Having a theme in mind also expedites research, since one may focus only on information that applies to the theme and thus save time by skipping anything that does not apply.

The problem with basing speeches on general subjects is that they are too broad; they cover too much information. Clouds, college and taxes are all subjects, but they encompass too much material to be practical themes for a speech. The focus needs to be narrowed down to some aspect of the subject that is more specific. To help you do this, one speech-course textbook advises: "Take the position that your theme is the particular *viewpoint* from which you develop your subject."²² In general, the more pointed or narrow the theme, the more effective it is. "The perfect theme is the perfect bumper sticker message," says public-speaking writer Suzen Fromstein.²³ Notice the following

examples of brief, focused theme possibilities derived from the broad subject of taxes:

- Sales Taxes or Income Taxes—Which Option Is Better For Our City?
- A Comparison of Pre-Christian Roman and Chinese Tax Structures.
- Tax School Milk To Finance Field Trips.
- The Gasoline Tax, Or, Why Not Bike To School?

The themes all address the subject of taxes, yet each one presents only a tiny slice of it, and each has an entirely different viewpoint and purpose. Speeches based on these narrower themes would more likely be interesting and informative. For further examples of reducing general subjects to specific themes, see the chart on page 19.

But how do you decide which aspect or viewpoint of your particular subject to use? By considering your purpose or objective for giving the speech, and by considering your audience. To help you recognize the purpose of your speech, ask yourself such questions as the following: Does my administration want me to promote a particular view or action, or to explain a new policy? Am I hoping to share a certain idea? Do I need to remind my audience of important matters they may have forgotten? Your area of expertise may also influence your purpose for speaking about the subject. A statistics professor, for example, is likely to handle the subject of taxes quite differently from a college dean concerned about the budget.

Next, think about your audience. “Determine the one message you want your audience to take home with them,” says Fromstein.²⁴ Are your listeners community professionals, fellow educators, a college class or elementary school children? Your treatment of the subject should vary according to the needs and capacity of that audience.

To illustrate, imagine that you are a teacher assigned to speak on implementing a milk tax to finance school field trips. Though this topic is a narrow one compared to the topic of taxes, you can tighten the theme by considering your audience. For a speech to colleagues and school administrators, you might choose the theme “Implementation strategies for Taxing School Milk,” but for school children who drink the milk, a more appropriate theme might be “Great Field Trips for Pennies.” Focusing on your particular listeners helps you narrow your theme to one that gives them the most benefit.

Once a theme is chosen, keep it in front of you as you organize your research and plan your delivery. That will help you stay focused and avoid getting sidetracked. According to professional speaker Paul Evans, you should “have your content so securely tied to your theme that it cannot be forgotten. Every point should reemphasize the premise of your presentation.”²⁵ As you develop your speech, look for ways to weave restatements of the theme throughout your material (using synonyms and parallel expressions) like a recurring pattern in fabric, which will knit the theme’s main and supporting points into a harmonious whole.

The theme cannot stand alone, however. You will need to select several main points or ideas to develop the theme and give it foundation. How to choose the material for your main points and make them stand out in your talk will be discussed next.

Turning Broad Subjects into Focused Themes—Examples

Speech Occasion	Subject	Possible Themes
Career Day	Student Careers	Influence of College Degrees on Careers.
		Today's Hottest Careers
		Choosing a Career That Is Right for You
Speech to Chamber of Commerce members	XY University and the Community	XY University Employment Opportunities
		Community Impact of Student Cultural Diversity
		XYU Community Extension Programs
Faculty Seminar	Budget Problems	Is It Time to Down-size XY University?
		The New Budget—Band-Aid or Cure?
		Saving the Art Department
Commencement	Life After XYU	Your New Role in Society
		Alumni Gifts for the Future
		The Meaning of Success
Media Presentation	XYZ Today	XYU Graduates Working in the Community
		Degrees Offered by XY University
		XYU Unveils New Scholarship Programs
		A Video Tour of the XYU Campus

Selecting and Emphasizing the Main Points

According to former television host Art Linkletter, the reason so many speeches are mediocre is that the speakers “don’t spend enough time *organizing* their research.”²⁶ That causes speakers to ramble, appear to lack conviction and fail to make an impact. On the other hand, speakers who organize their material convey their message clearly to their audiences.

To organize the information gathered from your research, you must first select the main points you wish to use to support and develop your theme, keeping in mind your objective and the needs of your audience. As you do so, you will probably notice that you have far more information collected from your research than will fit into the time allotted for the speech. So you will have to eliminate much of it before you can organize what is left. Initially you should eliminate whatever you obviously do not need. That will leave less material, which will be much easier to organize into the main points needed to support your theme.

You can do this preliminary elimination in three steps. First, weed out anything not directly connected with the theme. In researching a speech on computerizing the college library, for example, you may have uncovered fascinating information on Benjamin Franklin because of his historical role in today’s public-library system. You would eliminate that material, however, since those gems of information do nothing to support your theme of adding computers to the college library.

Next, think about the objective of your speech and weed out anything that does not contribute to that goal. Buck Rogers, former vice president of marketing at IBM,

emphasizes: “You should know specifically what you want to accomplish and organize your...material...to that end.”²⁷ Perhaps your objective in giving a speech on computerization of the college library is to get the administration to authorize purchasing the computers from the general budget. In that case, material on laptop computers would not be useful because libraries do not need portable computers. They use desktop systems. Discussing laptops could actually detract from your objective—their higher price could make the project seem more costly than it really would be. Therefore, you would eliminate the laptop material.

Finally, eliminate any material that clearly does not fit your audience. Speeches that tell audiences what they already know or things that seem irrelevant to their needs bore them. So start your speech from where the audience already is and build from there: “We all know that if we are in a building that catches on fire we need to exit immediately but calmly. Now let’s look at some innovative ways to exit in a faster and safer manner.”

Once you have weeded out all the information you clearly will not need for your speech, you are ready to select your main points from what remains. What are main points? The main points of a speech are the crucial ideas that are the strongest basis for the theme, that prove and develop it. Linver says: “Use your speech to present your big ideas to the audience. Big ideas are the major points you want to emphasize.”²⁸

If, for example, the theme of your talk is reducing world hunger, the topic of thousands of children dying of malnutrition in just one city in Africa would be a big idea, while the idea of neglected children in the U.S. having to eat breakfast at school is a small one bordering on irrelevance. Similarly, a speech on the need to update a school’s

computer and video-conferencing technology would not be served by the minor, perhaps even distracting point of replacing manual pencil sharpeners with electric ones. On the other hand, an electric pencil sharpener might be a main point of a speech to school children on appreciating the marvels of classroom technology. To select your main ideas, ask yourself which points from your research best support the theme and will help the most to accomplish your objective and benefit your audience.

The process for organizing research into main points can be illustrated with the speech on taxing school milk to finance field trips. Imagine that you are the teacher assigned the speech. In searching for information on the subject, you turned up a dozen ways to organize field trips; hundreds of field-trip destinations; reams of information on property and other school taxes; still more on state and federal aid to schools; and everything anyone ever wanted to know about milk and the cows it came from. After weeding out clearly irrelevant material such as the source of milk, you then look through the rest to find only those points directly related to the objective of convincing your audience that the milk tax is needed.

By keeping your objective clearly in mind, it is not hard to see that changing property-tax laws or tapping into federal subsidies is not likely to be of much help for the immediate problem of funding local field trips. But you might conclude that the following points *are* important to your theme and objective:

1. A discussion of why other methods of funding, such as bake sales and alumni donations cannot solve the problem
2. A practical way to apply the tax to the milk

3. Why field trips are important to student development
4. How to handle possible parental objections to the milk tax
5. Why taxing school milk is the perfect funding solution
6. The economic setbacks that have caused field trips to be dropped from the school budget

All of these are main points important to the theme of taxing school milk; each point helps convince the audience that a milk tax is needed.

Remember, though, that the composition of your audience must also be considered when selecting the main points. In a presentation to school children, you might concentrate on the benefits of field trips and how to get money for them, and leave out the economic underpinnings that led up to the financial crisis. But a presentation to administrators would demand more budgetary and technical material before they would be convinced.

When choosing main points, be careful that you do not choose too many. According to experts, most speeches, even long ones, should have no more than three to five main points. Orman points out that “all your audience wants from you is to walk away with one or two key points that will make a difference to them.” He adds: “Many studies have shown that people remember very [little] of the...information speakers convey.”²⁹ Too many main points become a blur of information. But if you limit your main ideas to two or three—no more than five—you increase the probability that your listeners will remember them. Applying this advice to the milk-tax speech, you would select just two to five of the main points listed above. If, for example, your speech is to

children who already know that field trips are in danger of being dropped for lack of money, you might choose to discuss only the points on the benefits of field trips, why other funding won't work, and why taxing milk is the perfect solution.

How can you make sure that the key ideas you have selected stand out? By only using material that supports and highlights those ideas. Irrelevant information, no matter how fascinating, will distract listeners from your objective. For example, when discussing the importance of field trips, you might mention the physical-fitness benefits they provide, but you would not digress into why children need exercise, as that would cloud your main point of why *field trips* are beneficial. You don't want the attention of your audience to wander into thinking about exercise programs for children. Keep the main points clear and distinct. Always show how secondary information directly relates to the main points. Even when secondary information *is* relevant, guard against including too much detail, because that also clouds the issues of your speech and overwhelms the audience. If listeners need more details you can provide handouts for later review.

Some speeches such as those on school policy that are given every semester require a speaker to include material the audience already knows. If that is the case, see if you can find new or unusual ways of conveying the main ideas to your listeners. Perhaps you can present the information in a humorous or unexpected manner, or offer innovative suggestions, or show them ways beyond the commonplace to apply the information. You might guide the audience to a deeper understanding of the subject, or reveal little-known aspects of it. Who hasn't enjoyed an "inside story" of otherwise mundane material? Try including anecdotes, because people enjoy true-life examples of what you are teaching.

Real examples catch attention and give immediacy to your topic. At times one must give speeches that require talking about unfamiliar or complex ideas difficult for your audience to understand. In that case, the material supporting your main points will have to include explanations and definitions of key words and phrases. However, use complex ideas only when necessary.

A number of techniques may be used to emphasize the main ideas. One is to refer to the main points frequently with key words and synonyms the same way the theme is emphasized. Other methods are restating the main ideas already discussed before introducing the next one, and numbering the main points, as in: “Our new testing policy has three revisions. Number one...” Useful too is the introduction, supporting argument, summary technique, which can be illustrated with a speech proposing new programs. The speaker would begin by saying, “Our university needs more cultural-awareness programs [introduction of the main idea]”; “With such programs we will be eligible for more grants because...[supporting arguments]”; “Therefore, we really need to offer more programs that awaken awareness for other cultural traditions [summary of the main idea]. All these methods are effective because, as an article on public speaking points out, they give the audience “several chances to absorb your message by repeating the main points.”³⁰

Thoughtful care in selecting your main ideas will help you develop and support your theme and will benefit your audience. The next step is to arrange the main points logically so that one thought leads to another in a manner that helps your audience follow your reasoning, and helps you remember the flow of your ideas.

Logical Order

Choosing a logical order for your main points will help you to develop your theme from beginning to end in a satisfying way. You may have noticed that the listing of main points on page 22 for the talk on taxing school milk was a bit jarring, even confusing. The reason was the disjointed order of the points, which created an effect similar to travel directions that tell you about a traffic light inside a city before telling you how to get to the city.

Notice, however, that a simple rearrangement of the ideas into logical order turns the speech into a satisfying, coherent whole:

1. Why field trips are important to student development
2. The economic setbacks that have caused field trips to be dropped from the school budget
3. A discussion of why other methods of funding, such as bake sales and alumni donations cannot solve the problem
4. Why taxing school milk is the perfect funding solution
5. How to handle possible parental objections to the milk tax
6. A practical way to apply the tax to the milk.

In logical order, each point now leads seamlessly to the next.

Your objective, when deciding the order of your main ideas, is to determine which arrangement will most likely accomplish the purpose of your speech and be easy for your audience to follow. No one way of ordering material is always right for every

speech. In fact, speakers have a variety of patterns from which to choose. (See chart on page 31.) The following are some of the most common:

Chronological order—The arrangement of main points in the order in which they happened. Chronological order is usually used for speeches that discuss a sequence of events, or that involve a progression of time such as a historical account. According to J. A. DeVito, author of *Human Communication*, a textbook for university speech courses, “This pattern is often used in describing how something should be done or how a process works. [It] is also useful for describing a past event or detailing the causes of a problem when the causes developed over a period of time.”³¹ Typical subjects for chronological order are the history of a community, the steps for preparing a recipe, and the development of an academic program. An effective variation on the chronological pattern is to begin the speech in the present or at a dramatic point of the story, and then show in chronological order the events that led to that point in time.

Inductive reasoning—Successful examples of past situations are applied to the present. The pattern is often employed to promote an idea or position on an issue. The success of situations in which the desired point of view or action was effectively applied in the past is used to prove that the same approach should be just as valid at present. Public-speaking expert Diana Nagy points out that to use this method effectively, “you must get enough representative examples in order to draw a generalization.”³² Examples of inductive reasoning are promoting a new program by citing other institutions that have used the program successfully; or advocating the hiring or election of a school official by showing the good work she has done before in other positions. The objective is to have the

audience conclude that previous successes ensure that the current program or person being considered must be good for the present need.

Deductive reasoning—A general statement made for the purpose of giving support to the specific objective desired; often used for emotional appeals. Ethically, when using deductive reasoning, you should “support your premises and draw a logical conclusion,” as Nagy states.³³ However, with emotional appeals, the effectiveness of deductive reasoning depends not only on the reliability of the general statement, but also on the audience’s willingness to accept it. The two do not always go together. In the right political climate, for example, general prejudicial statements are often accepted without question even when a cursory analysis of the statements reveal their falsehood, as witness Hitler’s accusations against the Jews. For this reason deductive-reasoning is often used when the audience is already leaning in the direction the speaker wishes it to go.

Spelling out an acronym—Each letter begins the first word of a main idea. Key ideas are hooked to the letters and are thus easier for the audience to remember. The acronym does not have to be taken directly from the subject of the speech, but it should be relevant to the theme. To illustrate how this method works, imagine a coach at XY University who wants to energize his team with a positive speech. He may decide to use the acronym XYU to organize his main points— *X*cellence on the field, *Y*ou make a difference, and *U*nited for victory! Or he might use an acronym that is not a college term but that does fit the victory theme of his speech such as WIN— *W*ork together, *I*magine the victory, and *N*ever give up! In either case the coach would build his speech around the acronym points, expanding and supporting each statement.

List Method— A short list of main points is enumerated and explained. The list method is one of the easiest patterns to use. According to author Fred Gleek, people love lists. He says: “People find it easy to learn when you give them a very specific number of things that they either should or shouldn't do.”³⁴ Examples of the list method include: “We will discuss two right ways and two wrong ways to interview for a position.” “The top career fields today are medicine, law, architecture and journalism.” “There are three keys to winning: teamwork, practice and confidence.” In each case the speech is organized around the listed points.

Problem, cause, solution—A problem is discussed, its cause explained, and a solution proposed; the speech is thus neatly divided into three major ideas. “We are all concerned about alcoholism on campus. How did it start and how can we end it?” is an example of the technique. According to UKY advisors, this order is useful for persuasive speeches.³⁵ A variation of the approach is the “cause and effect” method, in which a behavior or situation is described, and then the consequences, good or bad, are discussed. “At XYU, if you party ‘til you drop, XYU may drop you.” A second variation is using ideas that directly relate to each other as in: “XYU has the following policies for student housing, food and entertainment.”

Spatial pattern—Arrangement of material into “a sequence that moves from one direction to the other.”³⁶ A discussion of U.S. cities might begin with those in the east and continue towards the west, for example, or a description of the administrative structure of a university might begin with the president and continue downward. The spatial direction provides a logical structure for the main ideas.

Topical method—The main ideas are arranged into sections, or topics, that develop and promote the theme. According to DeVito, “Many subjects break naturally into subtopics. Whenever this is the case, it is wise to take advantage of the situation by discussing each subtopic.”³⁷ The previous milk-tax speech example uses the topical pattern. Look again at the topics for the speech on page 26 and notice how each contributes to the theme of taxing milk to fund field trips. For example, the first topic concerning the reasons for choosing a tax on milk is obviously fundamental to the theme of the speech. But the topic “why field trips are important” is also central to the milk-tax theme because unless the audience is convinced that the trips have value, no one will be interested in funding them. For audiences that are unaware of the problem with funding field trips, the economic setbacks or budget problems that caused field trips to be canceled would also be a necessary topic. The rest of the topics give similar support to the theme.

The topical pattern has no hard and fast rules for the order in which the main points should be presented as long as the order is logical, with one point leading smoothly and naturally to the next. If the main points can fit logically into more than one position, adjust the order to fit your audience. Using the milk-tax example, putting the alternative funding topic before the benefits of taxing milk enables you to remove possible objections that might otherwise close your listener’s minds to your new proposal. But for an audience already informed on the problems with other methods of funding, you may prefer to emphasize the benefits of the milk-tax program first and then briefly remind the audience why other methods are inferior.

Patterns for Arranging Material in Logical Order

Chronological Order	Points are arranged in the order in which they occurred.
Inductive Reasoning	Successful examples of past situations are given and applied to the present.
Deductive Reasoning	Draws a specific conclusion from a general idea.
Spelling Out an Acronym	Each letter begins the first word of a main idea.
List Method	The main ideas are enumerated as a brief list of points.
Problem, Cause, Solution	A problem is presented, its cause explained, and a solution proposed.
Spatial Pattern	Ideas are arranged in a sequence or direction, such as east to west or top to bottom.
Topical Method	Material is divided into several related main ideas or sections.

Sometimes, when considering which pattern of logical order to use for your speech, you may find that your material can logically be arranged according to more than one method. When this is so, considering your audience and objective will help you select the most effective pattern. If you were a community-college program director invited to speak to your peers at other schools about successful programs you developed for your college, for example, your material could be organized according to one of several logical patterns. Should the reason for your speech be simply to inform the other directors of your school's new programs, the list method would probably work best—"We have three successful new programs." If, though, your objective were to convince the other directors to try your programs in their schools, you would probably use the inductive-reasoning pattern—"This program has worked successfully for County College, City College and for us, so it will work for you."

You may find, however, that even after such a consideration you can still organize your speech according to several patterns with no discernable difference in the effect on your audience or the purpose of your talk. When that is the case, then simply choose the pattern with which you feel most comfortable. As long as it helps your speech to flow smoothly from one point to the next in a manner easily understood by your audience, the pattern is a good one.

Before you finish organizing your material, you need to take another look at how much time you have to deliver it. "Nothing endears you to an audience like brevity," say experts. "Every moment past your allotted time builds frustration."³⁸ When you end your speech before the audience is satiated, they will be happy to listen to you again. It is

always better to end on time or even under the time limit, as running overtime not only upsets your audience, but also interferes with the schedules of the program and your listeners. But what does timing have to do with organizing your material? The best way to ensure good timing is to limit the information in your speech so that you have plenty of time to develop each main point. So unless you are sure your speech is within your time limit, consider pruning some of your subpoints or even one or more of your main ideas. When you know you have plenty of room to develop your ideas without going overtime, you will be more relaxed and free to concentrate on a quality delivery.

The preparation methods discussed to this point—how to choose a theme, select the main ideas to support it, and arrange the ideas in a pattern of logical order—are sufficient for you to produce a speech. But the speech will be more effective and successful if it is enriched with well-chosen illustrations.

Effective Illustrations

Illustrations are tools no speaker should be without. They clarify complex ideas and make them relevant; they stir emotions and help dry statistics come to life. For example, the statistic in this sentence, “The probability of a single protein molecule forming at random in an organic soup [is] one in 10^{113} ,” takes on more meaning when that unimaginable number is illustrated as being “larger than the estimated total number of all the atoms in the universe.”³⁹ Illustrations are also an effective memory aid. According to communications authority Jeff Magee, illustrations enhance retention because “the brain anchors by stories and visuals, rather than just data placement.”⁴⁰

The word *illustration*, according to one speech commentary, comes from a Greek expression that “literally means ‘a placing beside or together.’ When you illustrate, you explain something by ‘placing it beside’ something similar.” The commentary adds that illustrations “allow listeners to absorb new information readily by comparing it with something already familiar to them.”⁴¹ In this way, illustrations help you give memorable speeches that have real impact on your listeners.

Illustrations can be figures of speech, analogies, and examples from fiction and real life (see chart on page 45). You probably learned about figures of speech such as similes and metaphors in high-school English class. These language tools are excellent for emphasizing important points in a way that is easy for the audience to remember. For a quick refresher on similes and metaphors, similes use the words *as* and *like* to compare two unlike things by highlighting a quality in which they are similar. Take, for example, the expression “The teacher is like a mother hen looking after her chicks.” Teachers and hens are not really alike, of course, but the simile causes you to think of the similarity in their manner of caring for those in their charge.

Metaphors are stronger siblings of the simile. Instead of saying something is *like* something dissimilar, a metaphor says the thing *is* the dissimilar thing. Saying the teacher *is* a mother hen is stronger than saying she or he is *like* one. Look at the contrast between the two figures of speech in the following examples:

- Simile: The drug pusher lurked on the corner like a shark after prey.
- Metaphor: The drug pusher was a shark, lurking for prey.
- Simile: The office was as small as a postage stamp and crammed with papers.

- Metaphor: The office was a postage stamp crammed with papers.
- Simile: He was like a bull, pounding through the other team to a touchdown.
- Metaphor: He was a bull, pounding through the other team to a touchdown.

Though metaphors are stronger than similes, they are not always the best choice. Some of the examples above would probably sound better to the listener as similes. Which to use depends on the context; choose the form most effective for the point you are making. As you become comfortable with these figures of speech, remember that, as one source points out, “metaphors and similes are just the tip of the iceberg. There are many ways in which you can use colorful, interesting language to spark up your speech and hold your listeners' attention.”⁴²

The power behind figures of speech is not only the colorful images they invoke, but also their brevity. If they are too lengthy their effect is weakened. Also, metaphors and similes should not need explanation; the audience should readily understand their meaning. To achieve this, make sure your figures of speech are comparing things with which the audience is familiar and with which they can identify. To say a party was as crowded as a subway in rush hour, for instance, is only meaningful to people who have had experience with subways. A rural audience would likely relate better to saying that the party was as crowded as the Budweiser tent at a state fair in August. It is the familiarity that gives figures of speech their impact. A short phrase that touches home to the audience can paint a big, colorful picture in their minds.

Because of the power of figures of speech to evoke more than the words actually say, be sure that they convey the thought you intend. Unless you are careful, you might

inadvertently suggest something that actually detracts from your point, as the following simile illustrates: “That girl is so pretty she attracts boys like flies to garbage!” The strength of the attraction of pretty girls and garbage may be the same, but the mental picture created suggests something unpleasant beneath the girl’s beauty.

Additionally, keep in mind that a figure of speech that is wonderful for one audience may offend another. Take as an example this simile: “Some employees are like wheelbarrows. They’re hard to get going, and when you do, they upset easily.” Say that to a group of managers and the simile would probably be taken humorously, but to a group of employees it would more likely incur resentment.

Examples, anecdotes and analogies are longer illustrations than are figures of speech; they are little stories used to clarify and emphasize main ideas. When skillfully used, illustrative stories help the audience remember your message. Professional business speaker Doug Stevenson says, “As a speaker, trainer or teacher, if you want your points to stick, then stories are your super glue.”⁴³ Illustrations help audiences remember and understand your points because they are specific instances of how the points apply to them. These longer illustrations can be drawn from fiction, hypothetical situations, and real life.

Examples are specific cases that demonstrate the application of general statements. Anecdotes turn the example into a narrative or little story, and analogies compare unfamiliar concepts with something familiar. According to experts, “by putting potentially comparable statements next to one another, analogy argues for similarity between ideas,” thus making them easier to grasp. ⁴⁴ Comparing a city or corporation to a

suit—each composed of many parts all necessary for the harmonious functioning of the unit—is one example of an analogy.

When using historical and fictional illustrations, use them to give color to situations, feelings and thoughts of people today. For instance, Nora’s disillusionment with her husband in Henrik Ibsen’s “A Doll House”⁴⁵ could be compared with similar problems experienced by modern married women. Or fictional situations can be contrasted with reality, as in: “People are not Cinderellas who live happily ever after.” But always take care to use fictional illustrations to emphasize main ideas and not merely to tell an appealing story.

The Ibsen example brings up the need to be sure your audience will recognize your choice of fiction. Before you illustrate your speech with Ibsen, for instance, consider whether he is an author familiar to your audience. Perhaps not, unless you are speaking to academic professionals or other well-educated people. When in doubt, draw illustrations from mainstream fiction. Furthermore, when speaking to people of non-Western cultures, remember that they often have their own unique legends and literary heritage and would be less likely to recognize references to traditional Western works. However, people of other cultures are surprised and appreciative when you use examples from their culture.

Examples from real life, as opposed to fiction, give immediacy to speeches, bringing the application of important points home to listeners. Audiences can identify with others who have the same problems and situations in life, and they will more readily accept solutions that they see have worked for others like them. “Talk to people in terms of their own experience and they will listen to you,” say public-speaking experts.⁴⁶

When choosing examples from real life, make sure that you verify them as true or “it can undermine your credibility,” explains an article on illustrations, continuing: “For the same reason, refrain from passing on hearsay or relating experiences you cannot verify.”⁴⁷ If an audience recognizes that an example you use is untrue or based on faulty information, they will begin to doubt or even reject everything else you say. Be especially wary of information obtained from newspapers or the internet. News stories are often half-told or later proven wrong, and the internet abounds with urban legends and hoaxes. So check and double-check the facts and sources of your illustrations.

Care should also be taken to avoid embarrassing people who may be subjects of your illustrations, especially when using negative examples. A relative or close friend of the person you are disparaging may be in the audience or come to know of the put down. And you certainly want to avoid inadvertently using an example that may needlessly offend listeners or at best make them uncomfortable.

One teacher lecturing high-school students on the benefits of looking for something higher than material values, gave the example of an imaginary student who bought a shiny yellow Corvette and had to work so hard to pay for it that her grades suffered. Unknown to the teacher, one of his students had just purchased a yellow Corvette and thought the comment was directed specifically to her rather than to the whole class. Since the teacher knew that the students were buying the latest cars and other must-have products (the reason for his speech), he should have used broader terms such as “shiny new sports cars,” or prefaced his remarks with a comment that any match of his examples to things his students owned would be entirely coincidental. If the

teacher had done so, he would have avoided needlessly offending his student with the yellow Corvette and she would not have felt that she was being singled out.

Because illustrations have the power to touch the feelings of the audience, they are very effective for handling emotional issues. Illustrations “combine intellectual appeal with emotional impact,” explains one speaking guide.⁴⁸ Charged, controversial subjects can be dealt with in the safe atmosphere of talking about someone else and potentially explosive points can be defused. Attempts to address an assembly of students about the evils of cheating, for instance, might sound accusatory and produce resentment or at least a “here we go again” reaction in the students and a tuning out of the rest of the speech. Any efforts to motivate such students to honesty by fear of punishment for cheating would probably backfire. On the other hand, begin the speech with illustrations that show students how they are affected by the cheating of *others*, and the results might be quite different. Students could be asked to imagine themselves flying on a jumbo jet and discovering in flight that the pilot and copilot had cheated their way through flight school. How would they feel? Or that they are about to have delicate brain surgery to remove a tumor, but just as they are wheeled into the operating room they discover that their surgeon’s high honors from medical school were obtained by cheating. Such illustrations would likely motivate the students to listen and leave them better disposed to apply your suggestions for getting good grades without cheating.

Illustrations can be particularly satisfying when they are woven throughout a speech. The best ones fit the theme of their talks so well that different aspects of the illustration can support each main point. For example, a discourse on improving

relationships could be illustrated with the suit analogy mentioned earlier, the suit being analogous to the relationship needing improvement. Just as it takes many pieces—sleeves, lapels, etc.—to construct a suit, so certain qualities of the mind and heart—unselfish love, a forgiving spirit, etc.—are needed to build strong relationships. Little acts of kindness and consideration might be associated with the hundreds of tiny stitches that bind the pieces of the suit. The speech could conclude with a brief review of the qualities needed for a good relationship, and a statement that *applying* these qualities is like a seamstress sewing the suit parts together. The seamstress is rewarded with an excellent suit, and the audience, with healthy relationships.

Illustrations based on humor are usually popular with audiences. They can be very effective for strengthening main ideas because humor helps the points stand out in a memorable way. An example from advertising (for most ads are illustrations in fancy packages), is the Chihuahua that says: “Yo quiero Taco Bell.”⁴⁹ The dog is funny and the humor works because both the dog and the Spanish phrase relate to Mexican food, which is what Taco Bell sells. The laugh produced by the ad makes it stick so well that many think of Taco Bell whenever they see a Chihuahua. In the same way, humorous examples, when they fit, can add sticking power to your message.

But the humor in the illustrations must emphasize your main ideas or your points will be lost in the laughter. Inappropriate humor is ineffective and distracting. To better understand how improper humor distracts, imagine that a main idea in a speech to your colleagues is how to adapt a language course to fit the needs of area senior citizens. In the speech you relate a humorous anecdote about Ethel and Edith, elderly friends who have

lunched together weekly for 35 years. During their last lunch, Ethel confesses to Edith that she has forgotten her name, and begs forgiveness. “Please tell me your name,” she pleads. Edith glares at her for several minutes and then responds: “How soon do you need to know?” Though funny, the only thing this illustration will accomplish in the context of the speech is laughter. Not only is the humor irrelevant to the main idea of adapting the language course to meet the needs of seniors, it actually diverts attention *away* from the idea. On the other hand, the humorous anecdote might be effective support for an idea on the need for programs to help people with memory disorders—“Though we laugh, we all know how difficult it is to cope with memory disorders in our loved ones. Our program can help.” The point is that illustrations must tie in tightly with the theme and the main idea they are illustrating to be effective.

You may have noticed repeated references to main ideas in this discussion of illustrations. That is because illustrations should be reserved for major points to make them stand out. Illustrating minor points (except when using brief ones to clarify difficult concepts) focuses too much attention on things of lesser importance, putting them on the same level as the main points. The purpose of your illustrations should be to embed important ideas deeper in the minds of your audience; if they merely add color or entertain, they will distract from the flow of the speech.

One speaker gave a diverting illustration on bird feet in winter. He wondered why birds’ feet do not freeze when they walk in the snow and sit on icy power lines. He talked about all the places he looked to find the answer and could not find it. After the speech almost everyone in his audience remembered the illustration, but few could recall the

point it was making. Make certain, then, that the illustrations you use reinforce the main points rather than blur them.

Good illustrations are easily understood. The best need no explanation but for those that do, the explanation should be brief. If a lengthy explanation is needed, that is probably a sign that the illustration is not really appropriate for your audience. The reason, say experts, is that “[a] simple illustration is easier to remember. If an illustration needs much explanation, it is excess baggage. Discard it or simplify it.”⁵⁰ If you were talking about narrowing broad career choices to a specific field, for example, illustrating the point by comparing it with the focal distances of camera lenses would most likely be too complex for general audiences. A lengthy explanation of camera techniques to an audience inexperienced in photography would distract from the main idea you were attempting to illustrate. A better, less specialized illustration of the idea would be of a cook narrowing down available dessert choices to a specific recipe.

Successful illustrations are also simple and direct. Illustrations that would otherwise be forceful are weakened by unnecessary detail. Look at every part of your illustration and ask yourself if it contributes to the point being made. Will it be missed if you leave it out? If not, then leave it out. When giving the yellow Corvette illustration, for example, the teacher needed a few details such as the sleek body and shiny chrome to illustrate the powerful attraction of the latest hot car. But the point would have been lost in the details if he had described too many features.

If you have trouble thinking of illustrations for your speeches, be assured that illustration material is all around you. “Learn to think in terms of illustrations,”

recommends one public-speaking guide. “For instance, if you see a potted flower that looks dry and wilted, you might think, ‘Friendship is like a plant. To flourish it must be watered.’”⁵¹ Think about your audience, as that is a particularly effective way to find good illustrations. Think of things that affect the personal lives of your listeners—their homes, children, and neighborhoods. What is their weather like? What do they eat? How do they entertain themselves? Think about the work the people in your audience do, their common activities, their cultural backgrounds and educational levels. Now draw from that information to illustrate your main points.

Thinking about your audience will also help you choose illustrations that are well-accepted and not offensive. Linkletter reminds us: “If you fail to keep the special identity of individual people in mind, you’re likely to toss in an illustration that may...be offensive.”⁵² Common sense tells us to avoid racist and other inflammatory stories, as well as any that involve vulgarity or obscenity. But even less-offensive examples can totally alienate the audience to the rest of your speech. The Ethel/Edith story, for instance, could offend some elderly listeners, their relatives, or some who see no humor in the afflictions of old age. By keeping the sensibilities of your audience in mind, your carefully targeted illustrations are likely to be well-received and effective.

Once you have chosen simple and direct illustrations for your main points, don’t stop there. “Be sure that the audience sees the relationship between the story and the point you are making,” advise speech instructors at the University of Kansas.⁵³ Don’t assume that your audience understands why you included the illustration. Make its application to the main point clear or your listeners may miss the point entirely.

To illustrate: A high-school principal is explaining to her faculty that when dealing with student problems they need to share ideas and communicate and cooperate with each other. She mentions that as she was walking up the campus sidewalk, she noticed a large beetle that somehow had gotten flipped onto its back. The beetle's legs were waving wildly and it rocked from side to side, but no matter what it did, it could not right itself. Once she flipped it over it ran happily off to its business. If the principal stops there, she leaves the teachers hanging. What was the point of the example? Why did she use it? What does a beetle on its back have to do with communication or sharing ideas?

However, if the principal concludes by making the application of the illustration clear, that sometimes even the best and most experienced teachers can suddenly find themselves 'flipped on their backs,' stymied and helpless unless others assist them, then the audience gets the point without confusion. Application is also necessary whenever an illustration is expanded. If the principal were to expand the beetle illustration to say that had the beetle known how to call for help, a buddy beetle could easily have pushed him to flip him over, then she would need to make that application clear too: teachers need to call for help from other teachers, whose assistance may turn a huge problem into a minor one easy to resolve.

By using illustrations to enhance your main points, you can add color and razor-sharp effectiveness to your speeches and they will be memorable and easy to understand. Now you are ready to develop the remaining two parts of your speech, the introduction and the conclusion.

ILLUSTRATION FORMS

Form	Defined	Examples
Similes	Figures of speech that compare two unlike things to show a common trait. The comparison is introduced with the words <i>like</i> and <i>as</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She bit on the hot pepper like a mule eating briars. • He was as limp as wilted lettuce.
Metaphors	Figures of speech that also compare two unlike things to show a common trait, but saying, in effect, that the one thing <i>is</i> the other. Stronger than similes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is an ice cube except when around children—then he melts. • She is a headstrong pony.
Fictional Examples	Fictional events and actions that support the main points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the best of whatever life gives you, as Crusoe did on his island. • Maybe this quest is your Moby Dick.
Real-life Examples	Actual events and actions that support main points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the outcome of Swaggart and Baker. Anyone can say that he or she was sent from God. • World War I, the ‘war to end all wars,’ proves that violence begets violence.
Analogies	Comparison of one thing or concept with another, implying similarity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is like eating. The information has to be ingested and digested. • A living cell is as complex as a large city.

Introductions

When introducing your speech, “start with a bang,” advises Rob Sherman, professional speech consultant. “In any presentation, the first 30 seconds are the “make or break” time.”⁵⁴ The first statements of your speech should ‘hook’ the audience and make them want to hear more in the same way as the first lines of a book or magazine article. Your listeners have lives packed with activities and problems, and if your opening does not capture and hold their attention, their minds will drift away to those other things.

Be sure to clearly identify your subject without delay and show the audience why it is important for them. In essence, tell them what you are going to tell them and why they need to listen. If you are speaking about changes in the budget, show how those changes will affect them or their families personally. If you are speaking to employees about workplace safety, show the workers how the safety issues affect them directly. Whatever your subject, always show the audience how they will benefit from listening to you, how your speech will help them with their needs, problems, or questions.

Experienced speakers make use of several methods for opening speeches,⁵⁵ the most common of which are explained here. The particular method selected for an introduction would depend upon the objective of the speech and the audience. One technique is to begin with a *key statement*, which is usually a statement of the central idea of the speech. The statement should be a powerful one, though, or it will fail to interest the audience. An example is this statement introducing a safety meeting: “Today you are going to learn how to spot hidden dangers lurking everywhere in your home and at your workplace.” A variation of the key statement is to make a *startling declaration* to grab

attention, and then pause: “Firemen risk having bombs explode in their faces nearly every time they fight a fire. Why? Aerosol cans. [pause] You can learn how to spot such hidden dangers before they hurt you.” The startling statement about aerosol cans hooks the audience—they want to learn more. A further variation of the key statement is to begin the speech with a *pertinent quotation*. One example is this possible introduction for the milk-tax speech: “Philosopher George Santayana once said: ‘A child educated only at school is an uneducated child.’⁵⁶ Field trips are a time-honored way to educate our children out of school while they are in school, but friends, our children’s field trips are being dropped for lack of funding.”

When a speech follows another speech, a *comment referring to the previous presenter* is an effective way to open that also facilitates the smooth flow of the entire program: “Professor Jones pointed out the reasons we depend on our alumni. Now I’m going to show you innovative ways to keep them involved with their alma mater.”

Another way to begin is by *stating something with which the audience agrees*, and then building upon it: “The science hall has been leaking for months now every time it rains, and it’s time to think about replacing the roof.” With sensitive topics, however, the chances are that at least a few in the audience will not agree. When that is the case, speakers can apply a principle of persuasion from Monroe’s Motivating Sequence, which is to “identify and eliminate possible objections” to the opening statement right away.⁵⁷ In other words, the speaker prepares for the possible difference of opinion by following his or her opening statement with a counter statement and its answer: “Some of you may be thinking that putting up with leaks is a minor nuisance compared with the expense of

replacing the roof; however, persistent leaks dramatically increase the risk of toxic mold, which is deadly and prohibitively expensive to remedy. To solve the problem before that happens, here is our proposal for a quality roof replacement at minimal cost.” This type of introduction engenders a favorable response from the audience and enhances the likelihood of their remaining responsive for the rest of the speech.

Establishing common ground with the audience is a related method that works very well for controversial issues and hostile audiences. Caryl Rae Krannich, author of *101 Secrets of Highly Effective Speakers*, points out: “By emphasizing their areas of agreement, speakers stand a better chance that their audience will listen with an open mind and may be persuaded to accept the speaker's point of view.”⁵⁸ The speaker begins by discussing a situation or attitude to which the audience is favorable and then carefully guides them from that point to the speaker’s objective. A classic example of this approach is Mark Antony’s eulogy for Julius Caesar as written by William Shakespeare.⁵⁹ Antony’s objective was to move the volatile crowd to avenge Caesar’s murder, but Brutus, one of the conspirators, had addressed them first and had so thoroughly convinced them of the good of the assassination that they called for Brutus to fill Caesar’s place. Nevertheless, Antony was able to establish common ground with the crowd by assuring them: “I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.”⁶⁰ He continued by speaking of things with which the crowd could agree, including that Brutus was an honorable man. Having established that common ground, Antony gradually revealed further information about Caesar and his murder that turned the crowd’s admiration for the conspirators to hatred and a demand for revenge, which was his objective.

Today those in positions of responsibility often have to present unpopular ideas to their audiences, and the common-ground introduction is one of the best methods for handling these awkward situations. To illustrate: A dean has to announce a new no-alcohol-on-campus policy to the student body. She first establishes common ground by saying: “I loved the crazy parties we had every weekend where we drank ourselves into a stupor. I partied with the best of them.” In this way she shows students that she can identify with their feelings and objections toward the new rules, which may lessen any hostility. Once she gains the students’ confidence, she leads them to her objective by continuing: “But I also remember the three friends I lost to a car accident when they drove off drunk from one of those parties.”

Anecdotes and *analogies* are two more effective speech openers. Analogies are good for getting the audience to think about your subject in new ways, and anecdotes or personal experiences can help your listeners identify with your topic and feel more at ease with you. However, to work well the analogy or experience must be relevant to your theme and contribute to moving the speech toward your objective. Remember that the purpose of your introduction is to direct your audience *into* your subject, not to distract them from it.

Another means for introducing your speech is to *cite a recent news item* or a *past or present event* familiar to your audience. News items give speeches a timely flavor, implying that the information you are about to share is significant to the lives of your audience. An example of effective use of the news to arouse audience interest is mentioning a news item about a missing child to introduce a speech on security for

school children. Citing a well-known current or historical event gives weight to and can validate the information you are about to present. An example is opening a speech on twentieth-century violence by saying: “In 1914, the world became embroiled in the Great War. It was not called ‘World War I’ yet because it was to be the war to end all wars. Instead, it planted the seeds for World War II and an increasingly violent world.”

Many speakers like to use *jokes and other humor* for openers, and bookstores have many selections of joke books for the purpose. When successful, this technique catches the attention of the audience and puts them in a friendly mood. An example of a humorous introduction is the following opening for a speech on teamwork: “Anyone who has seen a musical knows that if you decide to start dancing in the street, everyone you meet will know all the steps.” The speaker then leads into his teamwork theme by continuing: “But in real life we have to work at becoming good team players.” Humor can also be very effective for introducing controversial material. Getting the audience to laugh at something helps reduce their hostility toward it.

However, this method is also the riskiest. Humor is only helpful when it relates directly to the theme and promotes the purpose of the speech. Too often, introductory jokes are told to get a laugh but have little or nothing to do with the talk itself. Such humor leaves the audience let down and sometimes confused when the rest of the speech goes in a different direction. And humor carries the risk of inadvertently offending someone. “If you have any doubts about a joke and how well it will go over, don’t tell it,” advise communication consultants Connie Glaser and Barbara Smalley. “And steer clear of any jokes that are based on age, race, or sex. Otherwise, you risk offending and

alienating others.”⁶¹ Speakers do well to remember the maxim, “When in doubt, leave it out,” whenever considering the use of humor.

Whatever opening method you choose, keep in mind that careful preparation is as vital for the introduction as it is for the rest of the speech. Most speakers begin thinking about possible introductions as soon as they have their theme and major ideas in mind. How long should the introduction be? While there are no absolutes, the length should be relatively short in comparison to the rest of the speech. The introduction is just to lead the audience to the meat, or body, of the discourse. According to experts, “A good guide...is the 10/80/10 rule—whereby the introduction and conclusion are each allotted 10% of the presentation time, with the main body comprising 80%.”⁶² Introductions that are too long cause audiences to wonder when the speaker is going to get to the point.

Conclusions

Though it is the last and one of the shortest parts of your speech, a good conclusion is vital for its success. One reason is that the last words you say are often the ones that audiences remember best. But even more important, a well-crafted conclusion completes your objective by emphasizing and driving home your message. Sadly, many otherwise strong and successful speeches lose their power due to poor conclusions. So UKY instructors advise: “Don't just trail off. End with a bang, not a whimper!”⁶³

Effective conclusions also refer back to the introduction to “provide your audience with a sense of closure,” says communication expert Elizabeth Gareis.⁶⁴ But the conclusion is not the time to add information you did not discuss in the body of your talk.

As Detz says: “No new thoughts, please. You must avoid the temptation to stick in any additional points at the end.”⁶⁵ That would be the same as adding a new character or clue to the conclusion of a mystery. New points belong in the body of the speech, not the conclusion.

Many speakers think of conclusions as mere summaries of what has already been discussed. Though to briefly restate the theme and main ideas in the conclusion is desirable, because doing so increases audience retention, conclusions should also show the audience *what to do* with the information. Breeze and Rudd advise: “Where the introduction tells the audience how the presentation will benefit them, the conclusion should specifically tell them how...to apply the information provided.”⁶⁶ A pre-game speech to the team would fizzle if the coach did not conclude by telling them what he expects them to do: “Get out there and win!”

The conclusion should be brief in relation to the body or it will dissipate the force of the speech. Remember the 10/80/10 rule. Speakers should indicate by their tone of voice and pace that the speech is ending, that they are wrapping up. “Don’t leave your audience wondering if you are finished,” advises public-speaking expert Bernadette Sheedy.⁶⁷ Abrupt endings leave the audience hanging and unprepared. A successful conclusion will remind the audience of the main ideas, finalize the speech, and move listeners to act on what they have learned.

By this point you have learned how to choose a theme; how to develop it with a series of main ideas and supporting information that is arranged into logical order; and how to add an attention-grabbing introduction and powerful conclusion. You now have

the tools for preparing an excellent speech. But before you are ready to deliver it, one more tool is needed: an efficient way to remember what you want to say. You need an outline to guide you.

Successful Outlines

Outlines are bridges from good speech preparation to successful delivery. Think about the speeches you have enjoyed listening to the most. Were they not ones delivered in a conversational manner and with frequent audience interaction? That style of speaking is called *extemporaneous* delivery. David Zarefsky, author of *Public Speaking: Strategies for Success*, recommends extemporaneous delivery for most speeches because “[it] encourages a conversational quality and is flexible enough to permit adaptation.” He adds that extemporaneous speeches are “neither written out nor memorized.”⁶⁸ Instead, extemporaneous speakers use an outline or notes to guide them from one point to the next.

“But what is wrong with memorizing or writing out my speech,” you may wonder. A number of things, actually. Those speaking from memory are usually distracted by the fear that they will forget something, which undermines their confidence. They may overlook key points, and are in danger of straying from their theme into irrelevant tangents. On the other hand, though manuscripts are sometimes necessary for official speeches, those reading from them are prone to boring, stilted deliveries because their being tied to a manuscript prevents them from speaking naturally and having meaningful contact with their audience. Professional speaker Donnell King strongly

recommends that speakers “do anything except write a manuscript [because] people don't write the way they talk. [Written speeches] have a tendency to *sound* written, even if you don't just stand up there and read it.”⁶⁹ An outline, by contrast, frees speakers from the problems associated with either reading or memorizing speeches.

An outline is a system for listing the main ideas and subtopics of speeches in hierarchal order. With an outline, speakers can keep their thoughts organized and focused on their main ideas as they go from one point to the next in their notes. Instead of reading word for word, the speaker merely glances at a key word or phrase on the outline to be reminded of the next idea, which frees them to speak from the heart in a conversational manner that reflects their own personality. “When you know your material, a keyword outline is all you need,” says Sherman. “It only takes a second to glance down, look at the word, and then deliver the material from your heart.”⁷⁰ Outlines also save significant preparation time over writing out manuscripts. Outlines are the foundation for excellent deliveries because without one, delivery techniques are difficult to apply. They let you put sparkle in your speech.

Two keys to an effective outline are brevity and having the material well organized. First review the main points of the speech and distill each idea into two or three key words, or at most a *short* sentence. Then do the same for the subpoints, and list them below the main idea that each supports. Under the subpoints, briefly note illustrations you plan to use, quotes, and statistical or other proof. Be sure that supplemental points are really subpoints and not just extraneous information. If you cannot find a place to put an item of information, you probably need to leave it out, as it

obviously is not helping you develop your main ideas. Finally, look at the main ideas again and decide how much of your allotted time you need to properly develop each one; note that time by each point to help you pace your delivery.

The introduction and conclusion of the outline are places where you may wish to deviate a bit from the keyword format of your points. Even experienced speakers sometimes write out a key sentence or two for the introduction and conclusion if they need to convey them exactly. Having the part of your introduction written out may also increase your confidence that you will not stumble on your opening lines. But be careful not to slip into writing out the rest of the outline.

Choose a format for your outline that is comfortable for you. Most people are familiar with the classic high-school Roman-numeral method, and word processors have a number of additional styles to help you. The method is not important—even simply indenting points or writing each point on a separate note card can work well. What is important is that the relationship of main points and their subpoints is correct and clearly distinguished, and that the key words for each point are large enough to see easily when you glance at them during delivery.

Three sample outlines for the milk-tax speech are given below to illustrate how easily you can customize an outline to your needs. The outlines are all based on the main points listed on page 26, but the format chosen for each one differs. Additionally, the second outline condenses the first, and the third outline is briefer still. Points that are left out of the shorter versions are ones the speaker is likely to know without need of reminders.

Outline 1: *Taxing Milk to Fund Field Trips*

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. Why field trips are important
 - 1.2. Budget cuts affect field trips
 - 1.2.1. Influence of economic setbacks on overall budget
 - 1.2.2. Why field trips were cut from budget
2. Why other funding methods not solution
 - 2.1. Bake sales and fund drives
 - 2.2. Alumni donations
3. Solution: Taxing school-milk sales
 - 3.1. Statistics on milk sales
 - 3.2. Potential funds possible from milk tax
 - 3.3. Impact of tax on students
4. Practical suggestions for implementing the tax on milk
 - 4.1. Charge higher price for milk to cover the new tax
 - 4.2. Accounting office deducts tax from receipts and credits to field-trip fund
 - 4.3. Field-trip funds apportioned to teachers from taxes as if from budget
5. Conclusion
 - 5.1. Review benefits of field trips and problems funding
 - 5.2. Encourage administration to approve the milk-tax proposal as soon as possible

Outline 2: *Taxing Milk to Fund Field Trips*

- ❖ Intro
 - Importance of field trips
 - Trips cut from budget and why
- ❖ Problems with other funding methods
 - Fund drives
 - Alumni donations
- ❖ Solution: Taxing milk
 - Milk sales and potential revenue
 - Student impact
- ❖ Implementing the tax
 - Higher price for milk
 - Accounting office and disbursement
- ❖ Conclusion
 - Review and encourage approval

Outline 3: *Taxing Milk to Fund Field Trips*

- I. Field-trip funding problem
- II. Potential revenue from taxing milk
- III. Student impact
- IV. Implementing higher price
- V. Disbursement

Notice how all three outlines clearly distinguish the main ideas from their supporting information. The third outline, however, is ideal for its brevity. It allows maximum audience contact and conversational quality during the presentation. Though initially even a long outline may seem daunting to you, especially if you have been used to reading your speeches from a manuscript, you will find that the more you practice using an outline, the fewer notes you will need. Thorough knowledge of your subject also helps you condense your outline because you can eliminate familiar points as they become embedded in your memory. Bear in mind that the objective of using an outline is not only to help you keep your speech well organized, but also to free you to concentrate on your delivery when giving the speech.

Once you have the outline prepared, practice speaking from it so that you become comfortable with it. As you practice, you may see a need for adjustments in the outline. Perhaps the order of points is awkward or gaps in your reasoning need to be filled in with supplementary material. You may discover a need to eliminate certain points for lack of time or because they are superfluous. Practice allows you to spot such problems while you still have time to fix them.

This chapter on speech preparation has given you the tools needed for preparing excellent speeches that audiences will appreciate hearing. However, even the best-prepared speeches can be ruined if delivered poorly. Visualize an actor playing Romeo as he delivers his words of passion to Juliet in a wooden monotone. Your carefully prepared speeches deserve better—they deserve to be presented in the best way possible. And you can do that simply by applying the techniques discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

TECHNIQUES FOR BETTER DELIVERY

A business group decided to dine at a fine restaurant famous for its elegant décor and the quality of its steaks. When their order was ready, the server carried the expensive steaks to their table and said “Here’s your steak,” as she slapped the plates down in front of them like a bored flop-house waitress. Her crude, unimaginative presentation of the food spoiled the dining experience. In the same way, an otherwise quality speech can be spoiled by a lack of presentation skills. You need to give attention to how well you present your carefully prepared speech because your delivery can enhance or hinder its impact.

You have probably noticed that often what would have been fine speeches are spoiled when speakers use improper emphasis, speak in a lifeless monotone, are obviously uncomfortable and self-conscious, or talk at instead of with the audience. If you suffer from such problems in delivery, take heart: few dynamic speakers were born that way. Skillful delivery can be learned. In fact, according to experts, by studying and practicing a few time-tested delivery techniques, “any individual can become an effective speaker.”⁷¹

The techniques discussed here are by no means exhaustive, but they are some of the most effective for giving successful speeches. In fact, if you master them, you *will* give good speeches. Later, should you should desire to refine your skills further, you may wish to investigate the many books and articles available on speaking such as those listed in the reference section. Remember as you consider each method, that none stand alone.

The speech the audience hears is a blend of many factors, each one influencing the others. Just as the ease of delivery depends greatly on how well the material is organized, so each quality of the delivery is more effective when the other qualities are also present. An enthusiastic presentation, for example, would ring insincere if it were not also accompanied by warmth and feeling and good visual contact with the audience.

You may find that your natural personality makes certain delivery methods more difficult to apply than others. If so, then think of a well-known person or character that excels in or exudes that quality and pretend to be that person while practicing. A person who is naturally cold and unexpressive might imitate the warmth of actress Helen Hayes, for instance. Or someone who has difficulty demonstrating enthusiasm could pretend to be a car salesman or a carnival barker. Actually, the greater your weakness in a speech area, the more you should *over-act*. “You must overcome your fear of sounding dramatic,” advises an Indiana University article on public speaking. “What sounds overly “dramatic” to you usually does not sound that way to an audience.”⁷² The more serious your weakness in an aspect of delivery, the more likely that what seems excessive to you will look normal to others.

If you are unsure where you need improvement, try taping yourself with an audio or video recorder as you practice. This will help you see and hear yourself as others do. You might also practice giving your speech before friends and ask for their candid and specific opinions of areas in which you are weak. Try not to become overwhelmed, however, if you find that you are weak in a number of speech qualities. Simply work on them one at a time, beginning with the weakest. Work on the speech qualities in daily life

as well as when giving a speech because, as Linver points out, “people usually demonstrate the same weaknesses in one-to-one conversation as they do when speaking to a group.”⁷³ If you work on improving your manner of speaking in everyday conversation, you will find yourself naturally speaking better when giving speeches.

The speech qualities selected for discussion in this chapter include respect for the audience, sense stress, enthusiasm, warmth and feeling, modulation, gestures, visual contact, the use of visual aids, and poise. These are areas in which many speakers have problems. The first quality we will examine is showing respect for the audience. You have already learned how to consider the audience when preparing a speech, but now we will consider them from the viewpoint of the delivery.

Respect for the Audience

Because negative thinking creates a barrier between you and your audience, it is imperative that you realize that the audience is not your enemy. *Negative thinking*—They hate me! They’ll laugh at me!—is your enemy. That is what makes you fearful. The reality, assures Orman, is that “your audience truly wants you to succeed. They feel for you... most audiences are truly forgiving.”⁷⁴

So make an effort to be positive. Most audiences are friendly or at least neutral. If you respect your audience and expect good things from them you are more likely to receive good things. People like to be liked and respected. Typically, if you view your audience as likeable people, they will respond the same way to you.

Respect includes showing the audience consideration and according them dignity, no matter what their status in society. A textbook on public speaking points out that respect “promotes an atmosphere in which others are more likely to accept what we want to present to them.”⁷⁵ Every speech is an attempt to influence the audience in some way. Even when giving speeches that are simply presentations of information, speakers hope that the audience will go away better informed on the subject. If we show our listeners respect, we are more likely to succeed in our objective.

The first step to cultivating a respectful attitude toward your audience is to get out of yourself and your fears and think about the people listening to you. Respect includes “a sincere concern for the audience,” says Gareis.⁷⁶ You have already practiced thinking about your audience while developing your speech. Now you must extend that by staying interested in your audience as you speak, which is easier to do if you remember the special characteristics you have learned about them. As you speak, take local feelings into account and treat them respectfully rather than ridicule them. Be especially cognizant of the knowledge of elderly listeners. They may wonder what a younger or less experienced speaker can teach them. Acknowledge this to them and show respect for their experience.

For speeches that ask for a change of thinking, attitude or action on the part of the audience, care in choosing the manner of expressing the ideas can make the difference between audience acceptance and hostility. Find gentle ways of leading up to exposure of faulty reasoning rather than abruptly denouncing it. Instead of harshly criticizing, show understanding and persuasiveness. Always commend what is good before asking for

adjustments in what is faulty. Using the milk-tax speech as an example, if you were handling parental objections to having to come up with yet another school expense, you would be more likely to win the parents' cooperation by expressing empathy for them and their problems than if you berate them for being willing to buy luxuries yet too cheap to pony up for the field trips. Communications writer Esther Bogin counsels: "Never insult the audience by telling or even intimating to listeners they are in the wrong. Avoid the kind of statements that sound like: 'You should have...' [and] 'No, that's not...'"⁷⁷

Another way to convey respect for the audience is to include oneself whenever possible as experiencing the same problems or attitudes, or as having the same need to take a requested action. Saying: "These budget cuts are hard on you," conveys the idea that you as the speaker are unaffected by the cuts, that you are 'above all that.' Saying instead: "These budget cuts are hard on us," conveys the opposite. The speaker puts himself or herself on the level of the audience. Even when the levels are truly different, the respectful speaker looks for ways to establish common ground. A teacher, for example, may not be able to tell his students that he, like them, is tempted to cheat on exams if he never takes exams. But he *can* say that he *used* to be tempted when he took exams in school (if true), or he can mention current situations that tempt him to be dishonest such as when having to explain mistakes to his superior. In this way the teacher shows understanding and respect for the students' feelings and views. As Orman points out, "when you stand up in front of others and show that you're not afraid to admit [your weaknesses], you create a safe, intimate climate where others can acknowledge their personal shortcomings as well."⁷⁸

At times the gap between the speaker and his or her audience is too great to bridge, such as when one who has never had children must speak to parents about problems with their children, or when the speech involves a program with which the audience has had far more experience than the speaker. When that happens, a good way to defuse tension is to acknowledge the deficiency and then show why the information you have to share is still valid: “I’ve never had children, so I realize that our school’s discipline policy is easier for me to talk about than for you to accept. However, I also know that you want the best education for your children, which they cannot receive in an out-of-control classroom.”

When audiences see that you respect their dignity, their situations in life, and their experience, they will be more receptive to your ideas and arguments. That in turn will increase your confidence that both you and the audience will enjoy the speaking experience. Furthermore, your audience awareness and respectful attitude will ease your acquisition of the delivery skills that follow.

Sense Stress

“I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.”⁷⁹ Mark Antony hung his life on those words, as he strove to placate a crowd thirsting for the blood of any friends of Caesar. Had his delivery of that sentence been monotonic, Antony’s suspicious audience would likely have interpreted it as insincere. Only by emphasizing the word *bury* could Antony convincingly convey that he was no threat to the crowd. That emphasis on *bury* is an example of the importance of sense stress.

Sense stress means to put proper emphasis on words and phrases in a speech so that the meaning is clear to the audience. It helps listeners understand and get the sense of the main ideas. This can be illustrated with the following sentence: *Help me do my math lesson*. Notice how the sentence changes meaning as different words are stressed:

- Help me do my *math* lesson—(not my English or science lesson.)
- Help me *do* my math lesson—(Don't just tell me—help me do it!)
- Help *me* do my math lesson—(Don't help her—help me!)
- Help me do *my* math lesson—(Not his lesson—*mine*!)

Lillian Brown, author of *Your Public Best*, explains that sense stress helps you sort out the meaning of the message for your listeners—what you want them to remember.⁸⁰ In addition, stressing important words and phrases helps to engage the audience in what is being said and to keep them attentive. Sense stress is especially essential if the purpose of a speech is to persuade or motivate.

To determine the appropriate stress throughout your speech, be sure that you are thoroughly familiar with your material. Think about the information in terms of what your audience needs to take away from it. Try to develop a real desire for the audience to benefit from what you will be sharing with them. As Brown reminds, what you decide to emphasize should be the main points that you want your audience to remember.⁸¹

Normally word stress is on content words, which language experts say are “important words that carry the meaning or sense” of a sentence.⁸² However, inexperienced speakers sometimes misapply stress to content words by stressing them periodically, as in: “People everywhere *have* a pressing *need* for education to enable *them*

to find better *jobs*.” The periodic stress of the italicized words does nothing to emphasize the *education* needed. Other speakers mistakenly put stress on less important function words such as *of*, *the*, and *to*. At times, not just one word but a group of words must be stressed to get the point across to listeners. Notice both the one-word stress, and the stress on a group of words, in the following example: “Scientists are coming to realize that we *need* each other. It’s *people who have friends* who do the best in life.” In the second sentence, the main idea is best emphasized by stressing the entire phrase.

DeVito mentions a variety of techniques for stressing words and phrases needing emphasis,⁸³ some of which are listed below along with examples of how they are employed. For best results vary the methods throughout your speech.

- *Increase the volume*: “I am sorry, but I *cannot* allow you to do that.” Use this method judiciously. Too many volume increases quickly become tedious and can make the speaker appear as if he or she is scolding or shouting.
- *Project intense feeling*: “We must tell them that we are *deeply grateful* that they have not cut off their funding for the foundation.”
- *Gesture*: “We must *stop* saying that it is impossible.”—with hand out and fingers spread in a ‘stop’ gesture. (See section on gestures for more information.)
- *Change facial expression*: “Do you want to walk *blindly* into new situations?”—close eyes and raise eyebrows.
- *Speak slowly and deliberately*: “We will meet our obligations.”
- *Raise vocal pitch*: “*Never, never, never* try to bribe an official.”—with each ‘never’ said at a higher pitch.

- *Lower the pitch:* “We *are not going*—end of discussion.”—with ‘are not’ said at a lower pitch than ‘we,’ and ‘going’ said lower still.
- *Pause before or after the expression to be emphasized, or both:* “Only one thing—*(pause)* money—*(pause)* has stood in the way of your education.”

Sense stress also involves helping the audience to follow your line of reasoning. So when your reasoning is about to change direction, use transition words to show your listeners a change is coming. Communication experts such as Gareis list dozens of transition words in several categories.⁸⁴ Examples include order words such as *first*, *second*, *next*, and *finally*; reasoning words such as *so*, *thus*, *therefore* and *reasonably*; and words that indicate changes in direction such as *but*, *however*, and *nevertheless*. Transition words can also show the value of an idea. Words and phrases such as *most important*, *absolutely*, *never*, *always*, *unthinkable*, and *undeniable*, when used appropriately, can influence listeners to feel the way you do about your message. They are especially effective when used to persuade and motivate.

Speaking with Enthusiasm

When it is your turn to present a speech, are you afraid you will bore your listeners? Think about past speeches you have heard that you found to be deadly dull. Most likely the speaker lacked enthusiasm and so the talk was lifeless. Enthusiastic delivery is animated and speakers who display it show emotional involvement and conviction in what they are saying. The eagerness of enthusiastic speakers makes one want to listen. Enthusiasm is not dogmatic, but it does help show the audience that you

are convinced that your subject has real value for them. Ewing says of enthusiastic speakers: “We pay attention more intently and are more likely to get their message” because they are more enjoyable to listen to. ⁸⁵ When action is called for, enthusiastic delivery helps motivate listeners to comply. Enthusiasm is powerful because it is contagious. If you are enthusiastic when you speak, the audience will catch that and will be more likely to feel that way about your subject too.

Enthusiastic delivery requires that you “believe in the things you say,” according to the *Awake* article “Why Speak with Enthusiasm?”. The article continues: “This is essential, since a person cannot speak with genuine enthusiasm about matters in which he does not believe.”⁸⁶ Adjust the material as necessary so that you do believe in your subject, then look for aspects of it that you appreciate and meditate on how you feel about them. If your speech should be on the dangers of driving while intoxicated, for example, you could think about and visualize the emotional trauma of those who have lost loved ones to drunk-driving accidents. Doing so would help you give the speech with conviction. Practice using that same mode of thinking to get yourself involved with any subject.

But even more effective for building enthusiasm is to think about how your material will benefit your audience. Why do they need to hear your message? If the value of the material would not be readily evident to your listeners, how can you help them to appreciate it? To speak on the taxing-milk topic, for example, think about children and how they benefit from field trips. What do the trips teach them that classroom learning does not? How did you feel about field trips you took as a child?

What if your subject is a routine one such as an annual financial report or a standard welcome for new students? You can still muster up enthusiasm for the material if you find a fresh approach. Look for the big picture. An expense report, for example, may seem to be little more than a series of dry statistics. Yet every number means something concrete, and if you look for the big picture you can make those figures come alive. Think about what the money purchased and how that benefited your listeners. Even utility expenses represent such things as warm dorms insulating students from howling winter winds, bright lights to study by, and power to operate computers, overhead projectors, and lab equipment. Thinking of routine subjects in this manner will help you appreciate them more and that will build your desire to share your view with your listeners. Then find fresh ways to convey your fresh view to your audience such as by using illustrated charts to show how many students were warmed and showered for each dollar spent on electricity.

As you deliver the speech, demonstrate your enthusiasm for the subject by speaking in a lively manner. Speak with conviction, energy and vigor. An obvious way to do this is by showing excitement and increasing the volume. However, care is needed because too much excitement and volume can annoy listeners. Actually, upbeat, enthusiastic sections of your speech work best when they are used as highlights throughout the talk; this maintains audience interest without overwhelming them.

Some speakers go beyond enthusiasm to bombastic, overly emotional styles of delivery. Because such exaggerated delivery draws too much attention to the speaker at the expense of the message, Peggy Noonan, author of *Simply Speaking*, advises: ADon=t

imitate the high oratory of past presidents and generals. Say it the way you=d say it if you were speaking...to a friend.⁸⁷ Enthusiasm should not be forced. There should always be a reason for it.

Showing Warmth and Feeling

Enthusiasm makes speeches come alive, but warmth and feeling is needed to balance enthusiasm and give it dimension. It complements enthusiasm in the same way that a warm, caring person balances one who is excitable. Warmth and feeling softens the rough edges of enthusiasm without dulling it. It adds richness and depth to your words, drawing listeners to you and your message like a glowing fire on a wintry day. A textbook on public speaking points out a further reason for projecting warmth and feeling in your delivery: “It is not always enough to persuade the mind; you must move the heart.”⁸⁸ How you project your feelings about your topic will influence how your listeners will feel about it.

As with other speech qualities, warmth and feeling must come from within; if it is to ring true, it should be sincere. That does not mean, however, that you have to come by it naturally—you can learn to become a warm speaker. The textbook just mentioned points out the key to doing so: “As a speaker, you are usually enthusiastic because of your material, but you are warm when you think of your audience with the desire to help them.”⁸⁹ To develop the desire to help your listeners, practice insight, or seeing below the surface of the pond. The most hardened audience still has feelings and dreams—most love their families, are concerned about crime, and worry about their children’s future.

Develop insight into what really moves your listeners and think about what aspects of your talk will help them.

Speakers have many tools for conveying warmth and feeling, the most important of which are facial expressions and tone of voice. Smiles, softened eyes and gentle tones all convey tenderness and warmth. Communication authorities agree, saying: “A smile and a pleasant tone of voice go a long way in developing a quality of warmth that will increase an audience's comfort with a speaker and her or his ideas.”⁹⁰ Gestures are a further way to convey warmth, as when reaching arms out appealingly or drawing them inward to indicate comfort or closeness. Be careful, though, not to be overly dramatic.

In addition to physical expressions of caring, the words you choose can affect how warm you appear to your listeners. Two words with the same meaning can convey completely different emotions, as demonstrated by the following incident: At a certain state prison, when mail came in for inmates who had died, the mailroom worker responsible for returning undeliverable letters used to write “dead” on the envelope as the reason for non-delivery. The word was true, but instead of conveying warmth and compassion for the feelings of the sender, it did the opposite. On the other hand, the word “deceased” (which the employee was ordered to substitute) says the same thing in a kinder, gentler way. The English language has an abundance of euphemisms for this very reason. So when choosing words, think of ones that express not only what you mean, but also the *way* you mean it.

If your natural mode of expression makes it difficult for you to come across as warm and caring, you may have to work harder on specific areas to see improvement. For

instance, some speakers have naturally harsh voices and need to practice softening them by speaking in more gentle, quiet tones; by substituting longer, soft sounds for short, clipped ones; and by speaking more slowly. “Learn to draw out the softer sounds in words. This will help put warmth into your speech,” say experts.⁹¹ Enlist the aid of a friend to help you practice, and record or videotape the sessions to see where you are weak and to mark your improvement. The more ingrained your unexpressive disposition, the more you may need to overact being warm and caring until it becomes natural to you. Take heart that everyone can learn to become a warmer speaker, no matter what their personality.

Modulation

Modulation is a quality that is crucial for maintaining audience interest. Without it, the best-prepared speeches are certain to be dull and boring. Modulation is the variation of three aspects of vocal control while speaking: the speed, the tone of voice, and the volume. A simple way to remember that is to think of modulation as the ‘three P’s’: pace, pitch and power.⁹² Varying the pace, pitch and power of the delivery makes a speaker’s voice pleasant and easy to listen to and spices up the speech. Another benefit of modulation is dynamic delivery. It helps stir the emotions of the audience and make them more receptive to one’s message. On the other hand, if the speech is not modulated but instead is delivered in a flat, lifeless tone, the audience will feel that the speaker is not really interested in what he or she is saying.

The first step to improving modulation is to make sure that the substance of the speech is a varied mix and not entirely composed of arguments or a recitation of statistics, etc. Variety in the material provides a natural basis for variety in delivery. So re-examine your material and make whatever adjustments needed to facilitate the use of modulation in your delivery.

The easiest of the ‘three P’s’ to work on is power, or volume. Most people think of volume as something to adjust according to the circumstances of the audience—making sure everyone can hear through to the back row, and raising the voice over distracting noises. While true, of even greater concern when choosing volume is that it be appropriate to the material. Sheedy points out that you should “vary your volume based on what you are talking about.”⁹³ Therefore, you will want to look for places in your material where you can increase the volume to highlight main ideas or to show determination or conviction. Raising the volume is also appropriate when expressing urgency or condemnation. But search also for calm areas and secondary points where volume may be lowered; in fact, you will find that certain feelings and situations are actually enhanced by dropping the volume. If you are talking about being quiet in the library while students are studying for exams, for instance, you will get your point across more effectively by dramatically lowering your voice.

Avoid raising and lowering your volume routinely, which is monotonous. In some cases it may be more appropriate to show warmth and feeling rather than change the volume. Keep in mind too, that although using too much volume can irritate and weary audiences, talking too quietly has its own hazards. Even when the audience can hear you,

if you consistently talk in a low voice they may think you are uninterested in your material or that you are not convinced of its value.

To have good modulation, you need to vary your pace as well as your volume.. The overall pace of a speech should be moderate. When the pace is too rapid, speakers appear nervous and listeners are unable to keep up, but when it is too slow the speech drags. The moderate pace is then varied according to the needs of the material and what you want your audience to retain. Patricia Fripp, an experienced speaker and writer, explains: “Good music and good communication both contain changes of pace, pauses, and full rests. This is when listeners think about important points you've just made.”⁹⁴ The rate of speech should slow for complex information so that listeners have time to grasp the points. A slower pace also helps main ideas and climaxes stand out. Conversely, the pace should pick up when discussing secondary points and details or to express excitement. When changing pace, do it smoothly rather than abruptly so that listeners can follow you without confusion.

A key aspect of effective pacing is the use of appropriate pauses, a tool often overlooked by inexperienced speakers. Experienced speakers, however, prize pauses because these short silences can focus attention on important points, allow time for listeners to absorb new ideas, and prepare them for changes in direction of thought. “Silence is your secret weapon,” say speech counselors at Goldman Sachs, who advise: “After finishing a sentence or making a key point, count to three. The silence may worry you but [it] will emphasize your points and give the audience a chance to digest what you have said.”⁹⁵

Problems with pace can often be traced to using too many notes or trying to speak from memory. The preoccupation with what to say interferes with how to say it. But applying the previous suggestions for delivering your speech from an outline will usually remedy the problem.

The final aspect of modulation to be discussed is pitch. Changing the pitch of the voice raises or lowers its register or tone in a manner similar to going from one note to another when singing. According to Evelyn Bowling, author of *Voice Power*, "A Good speaker sometimes use as many as twenty-five different notes to give variety and meaning to their words."⁹⁶ In many Asian languages the tone of a word is a part of its meaning. But the majority of Western European languages, including English, use tonal variations to express moods. For English speakers the vocal pitch varies for commands, questions, emotions and to express degrees of seriousness.

Because tones convey so much of the meaning in English, variety in pitch is essential for public speakers. Variety in pitch helps make the voice pleasant for listeners and adds meaning to what is being said. Bowling notes that variations in pitch also help influence audiences. She says, "Psychologists report that the emotions we express with our voice arouses similar emotions in others."⁹⁷ When varying the voice, the pitch should rise or drop appropriately to ask questions, convey emotions, stress important words and phrases, and express such qualities as size or distance. The pitch would usually be inflected higher when conveying excitement or fear, for example, and lower to communicate sorrow or discouragement.

Proper modulation of pace, pitch and power can increase a speaker's flexibility during delivery. Perhaps you notice that you are losing the attention of your audience. You may regain their attention if you pause significantly or if you briefly increase or dramatically lower your volume. Remember, though, that the aim for using modulation is not to gain attention as a flowery speaker, but rather to present listeners with a well-seasoned, appealing speech that motivates them to listen.

Gestures

Almost everyone uses gestures and facial expressions to add meaning and flavor to daily conversations, yet many stiffen physically and forget to gesture when before an audience. Gestures are movements of the hands, body and face to add dimension to what is said and to reinforce feelings and attitudes. According to educational publishers Allyn and Bacon, "Dynamic gestures and movements reinforce the ideas of the speech [and enhance] the overall energy of a presentation."⁹⁸ Using gestures may actually stir up a speaker's own feelings for the subject. Telephone salespeople, for example, are taught to smile (a facial gesture) while they talk because the physical smile causes the voice to take on a smiling quality. On the other hand, speakers who do not gesture may appear indifferent to their subject. Researchers say that stiff, impassive speakers appear insincere, while those who gesture seem positive and honest and appear to care for their listeners.⁹⁹

One usually thinks of the hands when speaking about gestures, but the entire body may be used including the shoulders, head and face. The face, in fact, is the most

expressive part of the body and shows how one really feels about a subject. Researcher Albert Mehrabian has found that only seven percent of the feeling in a speech reaches the audience through what is said. The greatest part of the feeling—55%—reaches listeners through facial expressions.¹⁰⁰

Facial expressions, and all gestures, work best if they come from within you. No one has to force gestures in everyday life—they come naturally as an integral part of speaking. Try to describe a spiral shape without moving any part of your body. It is almost impossible to do—if you sit on your hands, your head will try to move. Expressing emotions causes similar natural movements of the face and body. As professional speaker Lenny Laskowki says: “If you are interested in your subject, truly believe what you are saying, and want to share your message with others, your physical movements will come from within you and will be appropriate to what you are saying.”¹⁰¹ So the easiest way to improve in gesturing is to get absorbed in your message and the audience that will be listening to you.

However, those who need to improve in gesturing will also benefit from a closer examination of gestures and when they are appropriate. Gestures in general are either descriptive or emphatic. Descriptive gestures, as their name implies, describe actions, objects, and location. According to one public-speaking tutorial, their purpose is to “clarify or enhance. They help visualise size, weight, shape, location, function, direction etc.”¹⁰² Raising an arm high to show height and throwing an air punch to illustrate a blow are examples of descriptive gestures. These gestures are the easiest to learn and apply. First, observe how people use such gestures in daily life. Then look through your speech

for areas that lend themselves to descriptive gestures and practice using them as you rehearse. Also work on relaxing, as that will release the natural gestures within you. After you have practiced using gestures in your speech several times, try videotaping a rehearsal. If your gestures still appear stiff and unnatural, then try overdoing them and see if your performance improves.

As you become comfortable with descriptive gestures, you can progress to emphatic gestures. Emphatic gestures convey feelings and reinforce ideas. Angrily shaking a fist, determinedly slapping the table, and shrugging shoulders to indicate lack of knowledge are a few examples of emphatic gestures. These gestures come from one's feelings and convictions about the material. But while emphatic gestures give vigor to speeches, they can turn into mannerisms if overused. Gareis therefore advises that you "vary your gestures. Anything overly repetitive distracts the audience."¹⁰³ Additionally, when using emphatic gestures, avoid any that appear grandiose or that may offend your listeners (such as pointing or shaking a finger at them.)

Your use of emphatic gestures can be improved by the same means as descriptive gestures. You will be glad you made the effort because as you develop proficiency in gesturing, you will not only improve the naturalness and quality of your speech, you will also find it easier for you to relax and enjoy the experience.

Visual Contact

To communicate with an audience and have any chance that they will be receptive to what you have to say, you have to look at them. That may be a fearful thing for many

speakers, but without really looking at the audience throughout the speech, speakers cannot develop a rapport with them and earn their trust. According to Lazkowski, “There is no surer way to break a communication bond between you and the audience than by failing to look at your listeners.”¹⁰⁴ When you look at your listeners you show that you are really interested in them.

Visual or eye contact is not only seeing your audience as a whole, but also looking at individuals in the audience. Your eyes actually meet a listener’s eyes for a few seconds just as they do in ordinary conversation and then move on. Looking at individuals in your audience helps you to ‘read’ them. When we speak to our friends and families, we have our antennae out to decipher their reactions. We look for clues in their eyes, facial expressions and body language. Often before they say a word in reply, we can tell if they are receptive to what we say or if they disagree; we can tell when they are surprised, angry or irritated. We use their reaction to shape what we say next. This skill is crucial for public speaking because, in contrast to ordinary conversation, the audience usually does not reply verbally. The only way we can tell what our listeners are thinking about our message is if we look at them.

Looking at the audience, we can observe whether we have our listeners’ attention, and whether or not they grasp and understand what we are saying. We can tell if they are bored, distracted, impatient, or skeptical. Communication experts say that expressions on the faces of our audience serve as our barometer, which we can use to adjust our presentation to what we have observed.¹⁰⁵ If, for example, we see that we do not yet have our listeners’ attention, we can pause and wait for them to focus on us. If we note

impatience, we can get to the point more quickly. We can add more proof for those who are skeptical, or slow down and reword explanations for those who seem confused. Of course, as Brown notes, "There will always be a few people in your audience that you cannot reach."¹⁰⁶ In that case, concentrate on those who are receptive.

One key to having good audience contact is good notes. If you are tied to a manuscript or extensive notes or are absorbed in reciting things from memory, you will find it very difficult to pay attention to the audience. You need to be "freed from looking at notes to use eye contact," say Allyn and Bacon.¹⁰⁷ So use brief notes written in a large font, so that a mere glance at them will remind you of your next thought. A second key to good eye contact is having a genuine interest in your audience, which will make you naturally want to look at them to see if they are benefiting from your message.

Audience contact begins when you first step up to the podium. Before speaking, wait a few seconds, and look at your audience with a friendly expression. This allows time for you to take a deep, relaxing breath and for everyone to settle down. Then, while speaking, begin gradually moving your eyes through the audience, looking at individual listeners. Do not robotically sweep your eyes back and forth or look over the tops of their heads. Remember that your aim is not only to look at the audience, but also to connect with the people in it and observe their reactions. Advice from a speakers' resource center provided by the Small Business Administration suggests that you "complete a thought with each person whose gaze you engage."¹⁰⁸ Of course, you need to be balanced. If you stare at a person too long, you may embarrass him or her. As you talk with individuals, work your way through the entire audience; do not look at just one side or the center.

To practice eye contact, give your speech before a mirror and look into it as much as possible instead of at your notes. When you become comfortable with looking away from your notes and into the mirror, begin speaking to various objects reflected in the mirror, imagining that they are people. Perhaps you can enlist the aid of a few friends to substitute for the audience and practice looking at each one in turn to observe their reaction to what you are saying. Make it fun. Throw out an absurd comment or something humorous every so often and look to see if anyone caught it. That will help you look for individual reactions in a real audience. Soon you will enjoy the advantage that good visual contact gives you for forging a bond with your audience.

Use of Visual Aids

Properly selected, visual aids are very effective for making a speech memorable and a pleasure to listen to. Visual aids include charts, objects, diagrams, pictures, slides, maps and overhead projections used to enhance a speech. Because the information conveyed by visual aids is both heard and seen, the points make a deeper impression on listeners. The aids help make complex information easier to understand and add validity to important points. We are all familiar with how math formulas are easier to grasp when written out on a blackboard. Time lines are another example, often used to clarify the relationship of historical events to each other. In addition, visual aids can help audiences grasp abstract ideas. One speaker assembled a large plastic eye to illustrate the abstract concept of entropy, and its influence on the impossibility of complex objects organizing themselves from their component parts unless intelligence directs the process. After

explaining the simplicity of the plastic eye in comparison to a biological eye, the plastic eye was disassembled into its component parts and the pieces shaken inside a paper bag. The visual demonstration was more effective than just a verbal explanation for helping the audience grasp the impossibility of a living eye assembling itself.

When selecting visual aids, never forget that the aids are to reinforce the points being taught. They should not ‘hog the limelight,’ but rather make the point itself stand out in the minds of listeners. And as Linkletter says, you should not have to “strain to include” the aid; rather, props should “fit naturally” into your speech.¹⁰⁹ The type of prop selected is determined by what will be the most appropriate for the material being illustrated. Examples include using charts to clarify statistics, maps to show geographic locations, and videos to put life into cultural studies.

If equipment is needed to present a prop, inquire beforehand to make sure that it will be available. Naturally, visual aids that require complex setup add another factor to your speech to be nervous about, so try to keep your props simple. Also make certain that the aid will be clearly visible to everyone in the audience because if some have to strain to see, they may miss the point being taught and even become irritated. Finally, present the aid in a way that is not disruptive. According to DeVito: “If a visual aid is displayed before the speaker talks about it or is left in view after she is finished talking about it, audience attention is likely to be drawn from the speaker. By the same token, objects that are passed around in the audience during a presentation are not aids, they are disruptions.”¹¹⁰ Used judiciously, visual aids can add a vivid impact to your speech that will make the ideas they illustrate something your listeners will never forget.

Poise

The delivery techniques discussed to this point provide you with a basic set of tools for giving good speeches. But you need one more delivery quality to fully empower you to be a successful speaker: poise. Think of poise as the toolbox that houses the techniques. A poised speaker confidently blends all the foregoing speech qualities into a natural, dignified delivery that directs the attention of his listeners away from himself to what he is saying. Speakers who excel in poise have calm, composed deliveries that are reflected in their bearing and posture. Every movement they make with their bodies is natural, yet purposeful; their voices are controlled yet relaxed.

That sounds wonderful, but how can a nervous speaker achieve such poised delivery? To improve in poise it is necessary to understand the nature of nervousness. According to Detz, Nervousness is simply energy. If you channel that energy, you can turn it into a positive force.¹¹¹ In other words, nervousness is not an enemy. It is a physical response that causes the body to produce more adrenaline so you will have the energy and alertness you need to give an exciting speech. Speech adviser Adam Khan compares the adrenaline rush before a speech to that experienced on a roller coaster. He says: “Your orientation to the feeling, your interpretation of it, makes it either anxiety or excitement. So make it excitement by thinking of it in those terms. Welcome the feeling and use it.”¹¹²

The first step to calm, poised deliveries is thorough speech preparation. This includes being sure you clearly understand your material and that it is organized in a manner comfortable for you to deliver. According to Toastmasters International, an

organization for public speakers, “If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness naturally will increase. Practice your speech and revise it until you can present it with ease.”¹¹³ Frequent practice increases confidence in speaking just as it does with any skill one learns. The first time you sit on a bike or strike the keys on a typewriter, it feels unnatural. But practicing those skills opens up new paths in the brain and before long the new instruments feel comfortable to use. Your speech practice gives you the same benefits.

A second way to reduce anxiety and cultivate poise is to “concentrate on getting your ideas across to the audience,” says Gregory. “This will get your mind where it belongs—on your listeners and not on yourself—and it will help you move your nervousness to a back burner, where it can still simmer and energize you without hindering your effectiveness.”¹¹⁴ The effect is similar to forgetting you have a headache when you are helping someone in distress. As you increase your desire to help your listeners, your anxiety will diminish and even disappear.

If you have already followed the previous advice, however, and yet still have problems with poise, you may need to identify and work on specific areas in which you betray nervousness. Some of the more common nervous behaviors include stiffness in posture and gestures; toying with such things as eyeglasses, watches or buttons; rhythmic body movements; and repeated swallowing or throat clearing. These problems can be conquered with conscious effort.

Learning to consciously relax the body will help with all symptoms of nervousness. Just before you go on stage, take a slow, deep breath, and relax each muscle

as you imagine the whole body going limp and your mind at peace. Visualize yourself presenting your speech successfully to the resounding applause of a delighted audience. “This has the effect of implanting positive subconscious messages in your mind,” say presentation experts. “These will counteract negative thoughts which are the main causes of ‘presentation stress’.”¹¹⁵ Then, when you go onstage, pause before speaking to take another slow, deep breath as you look in your audience for a friendly face. Smile at that person, and slowly begin your introduction.

You can also work on nervous mannerisms individually. Identify and list your particular nervous behaviors and think about ways you can prevent them. You may find it easier to work on one at a time. Choose the most noticeable, and work on it when conversing in daily life, when practicing your speech, and during your presentation. If your voice becomes high-pitched when you are nervous, for example, practice consciously lowering it to a deeper tone. Or if you start speaking too rapidly, pause, take a deep breath, and forcibly speak more slowly than normal for a few moments. Consistent effort will, in time, make those undesirable behaviors disappear and your nervousness diminish, which will add to your poise and confidence when you speak.

A poised delivery also naturally reflects your own personality. Noonan advises: “Be yourself in your presentation, because although there have already been many
Rathers and Brokaws and Jesse Jacksons, you are the only you.”¹¹⁶ Poised speakers do ‘dress up’ their personality for their speeches, but they do not artificially adopt the speaking styles of others. So stay true to your own unique style as you work on behaviors that detract from it and before long audiences will see you as a poised speaker.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this discussion has shown, academic professionals truly cannot afford to be without public-speaking skills, since they are so often called upon to give classroom lectures, public speeches, and interviews. Research indicates that polished speakers are far more likely than inept speakers to succeed in motivating audiences and to advance in their careers. Encouraging it is, therefore, to be assured by public-speaking authorities that “all of us can learn the secrets used by experts to become both competent and confident when speaking [to an audience].”¹¹⁷ Public-speaking research and the experience of professionals confirm that every teacher, professor and administrator, including you, can prepare and deliver successful speeches by applying the techniques you have learned here.

However, a speech is not a series of isolated techniques. You may have noticed that certain themes reappeared throughout the discussion of each speaking point. This is because every point supports and influences the others. You have seen, for example, that how you handle your material affects several aspects of your speech. Arranging the material in logical order contributes to the development of an effective outline, which, in turn, eases delivery anxiety and enhances audience contact. The preparation of the material also has a direct bearing on the speaker’s enthusiasm, modulation, and warmth and feeling during delivery. Making adjustments to your material often makes those qualities easier to display.

Another oft-repeated theme in this discussion was the importance of considering the audience through all stages of preparation and delivery. Speakers should choose their

material according to what the audience wants or needs to know about the subject, and then adjust its complexity and focus according to their listeners' backgrounds and ability to understand. In addition, a careful consideration of the audience helps speakers convey their information with respect; it influences the ideas they choose to stress and enhances their enthusiasm and warmth. Successful speeches also require interaction with the audience through good visual contact, which allows speakers to note the reaction of the audience to what they say and adjust their speech accordingly. Two additional themes were that repeated practice is beneficial for improving every aspect of speech presentation, and that all delivery techniques are most effective when they come from your genuine feelings about your message and your audience.

Work on improving your speaking ability with these techniques, and you will in time become a successful, confident speaker just as Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King and thousands of others have. Yes, as Gregory assures, you will no longer “view a speech as an ordeal to be endured, but as an opportunity to enrich the lives of [your] listeners.”¹¹⁸

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