COMS 105: FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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Communications 105

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Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Introduction to Public Speaking

1.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Articulate at least three reasons why public speaking skills are important.
- Describe the difference between the linear and the transactional model of communication.
- List, define, and give an example of each of the components of communication.
- Differentiate between the major types of speeches.
- Identify the eleven core public speaking competencies.
- Apply chapter concepts in final questions and activities.

Introduction to Public Speaking

Humans' ability to communicate using formalized systems of language sets us apart from other living creatures on the Earth. Whether these language conventions make us superior to other creatures is debatable, but there is no question that overall, the most successful and most powerful people over the centuries have mastered the ability to communicate effectively. In fact, the skill of speaking is so important that it has been formally taught for thousands of years.

The ironic feature of public speaking is that while we recognize that it is an important skill to have, many of us do not like or want to give speeches. You may be reading this book because it was assigned to you in a class, or you may be reading it because you have to give a speech in your personal or professional life. If you are reading this book because you like public speaking or you have a burning desire to learn more about it, you're in the minority.

The good news about public speaking is that although it may not be on the top of the list of our favorite activities, *anyone* can learn to give effective presentations. What is important is that the audience understands you and remembers what you have to say. By learning and using the techniques provided in this reading material, you will discover how to create engaging speeches and present them using your own delivery style.

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1.1: Benefits of Public Speaking

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, there is a core set of skills that are necessary "both for a globally engaged democracy and for a dynamic, innovation fueled economy" (Rhodes, 2010). In the category of "Intellectual and practical skills," public speaking is listed as one of these core skills.

Public speaking is the process of designing and delivering a message to an audience. Effective public speaking involves understanding your audience and speaking goals, choosing elements for the speech that will engage your audience with your topic, and delivering your message skillfully.

Good public speakers understand that they must plan, organize, and revise their material in order to develop an effective speech. This is not particularly surprising given that communication skills are critical for intellectual development, career trajectory, and civic engagement. Public speaking is universally applicable to all types of majors and occupations and is seen by U.S. employers as a critical employability skill for job seekers (Rockler-Gladen, 2009). No matter what your ambitions and interests are, developing speaking skills will benefit your personal, professional, and public life.

Personal

People don't just give presentations on the job and in classes. At times we are called upon to give speeches in our personal lives. It may be for a special event, such as a toast at a wedding. We may be asked to give a eulogy at a funeral for a friend or loved one. We may have to introduce a guest speaker at an event or present or accept an award for service.

Developing the skill to give these types of speeches can help us to fulfill essential roles in our family and community. Another great personal benefit of public speaking is that it builds self-confidence. It's no surprise that speaking in public is scary, but by engaging in the activity you will build self-confidence through the experience.

Professional

TV announcers, teachers, lawyers, and entertainers must be able to speak well, but most other professions require, or at the very least, can benefit from the skills found in public speaking. It is believed 70% of jobs today involve some form of public speaking (Aras, 2012).

With the recent economic shift from manufacturing to service careers, the ability to communicate with others has become crucial. Top CEOs advise that great leaders must be able to communicate ideas effectively; they must be able to persuade, build support, negotiate and speak effectively in public (Farrell, 2013).

The chapters on "Informative Speaking" and "Persuasive Speaking" can help readers understand how to write presentations that enhance their leadership skills. But before you even start a career, you have to get a job. Effective speaking skills make you more attractive to employers, enhancing your chances of securing employment and later advancing within your career.

Employers, career counselors, and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) all list good communication skills at the top of the list of qualities sought in potential employees. According to NACE's executive director, Marilyn Mackes, the Job Outlook 2013 Report found that employers are looking for people who can communicate effectively (Koncz & Allen, 2012). Monster.com advises, "articulating thoughts clearly and concisely will make a difference in both a job interview and subsequent job performance" (McKay, 2005).

Action is a great restorer and builder of confidence. Inaction is not only the result, but the cause, of fear. Perhaps the action you take will be successful; perhaps different action or adjustments will have to follow. But any action is better than no action at all.

~ Norman Vincent Peale

Public Speaking

Learning about public speaking will allow you to participate in democracy at its most basic level. Public speaking is important in creating and sustaining a society, which includes informed, active participants. Even if you do not plan to run for office, learning about public speaking helps you to listen more carefully to and critically evaluate others speeches. Listening and critical thinking allow you to understand public dilemmas, form an opinion about them, and participate in resolving them. The progress of the past

century involving segregation, women's rights, and environmental protection are the result of people advancing new ideas and speaking out to others to persuade them to adopt changes.

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1.2: Models of Communication

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

Linear Model of Communication

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

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

In this model, communication is seen as a one-way process of transmitting a message from one person to another person. This model can be found in Figure 1.2.1. If you think about situations when you communicate with another person face-to-face or when you give a speech, you probably realize that this model is inadequate—communication is much more complicated than firing off a message to others.

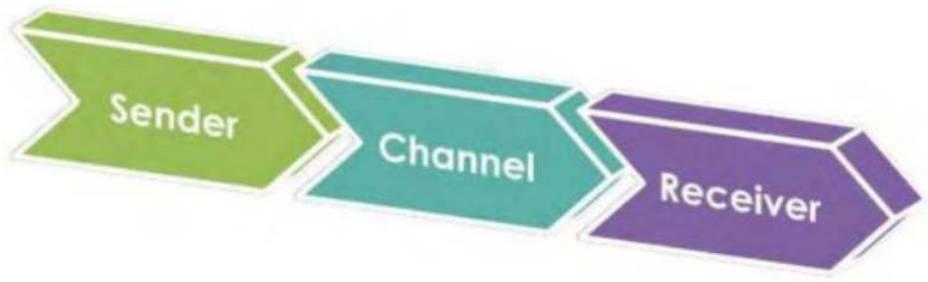

Figure 1.2.1: Linear Model of Communication

Transactional Model of Communication

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

The transactional model has a number of interdependent processes and components, including the encoding and decoding processes, the communicator, the message, the channel and noise. Although not directly addressed in Barnlund's (2008) original transactional model, participants' worldviews and the context also play an important role in the communication process. See Figure 1.2.2 for an illustration.

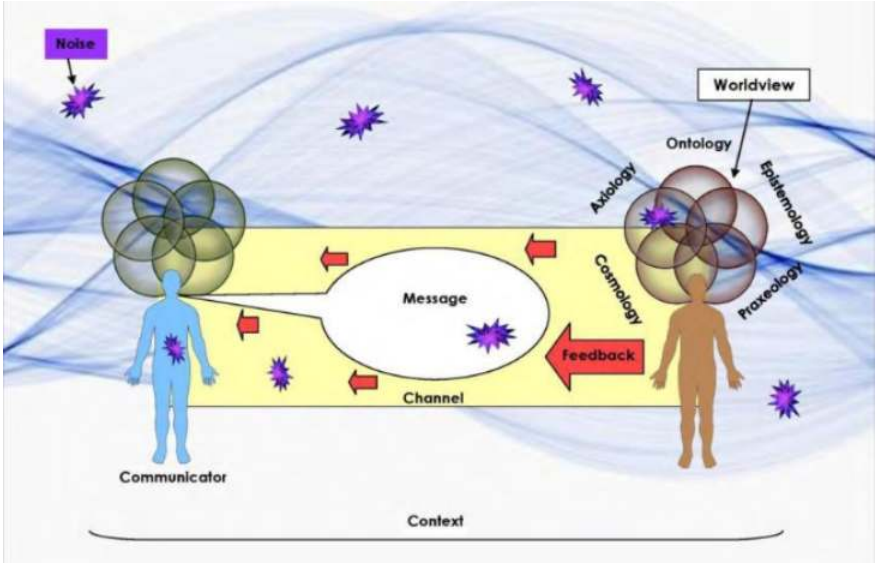

Figure 1.2.2: Transactional Model of Communication

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1.3: Elements of the Communication Process

Encoding and Decoding

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

Decoding is the reverse process of encoding. It involves listening to words, thinking about them, and converting those words into mental images, thoughts, feelings, and ideas. If your aunt were trying to find her way to your apartment, she would listen to your words, associate these words with streets and landmarks that she knows, and then she would form a mental map of the way to get to you. Using Language Well (Chapter 11) provides additional insight into the encoding and decoding processes.

Communicator

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

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

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

Message

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

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

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

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

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

when in fact you actually did. Thus as communicators, we cannot always be sure that the message we wish to communicate is interpreted as we intended.

Channel

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

Figure **1.3.1**: Nixon and Kennedy Debate. Image is in the Public Domain

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

One famous example of this is the 1960 televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. According to History.com (2012), on camera, Nixon looked away from the camera at the reporters asking him questions, he was sweating and pale, he had facial hair stubble, and he wore a grey suit that faded into the set background. "Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley reportedly said [of Nixon], 'My God, they've embalmed him before he even died'" (History.com).

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

Noise

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

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

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

The last type of noise is cultural noise. **Cultural noise** refers to message interference that results from differences in peoples' worldviews. Worldview is discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the greater the difference in worldview, the more difficult it is to understand one another and communicate effectively.

Worldview

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

Figure **1.3.2:** Image by sarthak choudhary

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

It is always good to explore the stuff you don't agree with, to try and understand a different lifestyle or foreign worldview. I like to be challenged in that way, and always end up learning something I didn't know.

~ Laura Linney

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

Figure 1.3.3: Lasagna is used under a CC-BY 2.0 license.

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

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

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

Context is worth 80 IQ points.

~ Alan Kay

Context

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

Figure **1.3.4**: “Talking technique” by The U.S. Army. CC-BY.

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

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1.4: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

Our capacity to communicate through systems of language differentiates us from other species, but the use of that language to communicate effectively is actually harder than anticipated, particularly in front of an audience. Fortunately, by reading this book, you can learn the skills required to communicate more effectively one-on-one and in a speaking situation.

The speeches you present will be given in a particular context. In your role as communicator, you will encode and deliver a message, which will then be decoded by audience members (also communicators). At the same time you are speaking, you will be receiving verbal and nonverbal feedback from the audience. The way that the message is decoded will depend entirely on the amount of noise interfering with the message as well as the worldviews of audience members.

Every new speaker should work to become skilled at the eleven core public speaking competencies. These competencies include: selecting a useful topic, writing an engaging introduction, organizing the points of the speech, finding effective supporting materials for the points, adding a conclusion that provides closure, using clear and vivid language, making sure that one's vocal expression corresponds to the goals of the speech, using nonverbals that complement the message, adapting the message to one's audience, using visual aids effectively, and using credible evidence and sound reasoning in persuasive messages. Each one of the competencies just listed is covered in depth in one or more chapters in this book.

The authors of this textbook hope that readers will find the chapters useful in developing their own communication competence. Whether you are new to giving presentations, or a more experienced speaker, it is important to remember that the best way to improve your public speaking skills is through preparation and practice. Although it may take time to learn effective speaking skills, the effort is well worth the benefits you will reap in your personal, professional, and public life.

Review Questions and Activities

1. What are the personal, professional and public benefits of enhancing your public speaking skills?
2. What is the difference between the linear and transactional model of communication?
3. Define and give an original example of each of the elements of the communication process.
4. Which of the elements of the communication process do you think has the greatest impact on the way a message is interpreted? Explain

Glossary

Abstract Word

Words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality.

Channel

The means through which the message travels.

Communicator

The people in the interaction or speech setting who encode and decode messages simultaneously.

Concrete Word

A word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses.

Context

The communication rules that govern different physical settings and/or different types of relationships.

Cultural Noise

Differences in worldview that cause message interference.

Decoding

The process of listening to words and interpreting the words so they are associated with a mental image.

Encoding

The process of taking a mental image, associating the image with words, and then speaking those words.

Listening

The psychological process of interpreting and making sense of the messages we receive.

Message

The words, nonverbal behavior, or other signals transmitted from one person to another.

Noise

Anything that interferes with the message transmission or the encoding and decoding processes.

Nonverbal Behavior

All of the messages we send — except for the words we say. Can include appearance, eye behavior, kinesics (body movement), proxemics (use of space), touch, time, and smell.

Norms

The verbal and nonverbal rules (usually unspoken) that govern communicative behavior.

Psychological Noise

Message interference that results from disturbed or excited mental states.

Physiological Noise

Message interference that results from bodily discomfort.

Physical Noise

Message interference that results when the noise level (as measured in decibels) makes it difficult to hear a message.

Public Speaking

The act of delivering a speech in front of a live audience.

Worldview

The overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Supporting Your Ideas

10.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Combine multiple forms of evidence to support your ideas.
- Differentiate between the three types of testimony, and know when to use each one.
- Navigate the library holdings and distinguish between the types of information found in each section.
- Evaluate source credibility and appropriateness for your speech.
- Explain plagiarism and implement strategies to avoid it.
- Apply chapter concepts in review questions and activities.

In 2010 celebrity chef Jamie Oliver won the Technology Entertainment Design (TED) Prize for his "One Wish to Change the World." In addition to a monetary award, he was given 18 minutes at the prestigious TED Conference in Long Beach, CA to discuss his wish: "Teach every child about food." This chef from Essex, England, had only a short window of time to convince an American audience to change their most basic eating habits. To get them to listen he had to catch their attention and demonstrate his credibility. He managed to do both using compelling research. He began by saying, "Sadly, in the next 18 minutes . . . four Americans that are alive will be dead from the food that they eat." He magnified the problem with a chart showing that many more Americans die from diet related diseases each year than die from other diseases, or even from accidents and murder. Along with the statistics, he offered testimony from people living in the "most unhealthy state in America." By weaving together multiple forms of research over the course of his brief talk, Oliver crafted a compelling case for a massive shift in the way that Americans teach their children about food.

Like Oliver, in order to give an effective speech, you will need to offer support for the ideas you present. Finding support necessitates research. Librarians have found that professors and students tend to have very different ideas regarding what it means to conduct research (Sjober & Ahlfeldt, 2010). The wide variety of resources available for conducting research can be overwhelming. However, if you have a clear topic, recognize the purpose of your speech, and understand the audience you will be speaking to, you can limit the number of sources you will need to consult by focusing on the most relevant information. Different types of appeals and evidence are better for different audiences. The best speeches will combine multiple forms of evidence to make the most convincing case possible. This chapter will help you research your speech by combining personal and professional knowledge, library resources, and Internet searches. It will help you to evaluate the sources you find and cite them to avoid plagiarism.

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10.1: Personal and Professional Knowledge

Professional public speakers are generally called upon to address a topic on which they are considered an expert. You may not feel like an expert in the area of your speech at this time, but you should consider whether you have any preexisting knowledge of the topic that might assist in crafting your speech. Do not be afraid to draw on your own experience to enhance the message.

Personal Testimony

Walter Fisher (1984) argues that humans are natural storytellers. Through stories people make sense of their experiences, and they invite others to understand their lived reality as part of a community. One compelling story that you can offer is your personal testimony. Although you are not a recognized authority on the topic, you can invite the audience to understand your first hand experience. Offering your testimony within a speech provides an example of your point, and it enhances your credibility by demonstrating that you have experience regarding the topic. Additionally, personal testimony can enhance your speech by conveying your insight and emotion regarding the topic, making your speech more memorable (Beebe & Beebe, 2003 & Parse, 2008). For example, if you are giving a speech on the importance of hunting to the local culture, you might explain how the last buck you shot fed your family for an entire season.

Since **personal testimony** refers to your experience, it is easy to assume that you can offer it with little preparation, but that is not always the case. If you plan to use personal testimony in your speech, practice the story to make sure that it makes the appropriate point in the time you have.

Interviews

If you do not have personal experience with the topic, you may seek out other forms of lay testimony to support your point. **Lay testimony** is any testimony based on witnesses' opinions or perceptions in a given case (Federal Rules of Evidence, 2012). For example, if you are giving a speech about Occupy Wall Street, but you have not experienced one of their protests, you may choose to include statements from a protestor or someone who identifies with the goals of the movement.

Expert testimony comes from a recognized authority who has conducted extensive research on an issue. Experts regularly publish their research findings in books and journals, which we will discuss later in this chapter, but you may need more information from the expert in order to substantiate your point. For example, if you were giving a speech about how to prepare for a natural disaster, you might interview someone from the Red Cross. They could tell you what supplies might be necessary for the specific types of disasters that are likely in your region. Interviews give people the chance to expand on their published research and offer their informed perspective on the specific point you are trying to make.

My basic approach to interviewing is to ask the basic questions that might even sound naive, or not intellectual. Sometimes when you ask the simple questions like "Who are you?" or "What do you do?" you learn the most.

~ Brian Lamb

If you are seeking an interview with an expert, it is best to arrange a time and place that works for them. Begin the process with a respectful phone call or email explaining who you are and why you are contacting them. Be forthcoming regarding the information you are seeking and the timeline in which you are working. Also be flexible about the format for your interview. If you can meet in person, that is often ideal because it gives you the chance to get to know the person and to ask follow up questions if necessary. A good alternative to an in person interview is a video call using a service such as Skype. These services are often free to both callers and allow you to see and hear the person that you are interviewing. If neither of these options will work, a phone call or email will do. Keep in mind that while an email may seem convenient to you, it will likely require much more time from the expert as they have to type every answer, and they may not be as forthcoming with information in that format.

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10.2: Using Examples

There are many types of examples that a presenter can use to help an audience better understand a topic and the key points of a presentation. These include specific situations, problems, or stories designed to help illustrate a principle, method, or phenomenon. They are useful because they can make an abstract concept more concrete for an audience by providing a specific case. There are three main types of examples: brief, extended, and hypothetical.

Brief Examples

Brief examples are used to further illustrate a point that may not be immediately obvious to all audience members but is not so complex that is requires a more lengthy example. Brief examples can be used by the presenter as an aside or on its own. A presenter may use a brief example in a presentation on politics in explaining the Electoral College. Since many people are familiar with how the Electoral College works, the presenter may just mention that the Electoral College is based on population and a brief example of how it is used to determine an election. In this situation it would not be necessary for a presented to go into a lengthy explanation of the process of the Electoral College since many people are familiar with the process.

Extended Examples

Extended examples are used when a presenter is discussing a more complicated topic that they think their audience may be unfamiliar with. In an extended example a speaker may want to use a chart, graph, or other visual aid to help the audience understand the example. An instance in which an extended example could be used includes a presentation in which a speaker is explaining how the “time value of money” principle works in finance. Since this is a concept that people unfamiliar with finance may not immediately understand, a speaker will want to use an equation and other visual aids to further help the audience understand this principle. An extended example will likely take more time to explain than a brief example and will be about a more complex topic.

Hypothetical Examples

A **hypothetical example** is a fictional example that can be used when a speaker is explaining a complicated topic that makes the most sense when it is put into more realistic or relatable terms. For instance, if a presenter is discussing statistical probability, instead of explaining probability in terms of equations, it may make more sense for the presenter to make up a hypothetical example. This could be a story about a girl, Annie, picking 10 pieces of candy from a bag of 50 pieces of candy in which half are blue and half are red and then determining Annie’s probability of pulling out 10 total pieces of red candy. A hypothetical example helps the audience to better visualize a topic and relate to the point of the presentation more effectively.

Communicating Examples

Examples help the audience understand the key points; they should be to the point and complement the topic. One method of effectively communicating examples is by using an example to clarify and complement a main point of a presentation. Examples are essential to help an audience better understand a topic. However, a speaker should be careful to not overuse examples as too many examples may confuse the audience and distract them from focusing on the key points that the speaker is making.

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10.3: Library Resources

The most well established way of finding research to support your ideas is to use the library. However, many students see the "library and its resources as imposing and intimidating, and are anxious about how they will manage in such an environment"(Leckie, 1996). Don't let any twinge of anxiety keep you from exploring all that the library has to offer!

When conducting research, one of your best resources is the librarian. It is their job to know all about the resources available to you, and to help you succeed in locating the material that is most relevant to your assignment. Additionally, many libraries have librarians who specialize in particular areas of research and they will be able to help you find the best resources for your specific speech topic. Ideally, you should seek some information on your topic alone before asking for their assistance. Doing some initial research independently demonstrates to the librarian that you have taken ownership of the assignment and recognize that the research is ultimately your responsibility, not theirs. They will be better equipped to help you find new information if they know where you have already looked and what you have found. Most libraries contain at least three primary resources for information: books, periodicals, and full text databases.

Books

Books are an excellent place to gain general knowledge. They contain comprehensive investigations of a subject in which authors can convey substantial amounts of information because they are not constrained by a strict page count. Most libraries make finding books easy by indexing them in an online catalog. You should be able to go to the library's website and simply search for your topic. The index will provide the titles, authors, and other publication information for each book. It will also provide a call number. The call number is like an address for the book that indicates where it can be found on the stacks in the library.

Before going to the stacks, take note of the title, author, and call number. The call number is the most important element, and the title and author will serve as backup for your search if you find that the books are out of order. If you find a book that is helpful, be sure to check the shelf nearby to see if there are other promising titles on that topic. If you cannot find the book that you are looking for, consider asking the librarian to help you borrow it from another library using a process called interlibrary loan.

The length of a book can make it seem overwhelming to someone researching a brief speech. In order to streamline your research, determine what you are looking for in advance. Are you seeking general background knowledge or support for a specific idea? Use the table of contents, headings, and index to guide you to the portion of the book that is likely to have what you are looking for. You do not need to read, or even skim, the entirety of every book. It is appropriate to skim for key words and phrases that pertain to your topic. Just be sure that once you find what you are looking for, you read enough of the section around it to understand the context of the statement and ensure that the book is making the point you think it is. Take note of the point that the book is making. Careful notes will help you remember the information that you gained from each source when you get home.

In addition to the traditional stacks of books present in your library, you will also find a reference section. This section contains books that do not delve deep into any subject, but provide basic summary knowledge on a variety of topics. The reference section contains books like dictionaries, which help define unfamiliar terms; encyclopedias, which provide overviews of various subjects; abstracts, which summarize books and articles; and biographical references, which describe people and their accomplishments. Since these resources do not require extensive time to process, and they are likely to be used briefly but regularly by many visitors, the library generally will not allow you to check out reference material. Take great care in drafting notes on the information that you find, and writing down the page numbers and authors according to the style preferred in your field of study. For more information on what you will need to record see the "style guides" section of this chapter.

Periodicals

Books are comprehensive, but they can take years to get published. This means that the material in books is often at least a year old by the time of its publication date. If your speech depends on more recent information, you should turn to periodicals. Periodicals include magazines, newspapers, journals, and other publications printed at predictable intervals. These publications may appear weekly, monthly, or quarterly to update the research in a given field. Each periodical will offer a variety of articles related to a specific subject area.

When researching, it is important to understand the difference between general interest periodicals and scholarly research journals. General interest periodicals include magazines and newspapers which provide a wide array of knowledge and keep readers up to

date on the news within a larger cultural context. These publications are targeted toward the general public and they often use pictures and advertising to attract attention. Examples of respected general interest publications include The Atlantic, Women's Health, The New York Times, and National Geographic (American Society of Magazine Editors, 2011). These publications are intended for profit. The information in them is edited to make sure it will appeal to the audience, is well written, and consistent with the commercial goals of the publication. General interest periodicals are good for context and current events information.

A newspaper is a circulating library with high blood pressure.

~ Arthur Baer

If you are looking for more rigorous research, such as an international relations expert detailing what forms of aid are best for nations experiencing uprisings, you will need a scholarly research journal. A scholarly research journal is not for profit. It is designed to publicize the best research in a particular area. These publications are targeted toward scholars who specialize in a given subject or type of research. Examples of respected scholarly journals include Journal of the American Medical Association, Harvard Law Review, and Quarterly Journal of Speech. These journals engage in a process of peer review in which scholars send their articles to the editor and the editor has other experts in the field examine the article to determine the quality of its research, writing, and fit with the scholarly goal of the publication.

Full-Text Databases

Rather than searching for a print copy of the latest periodical, many people now find articles on the computer using specialized electronic databases that contain the full text of periodicals. Most school libraries subscribe to a variety of databases which compile articles from journals within a particular specialization, industry, or field. Libraries tend to organize links to these databases on their website in two ways: (1) by the area of specialization, or (2) by the name of the database. You can use the list of specializations to identify databases that will pertain to your topic.

Full-text databases allow you access to the citations, abstracts, and articles in the journals they index. However, they sometimes limit access to the full text of articles that were published within a certain date range. If you find a title that looks promising, but is not available in the database you are searching, try the search in another database. Databases often give you the opportunity to search for articles matching your desired time period, author, publication, or key words. Some databases, such as EBSCO, allow you to specify whether you are looking for general interest or scholarly publications.

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10.4: Internet Resources

Search Engines

A search engine can be your most important resource when attempting to locate information on the Internet. Search engines allow you to type in the topic you are interested in and narrow the possible results. Some of the most popular search engines include Google, bing, Yahoo!, and Ask. These sites provide a box for you to type a topic, phrase, or question, and they use software to scan their index of existing Internet content to find the sites most relevant to your search.

Always scan the first few pages of search results to find the best resource for your topic. Skimming the content of the pages returned in your search will also give you an idea of whether you have chosen the most appropriate search terms. If your search has returned results that are not relevant to your speech, you may need to adjust your search terms and try a new search. Pay close attention to the first few sites listed in search results. Some databases allow “sponsored links” to appear before the rest of the results. These sites may or may not be relevant to your search, but they have paid for the top spot on the list and therefore may not be the most relevant. When search engines display sponsored sites first, they typically distinguish these from the others by outlining or highlighting them in a different color.

Defining Search Terms

In the early stages of research it may be helpful to simply search by topic. As you scan the results, watch for other useful terms that arise in relation to the topic and jot them down for possible use in later searches. Since people may write about the topic in different terms than you tend to think about it, paying close attention to their language will help you refine your search. Another way to approach this is to consider synonyms for your search terms before you even begin. In order to help with the search, you may use Boolean operators, words and symbols that illustrate the relationship between your search terms and help the search engine expand or limit your results. Although search engines regularly adjust their Boolean rules to avoid people rigging the site to show their own pages first, a few basic terms tend to be used by most search engines (BBC, 2012).

Table **10.4.1**: Boolean Operators

Operator	Explanation	Example
OR	The word “OR” is one way to expand your search by looking for a variety of terms that may help you support your topic.	For example, in a speech about higher education, you might be interested in sources discussing either colleges or universities. In this case using the term “OR” helps expand your search to include both terms, even when they appear separately.
AND /+	Using the word “AND” or the “+” symbol between terms limits your search by indicating to the search engine that you are interested in the relationship between the terms and want to see pages which offer both terms together.	If you are giving a speech about Hillary Rodham Clinton’s work in the Senate, you might search Hilary Rodham Clinton AND Senate. This search would help you find information pertaining to her senate career rather than sites that focus on her as First Lady or Secretary of State.
NOT /-	Using the word “NOT” or the “-” symbol can also limit your search by indicating that you are not interested in a term that may often appear with your desired term.	For example, if you are interested in hyenas, but want to limit out sites focused on their interactions with lions, you might search hyena -lion to eliminate all of the lion pages from your search.
“ ”	Quotation marks around a group of words limit the search by indicating you are looking for a specific phrase.	For example, if you are looking for evidence that human behavior contributes to global warming, you might search “humans contribute to global warming,” which would limit the search far beyond the simple human + global warming by specifying the point you seek to make.

When you have a well-defined area of research, it is best to start as specific as possible and then broaden your search as needed. If there is something on exactly what you want to say, you don’t want to miss it wading through a sea of articles on your general topic area. To make the best use of your search engine take some time to read the help section on the site and learn how their Boolean operators work. The help section will offer additional tips to assist you in navigating the nuances of that site and executing the best possible search.

Google

You may be at least somewhat familiar with Google, the name that has become synonymous with “internet search,” and called “the most used and most popular search engine”(Tajane, 2011). You may already be adept at searching Google for a wide variety of information, but you may be less familiar with some of its specialized search engines. Three of these search engines can be particularly helpful to someone seeking to support their ideas in a speech: Google Scholar, Google Books, and Google Images.

Google Scholar

The search engines listed earlier in this chapter will help you explore a diversity of sites to find the information you are looking for. However, certain topics and certain types of speeches call for more rigorous research. This research is typically best found in the library, but Google has an added feature that makes finding scholarly sources easier. On Google Scholar you can find research that has been published in scholarly journal articles, books, theses, conference proceedings, and court opinions.

Google Scholar is not only helpful for focusing on academic research; it has a host of features that will help to refine your search to the most helpful articles. You can search generally in Google Scholar and find citations of useful articles that will help support your ideas, but you may not always find the full text of the article. You can ask Google Scholar to help you find the full text articles

available in your library's databases by telling it which library you want to search. To do this, click the "scholar preferences" link next to the search button on scholar.google.com. Then scroll down to the section titled "library links," and type the name of your school or library, then click "find library." When the search is complete, check the box next to the name of your library so that Google knows to include it in the search.

Once you have included your library, the search results you get will have links that lead you to the articles available in your library's databases. Clicking the links will lead you to your library databases and prompt you to log into the system as you would if you were searching on the library site itself. Even when you are linked to your library's databases, there may be articles in your search results that you do not have electronic access to. In that case, search your library catalog for the title of the journal in which your desired article appears to see if they carry the journal in hard copy form. If you still cannot find it, copy the citation information and use your interlibrary loan system to request a copy of the article from another library.

I find I use the Internet more and more. It's just an invaluable tool. I do most of my research on the Net now…

~ Nora Roberts

In addition to enhancing your database searches, Google Scholar can also help you broaden your search in two strategic ways. First, underneath the citation for each search result, you will see a link to "related articles." If you found a particular article helpful, clicking "related articles" is one way to help you find resources that are similar. Second, as you know, researchers often look through the bibliography of a helpful source to find the articles that author used. However, when you are dealing with an older article, searching backwards in the bibliography may lead you to more outdated research. To search for more recent research, look again under the search result for the link called "cited by." Clicking the "cited by" link will give you all of the articles that have been published since, and have referred to, the article that you found. For example, if you are giving a speech on male body image you might find Paul Rozin and April Fallon's 1988 article in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology comparing opposite sex perceptions of weight helpful. However, it would be good to have more recent research. Clicking the "related articles" and "cited by" links would lead you to similar research published within the past few years.

Google Books

Just as Google Scholar can be used to enhance your research in scholarly periodicals, Google Books can be used to make your search for, and within, books more efficient. One way to enhance your research is to search for books on Google Books and then use your library site to see if they currently have the book, or if you will need to order it through interlibrary loan. The other way that you can use Google Books is to make your skimming more effective. Earlier in this chapter you learned that you should strategically skim books for the information that you need. You can do that with Google Books by looking up the book, and then using the search bar on the left side of the screen to search for keywords within the book. Google Books does not print books in their entirety, and often will omit pages surrounding a search result, so relying on the site to allow you to read enough of the book to make your argument is risky at best. Instead, use this site to help you determine which books to obtain, and which parts of those books will be most relevant to your research.

Google Images

Google Images may be useful as you seek visual aids to illustrate your point. You can search Google Images for photographs, charts, illustrations, clip art and more. Since search engines match the terms you put in, it is possible that your topic could yield images containing adult content. To prevent receiving adult content, you can use the "safe search" settings (located in the option wheel in the far upper right hand corner of the menu bar) to limit your exposure to explicit images. The setting has three options:

1. Strict filtering: filters sexually explicit video and images from Google Search result pages, as well as results that
2. Moderate filtering: excludes sexually explicit video and images from Google Search result pages, but does not filter results that might link to explicit content. This is the default SafeSearch setting.
3. No filtering: as you've probably figured out, turns off SafeSearch filtering completely (Google, 2012).

Remember that, as with other outside sources, you will need to offer proper source citations for every image that you use. Additionally, if you plan to post your speech to the internet or publish it more widely than your class, consider using only images that appear in the public domain so that you do not risk infringing on an artist's copyright privileges.

It is not ignorance but knowledge which is the mother of wonder.

~ Joseph Wood Krutch

Websites

When you use a more general search engine, such as Google or bing, you are looking for websites. Websites may be maintained by individuals, organizations, companies, or governments. To keep your research on track, be sure to continue asking yourself if the sources you have found support your specific purpose statement.

Most websites are created to promote the interests of their owner, so it is very important that you check to see whose website you are looking at. Generally the author or owner of the site is named near the top of the homepage, or in the copyright notice at the bottom. Knowing who the site belongs to will help you determine the quality of the information it offers. In addition to knowing the owner, it is important to look for the author of the material you are using. For example, an article on a reputable news site like CNN.com may come from a respected journalist, or it may be the opinion of a blogger whose post is not necessarily vetted by the company itself. Use the section of the chapter on evaluating information to determine whether the site you have found is a credible source.

Don’t leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented.

~ Richard Wright

Government Documents

Governments regularly publish large quantities of information regarding their citizens, such as census data, health reports, and crime statistics. They also compile transcripts of legislative proceedings, hearings, and speeches. Most college and university libraries maintain substantial collections of government documents. Additionally, these documents are increasingly available online. Government documents can be helpful for finding up-to-date statistics on an issue that affects the larger population. They can also be helpful in identifying strong viewpoints concerning government policies.

Now, whenever you read any historical document, you always evaluate it in light of the historical context.

~ Josh McDowell

One of the most helpful resources for searching government documents is fedworld.ntis.gov/. This site allows you to search Supreme Court decisions, government scientific reports, research and development reports, and other databases filled with cutting edge research. It also lists all major government agencies and their websites. Another excellent way to locate government documents is to use the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications. This index is issued every month and lists all of the documents published by the federal government, except those that are restricted or confidential. You can use the index to locate documents from Congress, the courts, or even the president. The index arranges reports alphabetically by the name of the issuing agency. The easiest way to search will be on the Government Printing Office website at catalog.gpo.gov. If you would prefer to work with hard copies of the reports, head to your library and search the subject index to find subjects related to your speech topic. Each subject will have a list of documents and their entry number. Use the entry numbers to find the title, agency, and call number of each document listed in the front of the index (Zarefsky, 2005).

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10.5: Statistics

Using statistics in public speaking can be a powerful tool. It provides a quantitative, objective, and persuasive platform on which to base an argument, prove a claim, or support an idea. Before a set of statistics can be used, however, it must be made understandable by people who are not familiar with statistics. The key to the persuasive use of statistics is extracting meaning and patterns from raw data in a way that is logical and demonstrable to an audience. There are many ways to interpret statistics and data sets, not all of them valid.

A common misunderstanding when using statistics is "correlation does not mean causation." This means that just because two variables are related, they do not necessarily mean that one variable causes the other variable to occur. For example, consider a data set that indicates that there is a relationship between ice cream purchases over seasons versus drowning deaths over seasons. The incorrect conclusion would be to say that the increase in ice cream consumption leads to more drowning deaths, or vice versa. Therefore, when using statistics in public speaking, a speaker should always be sure that they are presenting accurate information when discussing two variables that may be related. Statistics can be used persuasively in all manners of arguments and public speaking scenarios—the key is understanding and interpreting the given data and molding that interpretation towards a convincing statement.

Evaluating Information

The popular online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, is a great resource for general information. It is a good place to start in order to determine search terms and potentially relevant strains of thought on a given topic. However, it is not the most credible source to cite in your speech. Since anyone can update the site at any time, information may be entirely inaccurate. When using Wikipedia, look for source citations and follow the links to original source material.

To determine whether or not the information is comprehensive, check to see that it thoroughly covers the issue, considers competing perspectives, and cites the sources where supporting material came from. First, check to see that your source not only discusses issues that pertain to your topic, but thoroughly explains the reasoning behind the claims it offers. Often you will already be familiar with the topic, but you will require the addition of strong reasoning to properly support your ideas. If your source cannot provide strong reasoning, it is not the best quality source.

Second, determine whether the source considers competing perspectives. If your source does not also recognize and consider opposing arguments, it is not the best quality source. Third, check to see that your source offers supporting data and or if it includes non-credible citations, it is not the best quality source. It is fine to use a source that is weak in one of these areas if you still find it compelling, but know that you may need to back it up with additional credible information. If the source is weak in multiple areas, do your best to avoid using it so that it does not weaken your speech.

In addition to the quality, you should examine source credibility. When evaluating credibility, focus on the sources' qualifications, the parity of their message with similar sources, and their biases. One of the most important elements of credibility is qualification. Sometimes qualifications will be linked to a person's profession. For example, if you are talking about earthquakes, you might want the expertise of a seismologist who studies earthquake waves and their effects. However, professional expertise is not the only type of credibility. If you want to discuss the feeling of experiencing a major earthquake, testimony from a survivor may be more credible than testimony from a scientist who studied the event but did not experience it. When examining credibility, check to see that the person has the training or experience appropriate to the type of information they offer. Next, check to see whether the information in your chosen source aligns with information in other sources on the issue. If your source is the only one that offers a particular perspective, and no other source corroborates that perspective, it is less likely to be credible.

Additionally, check for **bias**. All sources have bias, meaning they all come from a particular perspective. You must check to see whether the perspective of the source matches your own, and whether the perspective overwhelms the ability to offer reliable information on an issue. Also check to see whether the source is affiliated with organizations that are known to hold a particularly strong opinion concerning the issue they are speaking to.

In your speech, make reference to the quality and credibility of your sources. Identifying the qualifications for a source, or explaining that their ideas have been used by many other credible sources, will enhance the strength of your speech. You may be tempted to stop once you have found one source that supports your idea, but continuing to research and comparing the information

in each source will help you better support your ideas. It will also prevent you from overlooking contradictory evidence that you need to be able to address.

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10.6: Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism

Style Guides

Once you have evaluated and gathered the appropriate sources to support your ideas, you will need to integrate citations for those sources into your speech using a **style guide** such as those published by the Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), or The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). These style guides help you determine the format of your citations, both within the speech and in the bibliography. Your professor will likely assign a particular style guide for you to use.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. Sometimes this is intentional, meaning people choose to copy from another source and make their audience think that the idea was original. Students in speech classes sometimes buy speeches from the internet, or repeat a speech written by a friend who took the class in a previous semester. These actions are cheating because the students did not do the work themselves, yet they took credit for it. Most instances of blatant cheating, such as these, are quickly caught by instructors who maintain files of work turned in previously, or who are adept at searching the Internet for content that does not appear original to the student. Consequences for this type of plagiarism are severe, and may range from failure of the course to expulsion from the school.

More often, plagiarism occurs by mistake when people are not aware of how to properly summarize and cite the sources from which they took information. This happens when someone incorporates words or ideas from a source and fails to properly cite the source. Even if you have handed your professor a written outline of the speech with source citations, you must also offer oral attribution for ideas that are not your own.

Omitting the oral attribution from the speech leads the audience, who is not holding a written version, to believe that the words are your own. Be sure to offer citations and oral attributions for all material that you have taken from someone else, including paraphrases or summaries of their ideas. When in doubt, remember to "always provide oral citations for direct quotations, paraphrased material, or especially striking language, letting listeners know who said the words, where, and when" (Osborn & Osborn, 2007). Whether plagiarism is intentional or not, it is unethical and someone committing plagiarism will often be sanctioned based on their institution's code of conduct.

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10.7: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

Remember that in order to convince an audience and appear credible, you will need to offer support for each of your ideas. Gathering testimony from experienced and expert individuals will lend excitement and credibility to your speech. Combining testimony with resources from the library, such as books, periodicals, and reference material, will help you backup your ideas. Examining credible Internet resources can also enhance your speech by yielding the most up-to-date evidence for the points you hope to make. With so much information available it is possible to support almost any idea. However, you will need to take care to ensure that you offer the highest quality and most credible support. Do this by gathering a variety of sources and comparing the information to make sure the support is consistent across sources, and that you have accounted for any possible contradictory information. As you integrate the sources into your speech, remember to ask: "Does this evidence support my specific purpose statement?" and "Is this evidence appropriate for my audience?" Also, don't forget to offer written and oral attribution for each idea. Using the various resources available you will likely find more evidence than you can possibly incorporate into one speech. These questions will assist you as you refine your support and craft the most compelling speech possible.

Review Questions and Activities

Review Questions

1. For each of the claims below, identify the most compelling form of evidence that the speaker might offer. List as many as you can think of.
    a. Photo-retouching alters our perspective on beauty.
    b. The Internet is an effective protest tool.
    c. Body scanners in airports are detrimental to our health.
2. You are giving a speech about the importance of legislation banning text messaging while driving. You want to offer diverse support for your argument that the legislation is necessary. What research tools would you use to find the following forms of evidence?
    a. A personal narrative concerning the effects of texting while driving.
    b. An academic study concerning the effects of texting while driving.
    c. Existing legislation regarding cell phone use in automobiles.
    d. A visual aid for your speech.
3. Checking the quality of your evidence is an important step in refining support for your argument. What are three elements that you should look for when determining source quality? Why is each element necessary?
4. You are giving a speech about bed bugs. You point out that bed bugs are a common pest that can be found almost anywhere. You have found a variety of sources for your speech including a bed bug registry website where people can report seeing bed bugs in hotels, an encyclopedia entry on bed bugs, a blog containing pictures and personal testimony about an experience with bed bugs, a scientific study on the conditions under which bed bugs thrive, and a psychological study concerning the way that people are conditioned to respond to the sight of bugs in their bed. Which of these is the most credible source to support your point? Why?
5. The following is an excerpt from John F. Kennedy's 1963 Civil Rights Address. Read the excerpt, and offer your own paraphrase of his ideas without incorporating any direct quotations from the text:

    > *I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened (Kennedy, 1963).*

6. Imagine you are giving a speech on _____ [fill in the blank]. Write a potential specific purpose statement. Then identify three types of research that you would integrate in order to offer balanced and compelling support for your statement.

Activities

1. Get to know your library. Use your library website to determine the name of the librarian who works with your major, or in the area of your speech topic. This activity is not designed for you to get the librarian to do your work for you, but rather for you to get to know the librarian better and make them a partner in your research process.
2. Using the topics below, or your own speech topic, practice developing productive search terms. Begin by brainstorming synonyms for the topic. Then, consider other concepts that are closely related to the topic. Using those terms, conduct a preliminary search in the search engine of your choice. Skim the content on the 3-5 most promising results and highlight common terms and phrases that appear on each page. Those common terms and phrases should help you narrow your searches as you move forward with your research.
    a. National Security
    b. Alternative Energy
    c. Economic Stability
    d. Media Piracy
    e. Privacy
    f. Local Events
3. Using one of the topics listed in the previous activity, conduct a search on the topic using identical search terms in Google Images, Google Scholar, and Google Books. For each search, identify the source that you think would best support a speech on the topic. Cite each source using a consistent style guide (MLA, APA, or Chicago), and offer your evaluation of the sources' relevance, quality, and credibility.
4. Watch Stephen Colbert's report concerning Wikipedia or search "wikiality" if the link does not work (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20PlHx_JjEo). Using research that you have found on your speech topic, update the Wikipedia page for your topic. Be careful not to replicate the errors that Colbert discusses. Offer only accurate information, and cite the source where support for your entry can be found.

Glossary

Bias

The predisposition toward a particular viewpoint.

Boolean Operators

Words and symbols that illustrate the relationship between search terms and help the search engine expand or limit results.

Expert Testimony

Testimony that comes from a recognized authority who has conducted extensive research on an issue.

Interlibrary Loan

The process of borrowing materials through one library that belong to another library.

Lay Testimony

Any testimony based on witnesses' opinions or perceptions in a given case

Parity

Similarity of information across sources.

Personal Testimony

An individual's story concerning his or her lived experience, which can be used to illustrate the existence of a particular event or phenomenon.

Search Engine

Software which uses algorithms to scan an index of existing Internet content for particular terms, and then ranks the results based on their relevance.

Source Credibility

Signs that a person is offering trustworthy information.

Style Guide

An established set of standards for formatting written documents and citing sources for information within the document.

References

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Using Language Well

11.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the power of language to define our world and our relationship
- to the world
- Choose language that positively impacts the ability to inform and persuade
- Choose language to create a clear and vivid message
- Use language that is ethical and accurate
- Use language to enhance his or her speaker credibility Chapter Outline

Language is one of the most influential and powerful aspects of our daily lives and yet very few people pay attention to it in their interpersonal and public communication. *The power of language cannot be overemphasized— language constructs, reflects, and maintains our social realities, or what we believe to be "true" with regard to the world around us.* What we "know is true" about a person, place, thing, idea, or any other aspect of our daily lives very much depends on what experiences we have had (or not), what information we have (or have not) come across, and what words people have used (or not used) when communicating about our world.

Language can also have an impact on how we feel about this reality. How we define words and how we feel about those words is highly subjective. In fact, cognitive psychologist Lera Boroditsky showed a key to a group of Spanish- speakers and to a group of German- speakers. The researchers then asked the participants to describe the key they had been shown. Because the Spanish word for "key" is gendered as feminine, Spanish speakers defined the key using words such as lovely, tiny, and magic. The German word for "key" is gendered masculine, however, and German speakers defined the key using adjectives like hard, jagged, and awkward (2003). This study suggests that the words we use to define something can have an impact on how we perceive what those words represent.

Because language is such a powerful, yet unexamined, part of our lives, this chapter focuses on how language functions and how competent speakers harness the power of language.

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11.1: Communication vs. Language

To understand the power of language, we need to differentiate between communication and language. Communication occurs when we try to transfer what is in our minds to the minds of our audience. Whether speaking to inform, persuade, or entertain, the main goal of a speaker is to effectively communicate her or his thoughts to audience members. Most chapters in this text help you determine how best to communicate information through considerations such as organizational structure, audience analysis, delivery, and the like.

Language, on the other hand, is the means by which we communicate—a system of symbols we use to form messages. We learn language as a child in order to read, write, and speak. Once we have mastered enough language we can communicate with relative ease, yet growing up we rarely learn much about language choices and what they mean for our communication.

Language Creates Social Reality

Our social realities are constructed through language; and therefore, people with different experiences in, and understandings of, the world can define the same things in very different ways. Language is culturally transmitted—we learn how to define our world first from our families and then our later definitions of the world are influenced by friends and institutions such as the media, education, and religion. If we grow up in a sexist culture, we are likely to hold sexist attitudes. Similarly, if we grow up in a culture that defines the environment as our first priority in making any decisions, we're likely to grow with environmentally friendly attitudes. Language, then, is not neutral. As a culture, as groups of people, and as individuals, we decide what words we're going to use to define one thing or another.

Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.

~ Geert Hofstede

For public speakers, these facts are important for three primary reasons. First, the careful use of language can make the difference between you giving a remarkable speech and one that is utterly forgettable. Second, you must remember that audience members may not share the same language for the definition of the very same ideas, realities, or even specific items. Finally, the language that you use in public (and even private) communication says something about you—about how you define and therefore perceive the world. If you are not careful with your language you may unintentionally communicate something negative about yourself simply because of a careless use of language. You should think very carefully about your audience's and your own language when you prepare to speak publicly. You can master all of the other elements in this textbook, but without an effective use of language those other mastered skills will not mean much to your audience. The suggestions in this chapter will help you communicate as effectively as possible using appropriate and expressive. You'll also learn about language to avoid so that your language leaves the audience with a positive impression of you.

The Differences Language Choices can Make

When I discuss the importance of language choice with my students, I generally begin with two different paragraphs based on a section from Reverend Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" speech. The first paragraph I read them is a section of Reverend Jackson's speech that I have rewritten. The second paragraph is the actual text from Reverend Jackson's speech. Let's start with my version first:

> *America should dream. Choose people over building bombs. Destroy the weapons and don't hurt the people. Think about a new system of values. Think about lawyers more interested in the law than promotions. Consider doctors more interested in helping people get better than in making money. Imagine preachers and priests who will preach and not just solicit money.*

This paragraph is clear and simple. It gets the point across to the audience. But compare my version of his paragraph to Reverend Jackson's actual words:

> *Young America dream. Choose the human race over the nuclear race. Bury the weapons and don't burn the people. Dream of a new value system. Dream of lawyers more concerned about justice than a judgeship. Dream of doctors more concerned about public health than personal wealth. Dream of preachers and priests who will prophecy and not just profiteer.*

The significant difference between these two versions of the paragraph can be explained simply as the difference between carefully choosing one group of words over another group of words. My version of the speech is fine, but it is utterly forgettable. Reverend

Jackson’s exact wording, however, is stunning. The audience probably remembered his speech and the chills that went down their spines when they heard it long after it was over. This example, I hope, exemplifies the difference language choice can make. Using language in a way that makes you and your speech memorable, however, takes work. Few people come by this talent naturally, so give yourself plenty of time to rework your first draft to fine tune and perfect your language choice. Using some of the strategies discussed below will help you in this process.

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11.2: Constructing Clear and Vivid Messages

Use Simple Language

When asked to write a speech or a paper, many of us pull out the thesaurus (or call it up on our computer) when we want to replace a common word with one that we believe is more elevated or intellectual. There are certainly times when using a thesaurus is a good thing, but if you're pulling that big book out to turn a simple idea into one that *sounds* more complex, put it back on the shelf. Good speakers use simple language for two primary reasons.

First, audiences can sense a fake. When you turn in your term paper with words that aren't typically used by people in everyday conversation and those words are simply replacing the common words we all use, your instructor knows what you've done. Part of having strong credibility as a speaker is convincing your audience of your sincerity, both in terms of your ideas and your character. When you elevate your language simply for the sake of using big words when small words will do, audiences may perceive you as insincere, and that perception might also transfer onto your message. In addition, the audience's attention can drift to questions about your character and veracity, making it less likely that they are paying attention to your message.

Second, using a long word when a short one will do inhibits your ability to communicate clearly. Your goal as a speaker should be to be as clear as you possibly can. Using language that makes it more difficult for your audience to understand your message can negatively impact your ability to get a clear message across to your audience. If your audience can't understand your vocabulary, they can't understand your message.

If you're paying attention to the language strategies discussed in this chapter, you'll find that you won't need to pull out that thesaurus to impress your audience—your command of language will make that positive impression for you. In addition, when you use language that your audience expects to hear and is used to hearing you may find that the audience perceives you as more sincere than someone who uses elevated language and sounds pretentious. Remember: It is rarely the case that you should use a long word when a short one will do.

Use Concrete and Precise Language

How many times a week do you say something to someone only to have them misunderstand? You believe that you were very clear and the person you were talking to thought that she understood you perfectly, and yet you both ended up with a problem we often deem "miscommunication." You said you'd "call later" and your friend got angry because you didn't. By "later" you probably meant one time frame while your friend defined that time frame very differently. Often in these cases both people are right. You were perfectly clear and your friend did understand you perfectly—so how did the miscommunication happen?

One of the primary reasons we miscommunicate is because language is an abstract phenomenon. Meanings exist in people's understandings, not the words we use. Therefore, if you're telling a story about "a dog" you could be talking about a German Shepherd while the person you're talking with is envisioning a Chihuahua. If you do not use concrete language, you risk at least sending a weaker or different message than you intended. When speaking, you want to use the concrete term "German Shepard" over the more abstract term "dog."

When you are writing your speech, look for words that you might need to define more clearly. Instead of talking about "bad weather," tell the audience that it was raining or that hail the size of golf balls was coming down. "Bad weather" means different things to different people. In discussing the aftermath of a natural disaster, rather than saying "a lot of people were affected" say, "25,000 citizens, 1 in every 5, were affected by this disaster." "A lot" means different things to different people. *Most words* mean different things to different people, so use concrete language over abstract words to better your chances of communicating your message as intended.

You also want to make sure that you're precise. Someone might call a sweater "green" while someone else calls it "teal." Even though those are just differences in perception not purposeful or mindless communication meant to be inaccurate, not being clear about exactly which color you're talking about can lead to confusion. It is best to remember to be as precise as possible when choosing words. Don't say something was "big"—tell us its weight or height, and to be sure you're communicating clearly compare that weigh or height to something we understand. So, instead of saying "The piles of garbage I saw in the local dump were really big" say "The piles of garbage I saw in the local dump weighed about 10,000 pounds, which is equivalent to the weight of the average female elephant." The more precise you are the less likely it is that your audience will misinterpret your message.

Our business is infested with idiots who try to impress by using pretentious jargon.

~ David Ogilvy

Another way to avoid language that obstructs communication is to avoid the use of **jargon**. Jargon is the "specialized language of a group or profession" (Hamiliton, 2008). It is appropriate to use jargon when you know that your audience understands the terms you are using. For example, if you are a computer science major and you are presenting to a group of similarly trained computer science majors, using jargon will help establish your credibility with that audience. Using terms even as basic as "RAM" and "binary code" with a general audience, however, will likely not go over well—you risk confusing the audience rather than informing or persuading them. Even people who can use computers may not know how they work or the technical terms associated with them. So you must be careful to only use jargon when you know your audience will understand it. If you must use jargon while speaking to a general audience, be sure to define your terms and err on the side of over-clarification.

Finally, another way to avoid confusion is to avoid using slang when it is not appropriate. **Slang** is language that some people might understand but that is not considered acceptable in formal or polite conversation. Slang may be a poor choice for a speaker because some members of your audience may not be familiar with the slang term(s) you use. Slang is often based in a very specific audience, defined by age, region, subculture and the like. If you are speaking to an audience that you know will understand and respond positively, you may choose to include that language in your speech.

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11.3: Using Stylized Language

Stylized language is language that communicates your meaning clearly, vividly and with flair. Stylized language doesn't just make you sound better; it also helps make your speeches more memorable. Speakers who are thoughtful about using language strategies in their speeches are more memorable as speakers and therefore so too are their messages more unforgettable as well.

Metaphors and Similes

One strategy that promotes vivid language is the use of metaphors. **Metaphors** are comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another. **Similes** are similar to metaphors in how they function; however, similes make comparisons by using the word "like" or "as," whereas metaphors do not. The power of a metaphor is in its ability to create an image that is linked to emotion in the mind of the audience. It is one thing to talk about racial injustice, it is quite another for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to note that people have been "…battered by storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality." Throughout his "I Have a Dream" speech the Reverend Dr. King uses the metaphor of the checking account to make his point.

In the same speech the Reverend Dr. King also makes use of similes, which also compare two things but do so using "like" or "as." In discussing his goals for the Civil Rights movement in his "I Have a Dream" speech, the Reverend Dr. exclaims: "No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Similes also help make your message clearer by using ideas that are more concrete for your audience. For example, to give the audience an idea of what a winter day looked like you could note that the "snow looked as solid as pearls." To communicate sweltering heat you could say that "the tar on the road looked like satin." A simile most of us are familiar with is the notion of the United States being "like a melting pot" with regard to its diversity. We also often note that a friend or colleague that stays out of conflicts between friends is "like Switzerland." In each of these instances similes have been used to more clearly and vividly communicate a message.

Alliteration

Remember challenging yourself or a friend to repeat a tongue twister "five times fast?" Perhaps it was "Sally sold seashells by the seashore" or "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." Tongue twisters are difficult to say but very easy to remember. Why? Alliteration. **Alliteration** is the repetition of the initial sounds of words.

Alliteration is a useful tool for helping people remember your message, and it's as simple as taking a few minutes to see if there are ways to reword your speech so that you can add some alliteration— this is a great time to use that thesaurus we talked about putting away early in this chapter. Look for alternative words to use that allow for alliteration in your speech. You might consider doing this especially when it comes to the points that you would like your audience to remember most.

Antithesis

Antithesis allows you to use contrasting statements in order to make a rhetorical point. Perhaps the most famous example of antithesis comes from the Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy when he stated, "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Going back to Reverend Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" speech he notes, "I challenge them to put hope in their brains and not dope in their veins." In each of these cases, the speakers have juxtaposed two competing ideas in one statement to make an argument in order to draw the listener's attention.

Parallel Structure and Language

Antithesis is often worded using parallel structure or language. Parallel structure is the balance of two or more similar phrases or clauses, and parallel wording is the balance of two or more similar words. The Reverend Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech exemplifies both strategies in action. Indeed, the section where he repeats "I Have a Dream" over and over again is an example of the use of both parallel structure and language. The use of parallel structure and language helps your audience remember without beating them over the head with repetition. If worded and delivered carefully,you can communicate a main point over and over again, as did the Reverend Dr. King, and it doesn't seem as though you are simply repeating the same phrase over and over. You are often doing just that, of course, but because you are careful with your wording (it should be powerful and creative, not pedantic) and your delivery (the correct use of pause, volumes, and other elements of delivery), the audience often perceives the repetition as dramatic and memorable. The use of parallel language and structure can also help you when you are speaking persuasively.

Through the use of these strategies you can create a speech that takes your audience through a series of ideas or arguments that seem to “naturally” build to your conclusion.

Personalized Language

We’re all very busy people. Perhaps you’ve got work, studying, classes, a job, and extracurricular activities to juggle. Because we are all so busy, one problem that speakers often face is trying to get their audience interested in their topic or motivated to care about their argument. A way to help solve this problem is through the use of language that personalizes your topic. Rather than saying, “One might argue” say “You might argue.” Rather than saying “This could impact the country in ways we have not yet imagined,” say “This could impact your life in ways that you have not imagined.” By using language that directly connects your topic or argument to the audience you better your chances of getting your audience to listen and to be persuaded that your subject matter is serious and important to them. Using words like “us,” “you,” and “we” can be a subtle means of getting your audience to pay attention to your speech. Most people are most interested in things that they believe impact their lives directly— make those connections clear for your audience by using personal language.

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11.4: Language and Ethics

For our purposes here, there are two ways to think about communication and ethics. First, ethical communication is that which does not unfairly label one thing or another based on personal bias. So, in addition to choosing "public housing" over "the projects," an ethical speaker will choose terms that steer clear from intentional bias. For example, pro-life speakers would refrain from calling "pro-choice" people "pro-abortion" since the basic principle of the "pro- choice" position is that it is up to the person, not society, to choose whether or not an abortion is acceptable. That is a very different position than being "pro-abortion." Indeed, many pro-choice citizens would not choose abortion if faced with an unplanned pregnancy; therefore calling them "pro- abortion" does not reflect the reality of the situation; rather, it is the purposeful and unethical use of one term over the other for emotional impact. Similarly, if a pro-choice person is addressing a crowd where religious organizations are protesting against the legality of abortion, it would not be ethical for the pro-choice speaker to refer to the "anti- abortion" protestors as "religious fanatics." Simply because someone is protesting abortion on religious grounds does not make that person a "religious fanatic," and as in the first example, choosing the latter phrase is another purposeful and unethical use of one term over another for emotional impact.

Language exerts hidden power, like the moon on the tides.

~ Rita Mae Brown

A second way to link communication and ethics is to remember that ethical speakers attempt to communicate reality to the best of their ability. Granted, each person's social reality is different, depending on background, influences, and cultural institutions, for example. So ethical communication also means trying to define or explain your subject in terms that are as closely tied to an objective reality as is possible—it is your best attempt to communicate accurately about your topic.

Sexist and Heterosexist Language

One of the primary means by which speakers regularly communicate inaccurate information is through the use of sexist language. In spite of the fact that the Modern Language Association deemed sexist language as grammatically incorrect back in the 1970s, many people and institutions (including most colleges and universities) still regularly use sexist language in their communication.

Is your remarkably sexist drivel intentional, or just some horrible mistake?

~ Yeardley Smith

First, you should avoid the use of what is called the **generic "he" or "man,"** which is the use of terms such as "mankind" instead of "humankind" or "humanity," or the use of "man" or "he" to refer to all people. A common response from students with regard to the use of "generic he" is that the word is intended to represent men and women, therefore when it's used it is not used to be sexist. If it were really the case that people truly recognized in their minds that the term "man" includes women, then we would talk about situations in which "man has difficulty giving birth" (Peccei, 2003) or the "impact of menstruation on man's biology." Of course, we do not say those things because they simply wouldn't make sense to us. Perhaps you can now see why the people of the 1700s and 1800s had trouble switching from non-sexist to sexist language—it defied their own common sense just as discussing how "man gets pregnant" defies yours.

Second, you should avoid using **man-linked terms**, which are terms such as "fireman" or "policemen." It is appropriate to use these terms when you know that the people you are speaking about are men only, but if you do not know for sure or if you're talking about groups generally, you should avoid using these types of terms and replace them with "firefighters" and "police officers." Colleges and universities should replace "freshman" with "first- year students" and so should you. Other, non job-oriented words also suffer from this same problem. People often note that tables need to be "manned" rather than "staffed" and that items are "man- made" instead of "human made" or "handmade."

A final common use of sexist language occurs when people use **spotlighting** when discussing the occupations of men and women. How often have you heard (or used) a phrase such as "he's a male nurse" or "that female lawyer?" When we spotlight in these ways, we are pointing out that a person is deviating from the "norm" and implying that someone's sex is relevant to a particular job. According to Peccei (2003), in the English language there is a very strong tendency to "place the adjective expressing the most 'defining' characteristic closest to the noun." If you talk about a "male nurse" or a "female cop," you risk communicating to the audience that you believe the most salient aspect of a particular job is the sex of the person that does it, and some audience members may not appreciate that assumption on your part.

The use of sexist language is not just grammatically incorrect; its use is also linked to ethics because it communicates a reality that does not exist—it is not accurate. Man- linked language communicates male superiority and that there are more men than women because women are regularly erased linguistically in speech and writing. Man- linked terms and spotlighting communicate that some job activities are appropriate for men but not women and vice versa by putting focus on the sex of a person as linked to their job or activity. Finally, the use of the generic “he” or “man” communicates that men are the norm and women deviate from that norm. If all humans are called “man,” what does that say about women? Sexist language can also limit what young males and females believe that they can accomplish in their lives. Ethical speakers should therefore avoid using language that communicates these sexist practices.

Heterosexist language is language that assumes the heterosexual orientation of a person or group of people. Be careful when speaking not to use words or phrases that assume the sexual orientation of your audience members. Do not make the mistake of pointing to someone in your audience as an example and discussing that person with the assumption that she is heterosexual by saying something like, “Let’s say this woman here is having trouble with her husband.” When thinking of examples to use, consider using names that could ring true for heterosexuals and homosexuals alike. Instead of talking about Pat and Martha, discuss an issue involving Pat and Chris. Not only will you avoid language that assumes everyone’s partner is of the opposite sex, you will also better your chances of persuading using your example. There are, of course, ethical considerations as well. Because it is likely that your entire audience is not heterosexual (and certainly they do not all hold heterosexist attitudes), using heterosexist language is another way that speakers may alienate audience members. In reality the world is not completely heterosexual and even in the unlikely case that you’re speaking in a room of consisting completely of heterosexuals, many people have friends or relatives that are homosexual, so the use of heterosexist language to construct the world as if this were not the case runs counter to ethical communication.

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11.5: Avoiding Language Pitfalls

Profanity

It seems obvious, but this fact bears repeating—you should **refrain from using profanity** in your speeches. One of the primary rules of all aspects of public speaking (audience analysis, delivery, topic selection, etc.) is that you should never ignore audience expectations. Audiences do not expect speakers to use profane language, and in most cases, doing so will hurt your credibility with the audience. It is true that certain audiences will not mind an occasional profane word used for effect, but unless you are speaking to a group of people with whom you are very familiar, it is difficult to know for sure whether the majority of the audience will respond positively or negatively to such language use.

Exaggeration

Speakers should also be careful about exaggeration. **Hyperbole** is the use of moderate exaggeration for effect and is an acceptable and useful language strategy. What is not acceptable, however, is the use of exaggeration to an extent that you risk losing credibility. For example, while it is acceptable to note that "it snows in South Texas as often as pigs fly," it would not be acceptable to state that "It never snows in South Texas." In the first case, you are using hyperbole as a form of exaggeration meant to creatively communicate an idea. In the second case, your use of exaggeration is stating something that is not true. It is unwise to use words such as "never" and "always" when speaking. It may be the case that speakers make this mistake accidentally because they are not careful with regard to word choice. We so easily throw words like "always" and "never" around in everyday conversation that this tendency transfers onto our public speeches when we are not thinking carefully about word choice.

There are two problems with the careless use of exaggeration. First, when you use words like "always" and "never," it is not likely that the statement you are making is true—as very few things *always or never* happen. Therefore, audiences might mistake your careless use of language for an attempt to purposefully misrepresent the truth. Second, when you suggest that something "always" or "never" happens, you are explicitly challenging your audience members to offer up evidence that contradicts your statement. Such a challenge may serve to impact your credibility negatively with the audience, as an audience member can make you look careless and/or silly by pointing out that your "always" or "never" statement is incorrect.

Powerless Language

Finally, think about using powerful language when speaking. Because women are more likely than men to be socialized to take the feelings of others into account, women tend to use less powerful language than men (Gamble & Gamble, 2003). Both men and women, however, can use language that communicates a lack of power. In some cases speakers use **powerless language that communicates uncertainty**. For example, a speaker might say "It seems to me that things are getting worse." Phrases like this communicate a lack of certainty in your statements. It is likely that in the case of these speeches, the speaker is arguing that some problem is getting worse, therefore more powerful language would be acceptable. Simply state that "Things are getting worse" and don't weaken your statement with phrases that communicate uncertainty.

Speakers should also beware of **hedges, tag questions**, and **qualifiers**. Examples of hedges would include, "I thought we should," "I sort of think," or "Maybe we should." Use more powerful statements such as "We should" or "I believe." In addition, speakers should avoid the use of tag questions, which are quick questions at the end of a statement that also communicate uncertainty. People who use tag questions might end a statement with "Don't you think?" or "Don't you agree?" rather than flatly stating what they believe because it can appear to audiences that you are seeking validation for your statements. Qualifiers such as "around" or "about" make your sentences less definitive, so generally avoid using them.

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.

~ Elie Wiesel

Incorrect Grammar

There are four primary means by which incorrect grammar tends to make its way into speeches, including basic error, mispronunciations, regionalisms, and colloquialisms.

Basic errors occur when people make simple mistakes in grammar because of carelessness or a lack of knowledge. If you are unsure about the grammatical structure of a sentence, ask someone. Practicing your speech in front of others can help you catch mistakes. Grammatical errors can also happen when speakers aren't familiar enough with their speech. If you do not know your topic well and have not given yourself an adequate amount of time for practice, you may fumble some during your speech and use incorrect grammar that you normally wouldn't use.

In addition, you must be sure that you are pronouncing words correctly. Making **pronunciation mistakes**, especially when you're pronouncing words that the general public deems ordinary, can seriously impede your credibility. If you're unsure about how to pronounce a word, check with someone else or with the dictionary to make sure you're pronouncing it correctly. In fact, many online dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster.com and Dictionary.com now include a function that allows you to hear how the word is pronounced. And if it's a word you're not used to saying, such as a technical or medical term, practice saying it out loud 10-20 times a day until you're comfortable with the word. Remember that our mouths are machines and that our tongues, teeth, cheeks, lips, etc. all work together to pronounce sounds. When faced with a word that our mouths are not yet "trained" to say, it is more likely that we'll mispronounce the word or stutter some on it during a speech. But if you practice saying the word out loud several times a day leading up to your speech, you're less likely to make a mistake and your confidence will be boosted instead of hurt in the midst of your speech.

Some grammar problems occur because people use regionalisms when speaking, which may pose problems for people in the audience not familiar with the terms being used. **Regionalisms** are customary words or phrases used in different geographic regions. You must be careful when using regional terms because your audience may not interpret your message correctly if they are not familiar with the regionalism you're using.

Another grammar issue often linked to region is the use of colloquialisms. **Colloquialisms** are words or phrases used in informal speech but not typically used in formal speech. Using the word "crick" instead of "creek" is one example of a colloquialism, and in some areas "I'm getting ready to cook dinner" would be said, "I'm fixin' to make dinner." Colloquialisms can also be phrases that stem from particular regions. In some regions nice clothes are often referred to as your "Sunday best," and in some areas, when people are preparing to vacuum, they note that they are getting ready to "red up the place" (make it ready for visitors). Like regionalisms, an audience understanding your use of colloquialisms depends on their familiarity with the language tendencies of a certain geographic area, so steering clear of their use can help you make sure that your message is understood by your audience.

Other Language Choices to Consider

Clichés are phrases or expressions that, because of overuse, have lost their rhetorical power. Examples include sayings such as "The early bird gets the worm" or "Making a mountain out of a molehill." Phrases such as these were once powerful ways of communicating an idea, but because of overuse these phrases just don't have the impact that they once had. Using clichés in your speeches runs the risk of having two negative attributions being placed on you by audience members. First, audience members may feel that your use of a cliché communicates that you didn't take the speech seriously and/or were lazy in constructing it. Second, your audience members may perceive you as someone who is not terribly creative. Clichés area easy ways to communicate your message, but you might pay for that ease with negative feelings about you as a speaker from your audience. Try to avoid using clichés so that audiences are more likely to perceive you positively as a speaker.

Another consideration for speakers is whether or not to use **language central to the popular culture** of a time period. Whether we're talking about "groovy, man" from the 1970s or "like totally awesome" from the 1980s, or "word to your mutha" from the 1990s, the language central to the popular culture of any time period is generally something to be avoided in formal public speaking. Like slang or profanity, language stemming from popular culture can be limited in its appeal. Some audiences may not understand it, some audiences may negatively evaluate you for using language that is too informal, and other audiences will have negative preconceived notions about "the kind of people" that use such language (e.g., "hippies" in the 1970s), and they will most likely transfer those negative evaluations onto you.

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11.6: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed a number of important aspects of language that good speakers should always consider. It is important for speakers to remember the power of language and to harness that power effectively, yet ethically. We've discussed the relationship between the language we use and the way we see the world, the importance of using language that is clear, vivid, stylized, ethical and that reflects well on you as the speaker.

The difference between choosing one word over another can be as significant as an audience member remembering your presentation or forgetting it and/or an audience turning against you and your ideas. Taking a few extra moments to add some alliteration or to check for language that might offend others is time very well spent. The next time you have to write or speak about an issue, remember the importance of language and its impact on our lives— carefully consider what language will you use and how will those language choices make a difference in how your audiences defines and understands your topic.

Review Questions and Activities

Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between communication and language.
2. Explain the relationship between language and the way that humans perceive their worlds.
3. Why should you use simple language in your speech?
4. The use of concrete and precise language in your speeches helps prevent what sorts of problems?
5. Give an example of a metaphor and explain how that metaphor functions to communicate a specific idea more clearly.
6. What is alliteration?
7. Why is personalized language important?
8. What are some examples of types of sexist language and what is the impact of those examples?
9. What are two problems associated with using exaggerated language in your speeches?
10. Explain the types of powerless language most commonly used.
11. Why shouldn't you use clichés in your speech?
12. Why is correct grammar important to good speech making?

Activities

1. Speakers should avoid the use of sexist language. Consider the sexist words and phrases listed below and think of as many replacement words as you can.
    a. Bachelor's Degree
    b. Bogeyman
    c. Brotherhood
    d. Businessman
    e. Chairman
    f. Forefather
    g. Layman
    h. Mailman
    i. Manmade
    j. Repairman
    k. Salesman
    l. Female Doctor
2. Using speeches from mlkonline.net or jfklibrary.org, choose any speech from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, or Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and isolate one paragraph that you believe exemplifies a careful and effective use of language. Rewrite that paragraph as I did for my classes, using more common and less careful word choices. Compare the paragraphs to each other once you're done, noticing the difference your changes in language make.

3. Speakers should always remember that it's rarely helpful to use a long word when a short word will do and that clichés should be avoided in speeches. Look at these common clichés, reworded using language that obstructs rather than clarifies, and see if you can figure out which clichés have been rewritten.
    a. A piece of pre-decimal currency conserved is coinage grossed.
    b. The timely avian often acquires the extended soft-bodied invertebrate.
    c. A utensil often used for writing is more prodigious than a certain long-edged weapon.
    d. Let slumbering members of the canine variety remain in slumber
    e. An animal of the avian variety resting on one's palm is more valuable than double that amount in one's appendage most often used for tactile feedback.

Glossary

Alliteration

The repetition of the initial sounds of words.

Antithesis

Rhetorical strategy that uses contrasting statements in order to make a rhetorical point.

Clichés

Phrases or expressions that, because of overuse, have lost their rhetorical power.

Colloquialisms

Words or phrases used in informal speech but not typically used in formal speech.

Communication

Attempts to reproduce what is in our minds in the minds of our audience.

Generic "he" or "man"

Language that uses words such as "he" or "mankind" to refer to the male and female population.

Hedges

Powerless phrases such as "I thought we should," "I sort of think," or "Maybe we should" that communicate uncertainty.

Heterosexist Language

Language that assumes the heterosexual orientation of a person or group of people.

Hyperbole

The use of moderate exaggeration for effect.

Jargon

The specialized language of a group or profession.

Language

The means by which we communicate—a system of symbols we use to form messages.

Man-linked Terms

Terms such as "fireman" or "policemen" that incorrectly identify a job as linked only to a male.

Metaphors

Comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another.

Qualifiers

Powerless words such as "around" or "about" that make your sentences less definitive.

Regionalisms

Customary words or phrases used in different geographic regions.

Sexist Language

Language that unnecessarily identifies sex or linguistically erases females through the use of man- linked terms and/or the use of “he” or “man” as generics.

Similes

Comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another using the word “like” or “as” to make the comparison.

Slang

Type of language that most people understand but that is not considered acceptable in formal or polite conversation.

Spotlighting

Language such as “male nurse” that suggests a person is deviating from the “normal” person who would do a particular job and implies that someone’s sex is relevant to a particular job.

Tag Questions

Powerless language exemplified by ending statements with questions such as “Don’t you think?” or “Don’t you agree?”

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Informative Speaking

12.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the importance of accuracy, clarity and listener interest in informative speaking.
- Discuss why speaking to inform is important. Identify strategies for making information clear and interesting to your speaking audience.
- Identify the different types of speeches
- Identify several categories of topics that may be used in informative speaking.
- Describe several approaches to developing a topic.

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12.1: Welcome to Informative Speaking

An informative speech conveys knowledge, a task that you've engaged in throughout your life. When you give driving directions, you convey knowledge. When you caution someone about crossing the street at a certain intersection, you are describing a dangerous situation. When you steer someone away from using the carpool lane, you are explaining what it's for.

When your professors greet you on the first day of a new academic term, they typically hand out a course syllabus, which informs you about the objectives and expectations of the course. Much of the information comes to have greater meaning as you actually encounter your coursework. Why doesn't the professor explain those meanings on the first day? He or she probably does, but in all likelihood, the explanation won't really make sense at the time because you don't yet have the supporting knowledge to put it in context. However, it is still important that the orientation information be offered. It is likely to answer some specific questions, such as the following: Am I prepared to take this course? Is a textbook required? Will the course involve a great deal of writing? Does the professor have office hours? The answers to these questions should be of central importance to all the students. These orientations are informative because they give important information relevant to the course.

An informative speech does not attempt to convince the audience that one thing is better than another. It does not advocate a course of action. Let's say, for instance, that you have carefully followed the news about BP's Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Let's further say that you felt outraged by the sequence of events that led to the spill and, even more so, by its consequences. Consider carefully whether this is a good topic for your informative speech. If your speech describes the process of offshore oil exploration, it will be informative. However, if it expresses your views on what petroleum corporations should do to safeguard their personnel and the environment, save that topic for a persuasive speech.

Being honest about your private agenda in choosing a topic is important. It is not always easy to discern a clear line between informative and persuasive speech. Good information has a strong tendency to be persuasive, and persuasion relies on good information. Thus informative and persuasive speaking do overlap. It remains up to you to examine your real motives in choosing your topic. As we have said in various ways, ethical speaking means respecting the intelligence of your audience. If you try to circumvent the purpose of the informative speech in order to plant a persuasive seed, your listeners will notice. Such strategies often come across as dishonest.

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12.2: Why We Speak to Inform

Informative speaking is a means for the delivery of knowledge. In informative speaking, we avoid expressing opinion. This doesn't mean you may not speak about controversial topics. However, if you do so, you must deliver a fair statement of each side of the issue in debate. If your speech is about standardized educational testing, you must honestly represent the views both of its proponents and of its critics. You must not take sides, and you must not slant your explanation of the debate in order to influence the opinions of the listeners. You are simply and clearly defining the debate. If you watch the evening news on a major network television (ABC, CBS, or NBC), you will see newscasters who undoubtedly have personal opinions about the news, but are trained to avoid expressing those opinions through the use of loaded words, gestures, facial expressions, or vocal tone. Like those newscasters, you are already educating your listeners simply by informing them. Let them make up their own minds. This is probably the most important reason for informative speaking.

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12.3: Informative Speaking Goals

A good informative speech conveys accurate information to the audience in a way that is clear and that keeps the listener interested in the topic. Achieving all three of these goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to your effectiveness as a speaker. If information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience. There is no topic about which you can give complete information, and therefore, we strongly recommend careful narrowing. With a carefully narrowed topic and purpose, it is possible to give an accurate picture that isn't misleading. Some professors may ask you to narrow down the topic by asking Who, What, When, Where and Why? This will help you narrow the topic and define the specific purpose of the speech.

Part of being accurate is making sure that your information is current. Even if you know a great deal about your topic or wrote a good paper on the topic in a high school course, you need to verify the accuracy and completeness of what you know. Most people understand that technology changes rapidly, so you need to update your information almost constantly, but the same is true for topics that, on the surface, may seem to require less updating. For example, the American Civil War occurred 150 years ago, but contemporary research still offers new and emerging theories about the causes of the war and its long- term effects. So even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, you need to carefully check your information to be sure it's accurate and up to date.

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

In addition to being clear, your speech should be interesting. Your listeners will benefit the most if they can give sustained attention to the speech, and this is unlikely to happen if they are bored. This often means you will decide against using some of the topics you know a great deal about. Suppose, for example, that you had a summer job as a veterinary assistant and learned a great deal about canine parasites. This topic might be very interesting to you, but how interesting will it be to others in your class? In order to make it interesting, you will need to find a way to connect it with their interests and curiosities. Perhaps there are certain canine parasites that also pose risks to humans—this might be a connection that would increase audience interest in your topic.

Making Information Clear and Interesting for the Audience

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

There are a number of principles to keep in mind as a speaker to make the information you present clear and interesting for your audience. Let's examine several of them.

Adjust Complexity to the Audience

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

Never assume that just because your audience is made up of students, they all share your knowledge set. If you base your speech on an assumption of similar knowledge, you might not make sense to everyone. If, for instance, you're an intercultural communication student discussing multiple identities, the psychology students in your audience will most likely not understand the context of your message based on their knowledge of multiple identities. Similarly, the term "viral" has very different meanings depending on whether it is used with respect to human disease, popular response to a website, or population theory. In using the word "viral," you

absolutely must explain specifically what you mean. You should not hurry your explanation of a term that's vulnerable to misinterpretation. Make certain your listeners know what you mean before continuing your speech. Stephen Lucas explains, "You cannot assume they will know what you mean. Rather, you must be sure to explain everything so thoroughly that they cannot help but understand." Define terms to help listeners understand them the way you mean them to. Give explanations that are consistent with your definitions, and show how those ideas apply to your speech topic. Approaching your speech In this way, you can avoid many misunderstandings.

Similarly, be very careful about assuming there is anything that "everybody knows." Suppose you've decided to present an informative speech on the growth of the three largest cities in California. Many of your listeners will know which cities are in California, but if there are international students in the audience, they might never have heard of these cities. You should clarify by pointing out the cities on a map.

Avoid Unnecessary Jargon

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

Some topics, by their very nature, are too technical for a short speech. For example, in a five-minute speech you would be foolish to try to inform your audience about the causes of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear emergency that occurred in Japan in 2011.

Other topics, while technical, can be presented in audience-friendly ways that minimize the use of technical terms. For instance, in a speech about Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that buried the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, you can use the term "pyroclastic flow" as long as you take the time to either show or tell what it means.

Create Concrete Images

As a college student, you have had a significant amount of exposure to abstract terms. You have become comfortable using and hearing a variety of abstract ideas. However, abstract terms lend themselves to many interpretations. For instance, the abstract term "transportation" can mean different things. It can mean that you are moving something from one place to another, but it can also mean a method of travel. Because of the potential for misunderstanding, it is better to use a concrete word. For example, instead of saying, "I am using transportation to get from Los Angeles to San Francisco," you will convey clearer meaning when you say, "I will be driving a car from Los Angeles to San Francisco," or "I will be using air travel to get from Los Angeles to San Franscisco."

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

Table **12.3.1**: Difference between Abstract and Concrete

Abstract	Concrete
transportation	air travel
success	completion of project
discrimination	exclusion of women
athletic	physically fit
profound	knowledgeable

By using an abstraction in a sentence and then comparing the concrete term in the sentence, you will notice the more precise meanings of the concrete terms. Those precise terms are less likely to be misunderstood. In the last pair of terms, "knowledgeable" is listed as a concrete term, but it can also be considered an abstract term. Still, it's likely to be much clearer and more precise than "profound."

Keep Information Limited

When you developed your speech, you carefully narrowed your topic in order to keep information limited yet complete and coherent. If you carefully adhere to your own narrowing, you can keep from going off on tangents or confusing your audience. If you overload your audience with information, they will be unable to follow your narrative. Use the definitions, descriptions, explanations, and examples you need in order to make your meaning clear, but resist the temptation to add tangential information merely because you find it interesting.

Link Current Knowledge to New Knowledge

Certain sets of knowledge are common to many people in your classroom audience. For instance, most of them know what Wikipedia is. Many have found it a useful and convenient source of information about topics related to their coursework. Because many Wikipedia entries are lengthy, greatly annotated, and followed by substantial lists of authoritative sources, many students have relied on information acquired from Wikipedia in writing papers to fulfill course requirements. All this is information that virtually every classroom listener is likely to know. This is the current knowledge of your audience.

Because your listeners are already familiar with Wikipedia, you can link important new knowledge to their already-existing knowledge. Wikipedia is an "open source," meaning that anyone can supplement, edit, correct, distort, or otherwise alter the information in Wikipedia. In addition to your listeners' knowledge that a great deal of good information can be found in Wikipedia, they must now know that it isn't authoritative. Some of your listeners may not enjoy hearing this message, so you must find a way to make it acceptable.

One way to make the message acceptable to your listeners is to show what Wikipedia does well. For example, some Wikipedia entries contain many good references at the end. Most of those references are likely to be authoritative, having been written by scholars. In searching for information on a topic, a student can look up one or more of those references in full-text databases or in the library. In this way, Wikipedia can be helpful in steering a student toward the authoritative information they need. Explaining this to your audience will help them accept, rather than reject, the bad news about Wikipedia.

Make It Memorable

If you've already done the preliminary work in choosing a topic, finding an interesting narrowing of that topic, developing and using presentation aids, and working to maintain audience contact, your delivery is likely to be memorable. Now you can turn to your content and find opportunities to make it appropriately vivid. You can do this by using explanations, comparisons, examples, or language.

Let's say that you're preparing a speech on the United States' internment of Japanese American people from the San Francisco Bay area during World War II. Your goal is to paint a memorable image in your listeners' minds. You can do this through a dramatic contrast, before and after. You could say, "In 1941, the Bay area had a vibrant and productive community of Japanese American citizens who went to work every day, opening their shops, typing reports in their offices, and teaching in their classrooms, just as they had been doing for years. But on December 7, 1941, everything changed. Within six months, Bay area residents of Japanese ancestry were gone, transported to internment camps located hundreds of miles from the Pacific coast."

This strategy rests on the ability of the audience to visualize the two contrasting situations. You have alluded to two sets of images that are familiar to most college students, images that they can easily visualize. Once the audience imagination is engaged in visualization, they are likely to remember the speech.

Your task of providing memorable imagery does not stop after the introduction. While maintaining an even-handed approach that does not seek to persuade, you must provide the audience with information about the circumstances that triggered the policy of internment, perhaps by describing the advice that was given to President Roosevelt by his top advisers. You might depict the conditions faced by Japanese Americans during their internment by describing a typical day one of the camps. To conclude your speech on a memorable note, you might name a notable individual—an actor, writer, or politician—who is a survivor of the internment.

Such a strategy might feel unnatural to you. After all, this is not how you talk to your friends or participate in a classroom discussion. Remember, though, that public speaking is not the same as talking. It's prepared and formal. It demands more of you. In

a conversation, it might not be important to be memorable; your goal might merely be to maintain friendship. But in a speech, when you expect the audience to pay attention, you must make the speech memorable.

Make It Relevant and Useful

When thinking about your topic, it is always very important to keep your audience members center stage in your mind. For instance, if your speech is about air pollution, ask your audience to imagine feeling the burning of eyes and lungs caused by smog.

This is a strategy for making the topic more real to them, since it may have happened to them on a number of occasions; and even if it hasn't, it easily could. If your speech is about Mark Twain, instead of simply saying that he was very famous during his lifetime, remind your audience that he was so prominent that their own great-grandparents likely knew of his work and had strong opinions about it. In so doing, you've connected your topic to their own forebears.

Personalize Your Content

Giving a human face to a topic helps the audience perceive it as interesting. If your topic is related to the Maasai rite of passage into manhood, the prevalence of drug addiction in a particular locale, the development of a professional filmmaker, or the treatment of a disease, putting a human face should not be difficult. To do it, find a case study you can describe within the speech, referring to the human subject by name. This conveys to the audience that these processes happen to real people.

Make sure you use a real case study, though—don't make one up. Using a fictional character without letting your audience know that the example is hypothetical is a betrayal of the listener's trust, and hence, is unethical.

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12.4: Types of Informative Speeches

There are three different types of informative speeches. They are the speech of demonstration, speech of description and the speech of definition. Each one maintains a different specific purpose, but all three types have the general purpose of to inform.

Speech of Demonstration

The speech of demonstration is commonly referred to as the process or "how to" speech. It intends to teach the audience how to complete a task through step-by-step instruction. It generally uses a temporal (chronological) pattern as each "step" of the process takes the audience through a sequence of time.

If your speech topic is a process, your goal should be to help your audience understand it, or be able to perform it. In either instance, processes involve a predictable series of changes, phases, or steps.

Examples:

- Bathe a dog
- Bake a cake
- Soil erosion
- Cell division
- Treating frostbite
- Training for a marathon

You will need presentation aids in order to make your meaning clear to your listeners. Even in cases where you don't absolutely need a presentation aid, one might be useful. For instance, if your topic is how to train for a marathon, you might find it useful to have a visual aid that lists the steps involved in the training, and even the type of eating one might do to be in the best possible physical shape possible.

Organizing your facts is crucially important when discussing a process. Every stage of a process should be explained fully so that members of the audience could repeat what you told them after they leave the classroom.

Speech of Description

A descriptive speech is given to describe an object, person, place, or event. Depending on the topic of the speech, it can be laid out in a topical, spatial, temporal or chronological format.

Objects

The term "objects" encompasses many topics we might not ordinarily consider to be "things." The following are some of these topics:

- Mitochondria
- Dream catchers
- Sharks
- Hubble telescope
- Spruce Goose
- Silicon chip
- Soy inks
- Cell phones
- Seattle's Space Needle
- Toothbrush
- DDT insecticide
- Seattle's Space Needle

You will find it necessary to narrow your topic about an object because, like any topic, you can't say everything about it in a single speech. In most cases, there are choices about how to narrow the topic. Here are some specific purpose statements that reflect ways of narrowing a few of those topics:

- To inform the audience about what we've learned from the Hubble telescope
- To inform the audience about the evolution of the cell phone
- To describe the significance of the gigantic Spruce Goose, the wooden airplane that launched an airline

These specific purposes reflect a narrow, but interesting, approach to each topic. These purposes are precise, and they should help you maintain your focus on a narrow but deep slice of knowledge.

People

This category applies both to specific individuals and also to roles. The following are some of these topics:

- Dalai Lamas
- Astronauts
- Tsar Nicholas II
- Modern midwives
- Mata Hari
- Catherine the Great
- Navajo code talkers
- Madame Curie
- Leopold Mozart
- Aristotle
- The Hemlock Society
- Sonia Sotomayor
- Jack the Ripper
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Justice Thurgood Marshall

There is a great deal of information about each one of these examples. In order to narrow the topic or write a thesis statement, it's important to recognize that your speech should not be a complete biography, or time line, of someone's life. If you attempt to deliver a comprehensive report of every important event and accomplishment related to your subject, then nothing will seem any more important than anything else. To capture and hold your audience's interest, you must narrow to a focus on a feature, event, achievement, or secret about your human topic aside from just providing background information.

Here are some purpose statements that reflect a process of narrowing:

- To inform the audience about the training program undergone by the first US astronauts to land on the moon
- To inform the audience about how a young Dalai Lama is identified
- To inform the audience about why Gandhi was regarded as a mahatma, or "great heart"
- To inform the audience about the extensive scientific qualifications of modern midwives

Without a limited purpose, you will find, with any of these topics, that there's simply too much to say. Your purpose statement will be a strong decision- making tool about what to include in your speech.

Events

An event can be something that occurred only once, or an event that is repeated:

- The Olympics
- The Iditarod Dogsled Race
- The Industrial Revolution
- The discovery of the smallpox vaccine
- The Bikini Atoll atomic bomb tests
- The Bay of Pigs
- The Super Bowl
- The Academy Awards

Again, we find that any of these topics must be carefully narrowed in order to build a coherent speech. Failure to do so will result in a shallow speech. Here are ways to narrow the purpose:

- To describe how the Industrial Revolution affected the lives of ordinary people
- To inform the audience about the purpose of the Iditarod dogsled race

There are many ways to approach any of these and other topics, but again, you must emphasize an important dimension of the event. Otherwise, you run the risk of producing a timeline in which the main point gets lost. In a speech about an event, you may use a chronological order, but if you choose to do so, you can't include every detail. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the purpose of the Iditarod dogsled race.

Thesis or Central Idea: The annual Iditarod commemorates the heroism of Balto, the sled dog that led a dog team carrying medicine 1150 miles to save Nome from an outbreak of diphtheria.

Main Points:

1. Diphtheria broke out in a remote Alaskan town.
2. Dogsleds were the only transportation for getting medicine.
3. The Iditarod Trail was long, rugged, and under siege of severe weather. IV.Balto the dog knew where he was going, even when the musher did not.
4. The annual race commemorates Balto's heroism in saving the lives of the people of Nome.

In this example, you must explain the event. However, another way to approach the same event would describe it. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To describe the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Thesis or Central Idea: It's a long and dangerous race.

Main Points:

1. The 1150-mile, ten- to seventeen-day race goes through wilderness with widely spaced checkpoints for rest, first aid, and getting fresh dogs.
2. A musher, or dogsled driver, must be at least fourteen years old to endure the rigors of severe weather, exhaustion, and loneliness.
3. A musher is responsible for his or her own food, food for twelve to sixteen dogs, and for making sure they don't get lost.
4. Reaching the end of the race without getting lost, even in last place, is considered honorable and heroic.
5. The expense of participation is greater than the prize awarded to the winner.

By now you can see that there are various ways to approach a topic while avoiding an uninspiring timeline. In the example of the Iditarod race, you could alternatively frame it as an Alaskan tourism topic, or you could emphasize the enormous staff involved in first aid, search and rescue, dog care, trail maintenance, event coordination, financial management, and registration.

You've probably noticed that there are topics that could be appropriate in more than one category. For instance, the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helen's could be legitimately handled as an event or as a process. If you approach the eruption as an event, most of the information you include will focus on human responses and the consequences on humans and the landscape. If you approach the eruption as a process, you will be using visual aids and explanations to describe geological changes before and during the eruption. You might also approach this topic from the viewpoint of a person whose life was affected by the eruption. This should remind you that there are many ways to approach most topics, and because of that, your narrowing choices and your purpose will be the important foundation determining the structure of your informative speech.

Speech of Definition

A speech of definition deals with explaining a concept or term. Generally, it is laid out in a topical, temporal or chronological format.

Concepts

Concepts are abstract ideas that exist independent of whether they are observed or practiced. Concepts can include hypotheses and theories.

The glass ceiling	Ethnocentrism
Honor codes	Autism
Karma	Wellness
Bioethics	Bipolar Disorder

Here are a few examples of specific purposes developed from the examples:

- To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric
- To describe the Hindu concept of karma
- To distinguish the differences between the concepts of wellness and health
- To show the resources available in our local school system for children with autism
- To explain three of Dr. Stephen Suranovic's seven categories of fairness

Here is one possible example of a way to develop one of these topics:

Specific Purpose: To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric.

Thesis (Central Idea): There are benefits to being ethnocentric.

Main Points:

1. Ethnocentrism is the idea that one's own culture is superior to others.
2. Ethnocentrism strongly contributes to positive group identity.
3. Ethnocentrism facilitates the coordination of social activity.
4. Ethnocentrism contributes to a sense of safety within a group.
5. Ethnocentrism becomes harmful when it creates barriers.

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12.5: Developing Your Topic for the Audience

One issue to consider when preparing an informative speech is how best to present the information to enhance audience learning. Katherine Rowan suggests focusing on areas where your audience may experience confusion and using the likely sources of confusion as a guide for developing the content of your speech. Rowan identifies three sources of audience confusion: difficult concepts or language, difficult-to-envision structures or processes, and ideas that are difficult to understand because they are hard to believe. The following subsections will discuss each of these and will provide strategies for dealing with each of these sources of confusion.

Difficult Concepts or Language

Sometimes audiences may have difficulty understanding information because of the concepts or language used. For example, they may not understand what the term “organic food” means or how it differs from “all-natural” foods. If an audience is likely to experience confusion over a basic concept or term, Rowan suggests using an elucidating explanation composed of four parts. The purpose of such an explanation is to clarify the meaning and use of the concept by focusing on the essential features of the concept. The first part of an elucidating explanation is to provide a typical exemplar, or example that includes all the central features of the concept. If you are talking about what is fruit, an apple or orange would be a typical exemplar.

The second step Rowan suggests is to follow up the typical exemplar with a definition. Fruits might be defined as edible plant structures that contain the seeds of the plant. After providing a definition, you can move on to the third part of the elucidating explanation: providing a variety of examples and nonexamples. Here is where you might include less typical examples of fruit, such as avocados, squash, or tomatoes, and foods, such as rhubarb, which is often treated as a fruit but is not by definition. Fourth, Rowan suggests concluding by having the audience practice distinguishing examples from nonexamples. In this way, the audience leaves the speech with a clear understanding of the concept.

Difficult-to-Envision Processes or Structures

A second source of audience difficulty in understanding, according to Rowan, is a process or structure that is complex and difficult to envision. The blood circulation system in the body might be an example of a difficult-to-envision process. To address this type of audience confusion, Rowan suggests a quasi- scientific explanation, which starts by giving a big-picture perspective on the process. Presentation aids or analogies might be helpful in giving an overview of the process. For the circulatory system, you could show a video or diagram of the entire system or make an analogy to a pump. Then you can move to explaining relationships among the components of the process. Be sure when you explain relationships among components that you include transition and linking words like “leads to” and “because” so that your audience understands relationships between concepts. You may remember the childhood song describing the bones in the body with lines such as, “the hip bone’s connected to the thigh bone; the thigh bone’s connected to the knee bone.” Making the connections between components helps the audience to remember and better understand the process.

Difficult to Understand because It’s Hard to Believe

A third source of audience confusion, and perhaps the most difficult to address as a speaker, is an idea that’s difficult to understand because it’s hard to believe. This often happens when people have implicit, but erroneous, theories about how the world works. For example, the idea that science tries to disprove theories is difficult for some people to understand; after all, shouldn’t the purpose of science be to prove things? In such a case, Rowan suggests using a transformative explanation. A transformative explanation begins by discussing the audience’s implicit theory and showing why it is plausible. Then you move to showing how the implicit theory is limited and conclude by presenting the accepted explanation and why that explanation is better. In the case of scientists disproving theories, you might start by talking about what science has proven (e.g., the causes of malaria, the usefulness of penicillin in treating infection) and why focusing on science as proof is a plausible way of thinking. Then you might show how the science as proof theory is limited by providing examples of ideas that were accepted as “proven” but were later found to be false, such as the belief that diseases are caused by miasma, or “bad air”; or that bloodletting cures diseases by purging the body of “bad humors.” You can then conclude by showing how science is an enterprise designed to disprove theories and that all theories are accepted as tentative in light of existing knowledge. Rowan’s framework is helpful because it keeps our focus on the most important element of an informative speech: increasing audience understanding about a topic.

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12.6: Conclusion and Activities

Conclusion

A variety of different topic categories are available for informative speaking. One way to develop your topic is to focus on areas that might be confusing to the audience. If the audience is likely to be confused about language or a concept, an elucidating explanation might be helpful. If a process is complex, a quasi-scientific explanation may help. If the audience already has an erroneous implicit idea of how something works then a transformative explanation might be needed.

Review Questions and Activities

1. Choose a topic such as “American Education in the Twenty-First Century.” Write a new title for that speech for each of the following audiences: financial managers, first-year college students, parents of high school students, nuns employed in Roman Catholic schools, psychotherapists, and teamsters. Write a specific purpose for the speech for each of these audiences.
2. Think about three potential topics you could use for an informative speech. Identify where the audience might experience confusion with concepts, processes, or preexisting implicit theories. Select one of the topics and outline how you would develop the topic to address the audience’s potential confusion.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Critical Thinking and Reasoning

13.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand and explain the importance of critical thinking
- Identify the core skills associated with critical thinking
- Demonstrate the difference between deductive and inductive reasoning
- Construct a logically sound and well-reasoned argument
- Avoid the various fallacies that can arise through the misuse of logic
- Apply chapter concepts in final questions and activities

As we meander through our daily routines, we are surrounded by numerous messages and people trying to get our attention and convince us to do something. We sign into our e-mail accounts and are bombarded with sales pitches to help us get rich quick or promise to fix all of our embarrassing physical problems. We drive to school and see billboards touting tantalizing restaurants or pitching local political candidates. We converse with our friends and family about current events like the crazy car thief who tried to avoid the police by driving down train tracks right into an oncoming train. Throughout all of these exchanges, we must constantly strive to make sense of the messages and determine which are true and which are not true, which are probably and which are improbable, which are intended and which are unintended. When we do this we practice **critical thinking**. We evaluate the **arguments** presented and determine if their **logic** is sound or if they rely on **fallacies** to build their case. In this chapter you will learn how to use critical thinking in all areas of your life, including preparing and presenting speeches. You will also learn how to construct a logical argument that avoids the pitfalls of fallacious thinking.

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13.1: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking has been defined in numerous ways. At its most basic, we can think of critical thinking as active thinking in which we evaluate and analyze information in order to determine the best course of action. We will look at more expansive definitions of critical thinking and its components in the following pages.

Before we get there, though, let's consider a hypothetical example of critical thinking in action:

> *Shonda was researching information for her upcoming persuasive speech. Her goal with the speech was to persuade her classmates to drink a glass of red wine every day. Her argument revolved around the health benefits one can derive from the antioxidants found in red wine. Shonda found an article reporting the results of a study conducted by a Dr. Gray. According to Dr. Gray's study, drinking four or more glasses of wine a day will help reduce the chances of heart attack, increase levels of good cholesterol, and help in reducing unwanted fat. Without conducting further research, Shonda changed her speech to persuade her classmates to drink four or more glasses of red wine per day. She used Dr. Gray's study as her primary support. Shonda presented her speech in class to waves of applause and support from her classmates. She was shocked when, a few weeks later, she received a grade of "D". Shonda's teacher had also found Dr. Gray's study and learned it was sponsored by a multi-national distributor of wine. In fact, the study in question was published in a trade journal targeted to wine and alcohol retailers. If Shonda had taken a few extra minutes to critically examine the study, she may have been able to avoid the dreaded "D."*

Shonda's story is just one of many ways that critical thinking impacts our lives. Throughout this chapter we will consider the importance of critical thinking in all areas of communication, especially public speaking. We will first take a more in-depth look at what critical thinking is—and isn't.

Before we get too far into the specifics of what critical thinking is and how we can do it, it's important to clear up a common misconception. Even though the phrase critical thinking uses the word "critical," it is not a negative thing. Being critical is not the same thing as criticizing. When we criticize something, we point out the flaws and errors in it, exercising a negative value judgment on it. Our goal with criticizing is less about understanding than about negatively evaluating. It's important to remember that critical thinking is not just criticizing. While the process may involve examining flaws and errors, it is much more.

Critical Thinking Defined

Just what is critical thinking then? To help us understand, let's consider a common definition of critical thinking. The philosopher John Dewey, often considered the father of modern day critical thinking, defines critical thinking as:

> *"Active, persistent, careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1933).*

The first key component of Dewey's definition is that critical thinking is active. Critical thinking must be done by choice. As we continue to delve deeper into the various facets of critical thinking, we will learn how to engage as critical thinkers.

Probably one of the most concise and easiest to understand definitions is that offered by Barry Beyer: "Critical thinking… means making reasoned judgments" (1995). In other words, we don't just jump to a conclusion or a judgment. We rationalize and justify our conclusions. A second primary component of critical thinking, then, involves questioning. As critical thinkers, we need to question everything that confronts us. Equally important, we need to question ourselves and ask how our own biases or assumptions influence how we judge something.

In the following sections we will explore how to do critical thinking more in depth. As you read through this material, reflect back on Dewey's and Beyer's definitions of critical thinking.

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13.2: Logic and the Role of Arguments

Critical thinkers tend to exhibit certain traits that are common to them. These traits are summarized in the following table:

Table 13.2.1: Traits of Critical Thinking

Traits	Summary
Open-Mindedness	• Critical thinkers are open and receptive to all ideas and arguments, even those with which they may disagree. • Critical thinkers reserve judgment on a message until they have examined the claims, logic, reasoning, and evidence used. • Critical thinkers are fair-minded and understand that a message is not inherently wrong or flawed if it differs from their own thoughts. • Critical thinkers remain open to the possibility of changing their view on an issue when logic and evidence supports doing so.
Analytic Nature	• Critical thinkers are interested in understanding what is happening in a message. • Critical thinkers ask questions of the message, breaking it into its individual components and examining each in turn. • Critical thinkers dissect these components looking for sound logic and reasoning.
Systematic by Method	• Critical thinkers avoid jumping to conclusions. • Critical thinkers take the time to systematically examine a message. • Critical thinkers apply accepted criteria or conditions to their analyses.
Inquisitive	• Critical thinkers are curious by nature. • Critical thinkers ask questions of what is going on around them and in a message. • Critical thinkers want to know more and take action to learn more.
Judicious	• Critical thinkers are prudent in acting and making judgments. • Critical thinkers are sensible in their actions. That is, they don't just jump on the bandwagon of common thought because it looks good or everyone else is doing it.
Truth-Seeking Ethos	• Critical thinkers exercise an ethical foundation based in searching for the truth. • Critical thinkers understand that even the wisest people may be wrong at times.
Confident in Reasoning	• Critical thinkers have faith in the power of logic and sound reasoning. • Critical thinkers understand that it is in everyone's best interest to encourage and develop sound logic. • More importantly, critical thinkers value the power of letting others draw their own conclusions.

Recall that critical thinking is an active mode of thinking. Instead of just receiving messages and accepting them as is, we consider what they are saying. We ask if messages are well-supported. We determine if their logic is sound or slightly flawed. In other

words, we act on the messages before we take action based on them. When we enact critical thinking on a message, we engage a variety of skills including: listening, analysis, evaluation, inference and interpretation or explanation, and self-regulation.

Next, we will examine each of these skills and their role in critical thinking in greater detail. As you read through the explanation of and examples for each skill, think about how it works in conjunction with the others. It's important to note that while our discussion of the skills is presented in a linear manner, in practice our use of each skill is not so straightforward. We may exercise different skills simultaneously or jump forward and backward.

Without an open-minded mind, you can never be a great success.

~ Martha Stewart

Listening

Critical thinking requires that we consciously listen to messages. We must focus on what is being said – and not said. We must strive not to be distracted by other outside noises or the internal noise of our own preconceived ideas. Although we have already explored listening, the type of listening you do critically is worth further discussion.

Listening becomes especially difficult when the message contains highly charged information. Think about what happens when you try to discuss a controversial issue such as abortion. As the other person speaks, you may have every good intention of listening to the entire argument. However, when the person says something you feel strongly about you start formulating a counter-argument in your head. The end result is that both sides end up talking past each other without ever really listening to what the other says.

Analysis

Once we have listened to a message, we can begin to analyze it. In practice we often begin analyzing messages while still listening to them. When we analyze something, we consider it in greater detail, separating out the main components of the message. In a sense, we are acting like a surgeon on the message, carving out all of the different elements and laying them out for further consideration and possible action.

Let's return to Shonda's persuasive speech to see analysis in action. As part of the needs section of her speech, Shonda makes the following remarks:

> *Americans today are some of the unhealthiest people on Earth. It seems like not a week goes by without some news story relating how we are the fattest country in the world. In addition to being overweight, we suffer from a number of other health problems. When I was conducting research for my speech, I read somewhere that heart attacks are the number one killer of men and the number two killer of women. Think about that. My uncle had a heart attack and had to be rushed to the hospital. They hooked him up to a bunch of different machines to keep him alive. We all thought he was going to die. He's ok now, but he has to take a bunch of pills every day and eat a special diet. Plus he had to pay thousands of dollars in medical bills. Wouldn't you like to know how to prevent this from happening to you?*

If we were to analyze this part of Shonda's speech, we could begin by looking at the claims she makes. We could then look at the evidence she presents in support of these claims. Having parsed out the various elements, we are then ready to evaluate them and by extension the message as a whole.

Evaluation

When we evaluate something we continue the process of analysis by assessing the various claims and arguments for validity. One way we evaluate a message is to ask questions about what is being said and who is saying it. The following is a list of typical questions we may ask, along with an evaluation of the ideas in Shonda's speech.

Is the speaker credible?

Yes. While Shonda may not be an expert per se on the issue of health benefits related to wine, she has made herself a mini-expert through conducting research.

Does the statement ring true or false based on common sense?

It sounds kind of fishy. Four or more glasses of wine in one sitting doesn't seem right. In fact, it seems like it might be bordering on binge drinking.

Does the logic employed hold up to scrutiny?

Based on the little bit of Shonda's speech we see here, her logic does seem to be sound. As we will see later on, she actually commits a few fallacies.

What questions or objections are raised by the message?

In addition to the possibility of Shonda's proposal being binge drinking, it also raises the possibility of creating alcoholism or causing other long term health problems.

How will further information affect the message?

More information will probably contradict her claims. In fact, most medical research in this area contradicts the claim that drinking 4 or more glasses of wine a day is a good thing.

Will further information strengthen or weaken the claims?

Most likely Shonda's claims will be weakened.

What questions or objections are raised by the claims?

In addition to the objections we've already discussed, there is also the problem of the credibility of Shonda's expert "doctor."

Table **13.2.2**: Analysis of Shonda's Speech

Claims	Evidence
• Americans are unhealthy • American is the fattest country • Americans suffer from many health problems • Heart attacks are the number one killer of men • Heart attacks are the number-two killer of women	• Some news stories about America as the fattest country • Research about heart attacks • Story of her uncle's heart attack

Inference and Interpretation or Explanation "Imply" or "Infer"?

For two relatively small words, imply and infer seem to generate an inordinately large amount of confusion. Understanding the difference between the two and knowing when to use the right one is not only a useful skill, but it also makes you sound a lot smarter! Let's begin with imply. Imply means to suggest or convey an idea. A speaker or a piece of writing implies things. For example, in Shonda's speech, she implies it is better to drink more red wine. In other words, she never directly says that we need to drink more red wine, but she clearly hints at it when she suggests that drinking four or more glasses a day will provide us with health benefits.

Now let's consider infer. Infer means that something in a speaker's words or a piece of writing helps us to draw a conclusion outside of his/her words. We infer a conclusion. Returning to Shonda's speech, we can infer she would want us to drink more red wine rather than less. She never comes right out and says this. However, by considering her overall message, we can draw this conclusion.

Another way to think of the difference between imply and infer is: A speaker (or writer for that matter) implies. The audience infers. Therefore, it would be incorrect to say that Shonda infers we should drink more rather than less wine. She implies this. To help you differentiate between the two, remember that an inference is something that comes from outside the spoken or written text.

The next step in critically examining a message is to interpret or explain the conclusions that we draw from it. At this phase we consider the evidence and the claims together. In effect we are reassembling the components that we parsed out during analysis. We are continuing our evaluation by looking at the evidence, alternatives, and possible conclusions.

Before we draw any inferences or attempt any explanations, we should look at the evidence provided. When we consider evidence we must first determine what, if any, kind of support is provided. Of the evidence we then ask:

1. Is the evidence sound?
2. Does the evidence say what the speaker says it does?
3. Does contradictory evidence exist?

4. Is the evidence from a valid credible source?

Even though these are set up as yes or no questions, you'll probably find in practice that your answers are a bit more complex. For example, let's say you're writing a speech on why we should wear our seatbelts at all times while driving. You've researched the topic and found solid, credible information setting forth the numerous reasons why wearing a seatbelt can help save your life and decrease the number of injuries experienced during a motor vehicle accident. Certainly, there exists contradictory evidence arguing seat belts can cause more injuries. For example, if you're in an accident where your car is partially submerged in water, wearing a seatbelt may impede your ability to quickly exit the vehicle. Does the fact that this evidence exists negate your claims? Probably not, but you need to be thorough in evaluating and considering how you use your evidence.

A man who does not think for himself does not think at all.

~ Oscar Wilde

Self-Regulation

The final step in critically examining a message is actually a skill we should exercise throughout the entire process. With self-regulation, we consider our pre-existing thoughts on the subject and any biases we may have. We examine how what we think on an issue may have influenced the way we understand (or think we understand) the message and any conclusions we have drawn. Just as contradictory evidence doesn't automatically negate our claims or invalidate our arguments, our biases don't necessarily make our conclusions wrong. The goal of practicing self-regulation is not to disavow or deny our opinions. The goal is to create distance between our opinions and the messages we evaluate.

The Value of Critical Thinking

In public speaking, the value of being a critical thinker cannot be overstressed. Critical thinking helps us to determine the truth or validity of arguments. However, it also helps us to formulate strong arguments for our speeches. Exercising critical thinking at all steps of the speech writing and delivering process can help us avoid situations like Shonda found herself in. Critical thinking is not a magical panacea that will make us super speakers. However, it is another tool that we can add to our speech toolbox.

As we will learn in the following pages, we construct arguments based on logic. Understanding the ways logic can be used and possibly misused is a vital skill. To help stress the importance of it, the Foundation for Critical Thinking has set forth universal standards of reasoning.

Universal Standards of Reasoning

- All reasoning has a purpose.
- All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some question, to solve some problem.
- All reasoning is based on assumptions.
- All reasoning is done from some point of view.
- All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence.
- All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas.
- All reasoning contains inferences or interpretations by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data.
- All reasoning leads somewhere or has implications and consequences.

Logic and the Role of Arguments

We use logic every day. Even if we have never formally studied logical reasoning and fallacies, we can often tell when a person's statement doesn't sound right. Think about the claims we see in many advertisements today—Buy product X, and you will be beautiful/thin/happy or have the carefree life depicted in the advertisement. With very little critical thought, we know intuitively that simply buying a product will not magically change our lives. Even if we can't identify the specific fallacy at work in the argument (non causa in this case), we know there is some flaw in the argument.

By studying logic and fallacies we can learn to formulate stronger and more cohesive arguments, avoiding problems like that mentioned above. The study of logic has a long history. We can trace the roots of modern logical study back to Aristotle in ancient Greece. Aristotle's simple definition of logic as the means by which we come to know anything still provides a concise

understanding of logic. Of the classical pillars of a core liberal arts education of logic, grammar, and rhetoric, logic has developed as a fairly independent branch of philosophical studies. We use logic everyday when we construct statements, argue our point of view, and in myriad other ways. Understanding how logic is used will help us communicate more efficiently and effectively.

Defining Arguments

When we think and speak logically, we pull together statements that combine reasoning with evidence to support an assertion, arguments. A logical argument should not be confused with the type of argument you have with your sister or brother or any other person. When you argue with your sibling, you participate in a conflict in which you disagree about something. You may, however, use a logical argument in the midst of the argument with your sibling. Consider this example:

> *Brother and sister, Sydney and Harrison are arguing about whose turn it is to clean their bathroom. Harrison tells Sydney she should do it because she is a girl and girls are better at cleaning. Sydney responds that being a girl has nothing to do with whose turn it is. She reminds Harrison that according to their work chart, they are responsible for cleaning the bathroom on alternate weeks. She tells him she cleaned the bathroom last week; therefore, it is his turn this week. Harrison, still unconvinced, refuses to take responsibility for the chore. Sydney then points to the work chart and shows him where it specifically says it is his turn this week. Defeated, Harrison digs out the cleaning supplies.*

Throughout their bathroom argument, both Harrison and Sydney use logical arguments to advance their point. You may ask why Sydney is successful and Harrison is not. This is a good question. Let's think critically about each of their arguments to see why one fails and one succeeds.

Let's start with Harrison's argument. We can summarize it into three points:

1. Girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys.
2. Sydney is a girl.
3. Therefore, Sydney should clean the bathroom.

Harrison's argument here is a form of **deductive reasoning**, specifically a syllogism. We will consider **syllogisms** in a few minutes. For our purposes here, let's just focus on why Harrison's argument fails to persuade Sydney. Assuming for the moment that we agree with Harrison's first two premises, then it would seem that his argument makes sense. We know that Sydney is a girl, so the second premise is true. This leaves the first premise that girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys. This is the exact point where Harrison's argument goes astray. The only way his entire argument will work is if we agree with the assumption girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys.

Let's now look at Sydney's argument and why it works. Her argument can be summarized as follows:

1. The bathroom responsibilities alternate weekly according to the work chart.
2. Sydney cleaned the bathroom last week.
3. The chart indicates it is Harrison's turn to clean the bathroom this week.
4. Therefore, Harrison should clean the bathroom.

Sydney's argument here is a form of **inductive reasoning**. We will look at inductive reasoning in depth below. For now, let's look at why Sydney's argument succeeds where Harrison's fails. Unlike Harrison's argument, which rests on assumption for its truth claims, Sydney's argument rests on evidence. We can define evidence as anything used to support the validity of an assertion. Evidence includes: testimony, scientific findings, statistics, physical objects, and many others. Sydney uses two primary pieces of evidence: the work chart and her statement that she cleaned the bathroom last week. Because Harrison has no contradictory evidence, he can't logically refute Sydney's assertion and is therefore stuck with scrubbing the toilet.

Defining Deduction

Deductive reasoning refers to an argument in which the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusions. Think back to Harrison's argument for Sydney cleaning the bathroom. In order for his final claim to be valid, we must accept the truth of his claims that girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys. The key focus in deductive arguments is that it must be impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion to be false. The classic example is:

All men are mortal.

Socrates is a man.

Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

We can look at each of these statements individually and see each is true in its own right. It is virtually impossible for the first two propositions to be true and the conclusion to be false. Any argument which fails to meet this standard commits a logical error or fallacy. Even if we might accept the arguments as good and the conclusion as possible, the argument fails as a form of deductive reasoning.

Another way to think of deductive reasoning is to think of it as moving from a general premise to a specific premise. This form of deductive reasoning is called a syllogism. A syllogism need not have only three components to its argument, but it must have at least three. You can begin with a major premise, progress to your minor premise, and then to your conclusion. We have Aristotle to thank for identifying the syllogism and making the study of logic much easier. The focus on syllogisms dominated the field of philosophy for thousands of years. In fact, it wasn't until the early nineteenth century that we began to see the discussion of other types of logic and other forms of logical reasoning.

It is easy to fall prey to missteps in reasoning when we focus on syllogisms and deductive reasoning. Let's return to Harrison's argument and see what happens.

1. Girls are better at cleaning bathrooms.
2. Sydney is a girl.
3. Sydney should clean the bathroom.

Considered in this manner, it should be clear how the strength of the conclusion depends upon us accepting as true the first two statements. This need for truth sets up deductive reasoning as a very rigid form of reasoning. If either one of the first two premises isn't true, then the entire argument fails.

Defining Induction

Inductive reasoning is often thought of as the opposite of deductive reasoning; however, this approach is not wholly accurate. Inductive reasoning does move from the specific to the general. However, this fact alone does not make it the opposite of deductive reasoning. An argument which fails in its deductive reasoning may still stand inductively.

Unlike deductive reasoning, there is no standard format inductive arguments must take, making them more flexible. We can define an inductive argument as one in which the truth of its propositions lends support to the conclusion. The difference here in deduction is the truth of the propositions establishes with absolute certainty the truth of the conclusion. When we analyze an inductive argument, we do not focus on the truth of its premises. Instead we analyze inductive arguments for their strength or soundness.

Another significant difference between deduction and induction is inductive arguments do not have a standard format. Let's return to Sydney's argument to see how induction develops in action:

1. Bathroom cleaning responsibilities alternate weekly according to the work chart.
2. Sydney cleaned the bathroom last week.
3. The chart indicates it is Harrison's turn to clean the bathroom this week.
4. Therefore, Harrison should clean the bathroom.

What Sydney does here is build to her conclusion that Harrison should clean the bathroom. She begins by stating the general house rule of alternate weeks for cleaning. She then adds in evidence before concluding her argument. While her argument is strong, we don't know if it is true. There could be other factors Sydney has left out. Sydney may have agreed to take Harrison's week of bathroom cleaning in exchange for him doing another one of her chores. Or there may be some extenuating circumstances preventing Harrison from bathroom cleaning this week.

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13.3: Understanding Fallacies

When we form arguments or examine others' arguments, we need to be cognizant of possible fallacies. A **fallacy** can be defined as a flaw or error in reasoning. At its most basic, a logical fallacy refers to a defect in the reasoning of an argument that causes the conclusion(s) to be invalid, unsound, or weak. The existence of a fallacy in a deductive argument makes the entire argument invalid. The existence of a fallacy in an inductive argument weakens the argument but does not invalidate it.

It is important to study fallacies so you can avoid them in the arguments you make. Studying fallacies also provides you with a foundation for evaluating and critiquing other arguments as well. Once you start studying and thinking about fallacies, you'll find they are everywhere. You could say that we live in a fallacious world!

A fallacy exists because of an error in the structure of the argument. In other words, the conclusion doesn't follow from the premises. Fallacies are specific types of non sequiturs, or arguments in which the conclusions do not follow from the premises. Other fallacies occur because of an error in reasoning. These are identified through examining the structure of the argument, through analysis of the content of the premises. These will become clear as you examine different types of fallacies.

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13.4: Types of Fallacies

Bad Reasons Fallacy (Argumentum ad Logicam)

In this fallacy, the conclusion is assumed to be bad because the arguments are bad. In practice, a premise of the argument is bad and therefore the conclusion is bad or invalid. This fallacy is seen often in debate or argumentation. We summarize the fallacy as: He gave bad reasons for his argument; therefore, his argument is bad. Consider the following claim:

The new employee is too quiet and has no sense of style. We should fire him.

The problem here should be obvious. To be a good employee does not require a certain look or the ability to put together interesting outfits. (Just look around your campus or workplace and you'll probably see how true this is.) As such, the reasons for concluding the new faculty member should be fired are bad. We commit a fallacy if the conclusion to fire him is also bad or wrong. While the given reasons don't necessarily support the conclusion, there may be others that do.

Fallacy of Quantitative Logic

Fallacies of quantitative logic revolve around the grammatical structure of the proposition. The focus is on the use of some sort of quantifying word such as "all" or "some." Consider this example:

All philosophers are wise.

We can show the flaw in this statement by simply finding a counter-example. And since the fact of being wise is abstract, how do we truly know if one is wise or not? Consider how the statement changes with the use of a different quantifier:

Some philosophers are wise.

This statement is stronger because it allows for the possibility there are counter- examples. However, the error arises from the fact that it is not a known quantity. We must infer from the statement that some philosophers are not wise.

Let's look at another example:

All conservatives are Republicans. Therefore, all Republicans are conservatives.

OR

All liberals are Democrats. Therefore, all Democrats are liberal.

Without thinking too hard you can probably think of one counter-example.

Hasty Generalization Fallacy

A hasty generalization fallacy occurs when reaching a conclusion without any, or little, evidence to back up the argument. I recently celebrated an event at a local restaurant that is known for its exceptional food. That night I got a severe case of food poisoning. If I told all of my friends not to eat at that restaurant because they would get food poisoning, I am guilty of a hasty generalization.

Ad Hominem Fallacy

The ad hominem fallacy occurs when we shift our focus from the premises and conclusions of the argument and focus instead on the individual making the argument. An easy way to remember this fallacy is to think of it as the personal attack fallacy. This type of fallacy is often used in political campaigns where candidates focus on the personal aspects of a candidate rather than his or her qualifications.

It is the weak form of arguing that many of us employed on our elementary school playgrounds such as this exchange:

> ***Bill: I think we should go back to class now.***
>
> ***Jane: I don't think we need to worry about it.***
>
> ***Bill: Well, the bell rang a few minutes ago. We're going to be late.***
>
> ***Jane: Well, you're a big jerk and don't know anything, so we don't have to go back to class.***

If we examine this exchange we can see that Bill's arguments are sound and supported by what appears to be good evidence. However, Jane ignores these and focuses on Bill's supposed character – he's a big jerk. The fallacy happens when we connect the truth of a proposition to the person asserting it.

Appeal to Authority Fallacy

When we appeal to authority we claim the truth of a proposition is guaranteed because of the opinion of a famous person. Appeals to authority look like this:

Authority figure X says Y. Therefore, Y is true.

We see this fallacy in play regularly in commercials or other advertisements featuring a doctor, lawyer, or other professional. Think about, for example, ads for the latest weight loss supplement. A doctor will discuss the science of the supplement. At times she will mention that she used the supplement and successfully lost weight. Even though we do learn something about the specifics of the supplement, the focus is on the doctor and her implied authoritative knowledge. We are to infer that the supplement will work because the doctor says it will work.

The fallacy in this type of reasoning occurs when we confuse the truth of the proposition with the person stating it. Instead of considering the strength of the argument and any evidence associated with it, we focus solely on the individual.

Begging the Question Fallacy

A begging the question fallacy is a form of circular reasoning that occurs when the conclusion of the argument is used as one of the premises of the argument. Arguments composed in this way will only be considered sound or strong by those who already accept their conclusion.

> ***Dilbert: And we know mass creates gravity because more dense planets have more gravity.***
>
> ***Dogbert: How do we know which planets are more dense?***
>
> ***Dilbert: They have more gravity.***

To see how begging the question develops as a fallacy, let's turn to standard arguments in the abortion debate. One of the common arguments made by those who oppose legalized abortion is the following:

Murder is morally wrong. Abortion is murder. Therefore, abortion is morally wrong.

Most people would agree with the first premise that murder is morally wrong. The problem, then rests in the second premise. Not all individuals would agree that abortion is murder. However, as presented, the premise creates a presumption it is valid in all cases.

Those who advocate for legalized abortion are not immune from this fallacy. One of their standard arguments is:

The Constitution guarantees Americans the right to control their bodies. Abortion is a choice affecting women's bodies. Therefore, abortion is a constitutional right.

Like the previous example, the second premise generates a potential stopping point. While the choice to have or not have an abortion does clearly impact a woman's body, many individuals would argue this impact is not a deciding issue.

Either-Or Fallacy

The thrust of the fallacy occurs when we are only given the choice between two possible alternatives, when in fact more than two exist. It may be looked at as a false dilemma.

Returning to the abortion debates, we can see a form of this fallacy in play by simply looking at the way each side refers to itself. Those who oppose legalized abortion are Pro-Life. The implication here is that if you are for abortion then you are against life. The fallacy in this case is easy to figure out – there are many facets of life, not just abortion. Those who favor legalized abortion are Pro-Choice. The implication here is that if you are against abortion, then you are against choices. Again, the reasoning is faulty.

There is no black-and-white situation. It's all part of life. Highs, lows, middles.

~ Van Morrison

False Cause Fallacy

Sometimes called a Questionable Cause fallacy, this occurs when there exists a flawed causal connection between events. The fallacy is not just a bad inference about connection between cause and effect, but one that violates the cannons of reasoning about causation. We see two primary types of this fallacy.

Accidental or coincidental connection occurs when we assume a connection where one might or might not exist. We say event C caused event E when we have no clear proof. Here's an example:

Yesterday Jen went out in the rain and got soaked. The next day she was in bed with the flu. Therefore, the rain caused her to get sick.

Most of us probably grew up hearing statements like this without ever realizing we were being exposed to a logical fallacy in action. Flu is caused by exposure to a virus, not to bad weather.

The other type of causal fallacy occurs with a general causation between types of events. For example, we know that drinking excessive amounts of alcohol leads to alcoholism and cirrhosis of the liver. However, not every individual who drinks excessively develops either of these diseases. In other words, there is a possibility that the disease will occur as a result of excessive drinking, but it is not an absolute.

Red Herring Fallacy

This fallacy occurs when we introduce an irrelevant issue into the argument. The phrase "red herring" comes from the supposed fox hunting practice of dragging a dried smoke herring across the trail so as to throw off the hound from the scent. In logical reasoning, the red herring fallacy works in much the same way. No, this doesn't mean you make the argument while smelling like an old fish. What it does mean is that we attempt to distract the audience by introducing some irrelevant point, such as this:

Each year thousands of people die in car accidents across the country. Why should we worry about endangered animals?

This argument is trying to get us to focus on dead people instead of animals. While car accidents and the deaths resulting from them are a serious issue, this fact does not lessen the importance of worrying about endangered animals. The two issues are not equated with each other.

Slippery Slope Fallacy

This fallacy occurs when we assume one action will initiate a chain of events culminating in an undesirable event later. It makes it seem like the final event, the bottom of the slope, is an inevitability. Arguments falling prey to the slippery slope fallacy ignore the fact there are probably a number of other things that can happen between the initial event and the bottom of the slope. We hear examples of the slippery slope fallacy all around us:

If we teach sex education in school, then students will have more sex. If students have more sex, we will have a rash of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Students will be forced to drop out of school and will never have the chance to succeed in life.

Clearly, just learning about sex doesn't automatically mean that you will engage in sex. Even more unlikely is the fact that merely learning about sex will force you to drop out of school.

Strawman Fallacy

This fallacy occurs when a speaker appears to refute the argument that is presented, but in reality the speaker refutes an argument that was not brought up. The best strawman arguments will argue the new point to a conclusion that appears solid; however, because their point is not the original point, it is still a fallacy.

Examples of the strawman fallacy are everywhere and can appear to be quite persuasive:

President Obama cannot truly have American interests in mind because he's not truly American but Muslim.

Statements similar to this were quite prevalent during the 2008 Presidential election and still appear on occasion. The assumption here is that if a person follows Islam and identifies as Muslim they clearly can't be American or interested in America. While there

are many potential flaws in this argument as presented, for our purpose the most obvious is that there are many Americans who are Muslim and who are quite interested and concerned about America.

False Analogy Fallacy

When we use analogies in our reasoning, we are comparing things. A fallacy of weak analogy occurs when there exists a poor connection between examples. Structurally, the fallacy looks like this:

> *A and B are similar.*
>
> *A has characteristic X. Therefore, B has characteristic X.*

This fallacy often occurs when we try to compare two things that on the surface appear similar. For example:

Humans and animals are both living, breathing beings. Humans have civil rights. Therefore, animals have civil rights.

The problem in this argument is that while humans and animals are alike in their living and breathing status, there are numerous other ways they differ. We commit a fallacy when we infer that based on this initial similarity, they are similar in all other ways as well.

Non-Sequitur

There are times when a conclusion does not follow from a statement. In this fallacy, an argument where the conclusion may be true or false, but there exists a disconnect within the argument itself. Some of these are so blatant we are left wondering how someone got to the conclusion they did. An example of this may be if I walk around my campus and say that we should not build our new multi-level parking structure because the elevators are not well cleaned inside of the campus. Clearly, my conclusion does not align with my argument.

Bandwagon Fallacy

If you have ever seen someone take action, or believe in something simply because everyone else did, you may have witnessed the Bandwagon Fallacy. During the most recent presidential election, social media sites showed an increase in hate speech and vitriolic language. Many people actually told “friends” they would delete them if they had voted for Trump. There was a wave of actions like this across the country. Did people truly want to unfriend everyone that they knew voted for Trump, or did they jump on the bandwagon?

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13.5: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined what critical thinking is and how it involves more than simply being critical. Understanding critical thinking helps in formulating and studying arguments. We see arguments every day in advertising, use arguments to persuade others, and we use them to benefit us. The overview of fallacies showed not all arguments are valid or even logical. Always critically think and examine any argument you confront, and remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is a fallacious argument.We practice critical thinking on a daily basis, often without any extra effort. Now that you know a bit more about how to do these things better, you should find that you can put together more persuasive arguments that avoid the pitfalls of fallacious thinking. More importantly, when you hear a statement such as, “You should drink at least four glasses of wine per day,” you’ll know that something isn’t right. And if you do hear a statement like this, you will be prepared to think critically about the statement, and will be in a position to make a more educated decision about the information.

Review Questions and Activities

Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between critical thinking and being critical. Why should we care?
2. List and discuss at least three ways that we use logic and argumentation in our daily lives.
3. If I say, “There is plenty of pasta, so you should have some more,” am I implying or inferring that you have not eaten enough?
4. What are fallacies and why is it important that we study them?
5. Name, define, and give examples of three different fallacies you have heard recently.

Activities

1. Throughout this chapter, we have turned to the abortion debates for examples. In order to practice critical thinking in action, spend some time researching the major arguments each side uses. Because the debates in this area are so complex, you might want to narrow your focus just a bit. For example, you could focus on the issue of minors consenting to abortion or abortion in the case of rape or other sexual assault. Compile a list of the most common arguments used by each side.Your list should include: any evidence used to support claims, a list of the major claims, any conclusions. Return to the core critical thinking skills and critically evaluate how each side forms arguments and uses evidence. How do your own biases and thoughts on the issue of abortion influence your evaluation? If you were an advisor, what advice would you give to each side to make their arguments stronger and more logically sound?
2. Your local newspaper’s Letters to the Editor section is a prime spot to find logical fallacies in action. For several days, read the Letters to the Editor and identify all of the fallacies you find. Keep a log of the specific fallacies you find, dividing them by type. Once you have compiled a variety of example, take a step back and evaluate them. Questions that you might want to ask include: what fallacy or fallacies seem to be most popular? Why do you think this is? Pick a few of the most egregious fallacies and rewrite them correcting for the flaw in reasoning.
3. Throughout this chapter, we have studied arguments by looking at their various parts. In practice, arguments occur as part of larger statements or speeches making their analysis a bit more complicated. To understand the ways arguments occur in daily life, visit the American Rhetoric page (www.americanrhetoric.com). On this page you will find a number of political, activist, movie, and other speeches. Pick one and try to identify the major arguments that are set forth. What are the main claims? What are the sub-claims? What sorts of evidence or support are provided? Are there any fallacies present in the argument? If you were a speech writer, what advice would you give to improve the argument?

Glossary

Ad Hominem Fallacy

A fallacy focus from the premises and conclusions of the argument and focus instead on the individual making the argument; a personal attack.

Analysis

The process of asking what is happening in a message through breaking it into its individual components and asking questions of each section.

Appeal to Authority

A fallacy that occurs when the truth of a proposition is thought to rest in the opinion of a famous other or authority.

Argument

Statements that combine reasoning with evidence to support an assertion.

Bad Reasons Fallacy

A fallacy that occurs when then we assume the conclusion of an argument to be bad because a part of the argument is bad.

Bandwagon Fallacy

Believing in something, or taking action simply because everyone else did.

Begging the Question

A fallacy that occurs when the conclusion of the argument is also used as one of the premises.

Critical Thinking

Active thinking in which we evaluate and analyze information in order to determine the best course of action.

Deduction

An argument in which the truth of the premises of the argument guarantee the truth of its conclusion.

Either-Or Fallacy

A fallacy that occurs when the audience is only given two choices.

Evaluation

The process of assessing the various claims and premises of an argument to determine their validity.

Evidence

Research, claims, or anything else that is used to support the validity of an assertion.

Fallacy

A flaw or error in reasoning.

Fallacy of Quantitative Logic

A fallacy that occurs when we misuse quantifying words such as “all” or “some.”

False Analogy

A fallacy that occurs when there exists a poor connection between two examples used in an argument.

False Cause

A fallacy that occurs when there exists a flawed connection between two events.

Hasty Generalization

A fallacy that occurs when reaching a conclusion without any, or little, evidence to back up the argument.

Imply

To suggest or convey an idea.

Induction

An argument in which the truth of its propositions lend support to the conclusion.

Infer

To draw a conclusion that rests outside the message.

Interpretation

Explaining and extrapolating the conclusions that we draw from a statement.

Non sequitur

An argument where the conclusion may be true or false, but in which there exists a disconnect within the argument itself.

Premise

A proposition (statement) supporting or helping to support a conclusion; an assumption that something is true.

Red Herring Fallacy

A fallacy that occurs when an irrelevant issue is introduced into the argument.

Self-regulation

The process of reflecting on our pre-existing thoughts and biases and how they may influence what we think about an assertion.

Slippery Slope Fallacy

A fallacy that occurs when we assume one action will initiate a chain of events that culminate in an undesirable event.

Strawman Fallacy

A fallacy that occurs when the actual argument appears to be refuted, but in reality a related point is addressed.

Syllogism

A form of deductive argument in which the conclusion is inferred from the premises. Most syllogisms contain a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Persuasive Speaking

14.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain what a persuasive speech is.
- Describe the functions of persuasive speeches.
- List the different types of persuasive speeches.
- Identify persuasive strategies that make a speech more effective.
- Apply the appropriate organizational pattern based on your persuasive goals.
- Distinguish between ethical and unethical forms of persuasion.
- Apply module concepts in final questions and activities.

At the gas pump, on eggs in the grocery store, in the examination room of your doctor's office, everywhere you go, advertisers are trying to persuade you to buy their product. This form of persuasion used to be reserved for magazines and television commercials, but now it is unavoidable. One marketing research firm estimates that a person living in a large city today sees approximately 5,000 ads per day (Story, 2007). It is easy to assume that our over- exposure to persuasion makes us immune to its effect, but research demonstrates that we are more susceptible than ever. In fact, advertisers have gotten even better at learning exactly the right times and places to reach us by studying different audiences and techniques (Aral & Walker, 2012; Blackman, 2009; Rodendaal, Lapierre, vanReijmersdal, Buijzen, 2011).

We also encounter persuasion in our daily interactions. Imagine you stop at a café on your way to school, and the barista persuades you to try something new. While enjoying your espresso, a salesperson attempts to persuade you to upgrade your home Internet package. Later, while walking across campus, you observe students who are enthusiastically inviting others to join their organizations. Within thirty minutes, you have encountered at least three instances of persuasion, and there were likely others emanating in the background unbeknownst to you. Amidst being persuaded, you were also actively persuading others. You may have tried to convince the Internet sales person to give you a better deal and an extended contract, and later persuaded a group of friends to enjoy a night on the town. Persuasion is everywhere.

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14.1: What is Persuasive Speaking?

You are used to experiencing persuasion in many forms, and may have an easy time identifying examples of persuasion, but can you explain how persuasion works? Osborn and Osborn define **persuasion** this way: “the art of convincing others to give favorable attention to our point of view” (Obsorn & Osborn, 1997). There are two components that make this definition a useful one. First, it acknowledges the artfulness, or skill, required to persuade others.

Whether you are challenged with convincing an auditorium of 500 that they should sell their cars and opt for a pedestrian lifestyle or with convincing your friends to eat pizza instead of hamburgers, persuasion does not normally just happen. Rather it is planned and executed in a thoughtful manner. Second, this definition delineates the ends of persuasion—to convince others to think favorably of our point of view. Persuasion “encompasses a wide range of communication activities, including advertising, marketing, sales, political campaigns, and interpersonal relations”(German, Gronbeck, Ehninger, Monroe, 2004). Because of its widespread utility, persuasion is a pervasive part of our everyday lives.

Although persuasion occurs in nearly every facet of our day-to- day lives, there are occasions when more formal acts of persuasion —persuasive speeches—are appropriate. **Persuasive speeches** “intend to influence the beliefs, attitudes, values, and acts of others” (O’Hair & Stewart, 1999). Unlike an informative speech, where the speaker is charged with making some information known to an audience, in a persuasive speech the speaker attempts to influence people to think or behave in a particular way. This art of convincing others is propelled by reasoned argument, the cornerstone of persuasive speeches. Reasoned arguments, which might consist of facts, statistics, personal testimonies, or narratives, are employed to motivate audiences to think or behave differently than before they heard the speech.

There are particular circumstances that warrant a persuasive approach. As O’Hair and Stewart point out, it makes sense to engage strategies of persuasion when your end goal is to influence any of these things—“beliefs, attitudes, values, and acts”—or to reinforce something that already exists. For instance, safe sex advocates often present messages of reinforcement to already safe sexual actors, reminding them that wearing condoms and asking for consent are solid practices with desirable outcomes. By the same token, safer sex advocates also routinely spread the message to populations who might be likely to engage in unsafe or nonconsensual sexual behavior.

In a nutshell, persuasive speeches must confront the complex challenge of influencing or reinforcing peoples’ beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions, all characteristics that may seem natural, ingrained, or unchangeable to an audience. Because of this, rhetors (or speakers) must motivate their audiences to think or behave differently by presenting reasoned arguments.

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14.2: Functions of Persuasive Speeches

So far, we have discussed the functions of persuasive speeches—to influence or reinforce—only peripherally as they relate to our working definition. Next, we turn to an in-depth discussion about how persuasive speeches function.

Speeches to Convince

Some persuasive speeches attempt to influence or reinforce particular beliefs, attitudes, or values. In these speeches, called **speeches to convince**, the speaker seeks to establish agreement about a particular topic. For instance, a climatologist who believes that global warming is caused by human behavior might try to convince an audience of government officials to adopt this belief. She might end her speech by saying, "In recent years, humans have been producing machines that expel CO_2 either in their production, their consumption, or in both. At the same time, the level of CO_2 in the atmosphere increased dramatically. The connection is clear to many of us that humans have caused this damage and that it is up to us to similarly intervene." Throughout her speech, the scientist would likely recite a number of statistics linking human productivity with global warming in her effort to convince the government officials that both the causes and solutions to the climatic changes were a distinctly human problem.

Speeches to Actuate

Other times, persuasive speeches attempt to influence or reinforce actions. **Speeches to actuate** are designed to motivate particular behaviors. Think of a time when you found yourself up at 2 a.m. watching infomercials. Someone on the television screen was trying very hard to sell you a $20 spatula that morphed into a spoon with the click of a button. The salesperson described its utility and innovation for your kitchen, and he described why it would be a good purchase for you—after all, how does a busy person like you have time to use two different utensils? "But wait," he would say, "there's more!" In case he had not already convinced you that you needed this kitchen tool, he ended his spiel with a final plea—an extra Spoonatula for free. In this infomercial, the salesperson attempted to convince you that you needed to buy the kitchen tool—it will save you time and money. Thus, not only was the commercial an attempt to convince you to change how you felt about spoons and spatulas, but also an effort to incite you to action—to actually purchase the Spoonatula. This illustrates a function of persuasive speeches, to motivate behavior.

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14.3: Types of Persuasive Speeches

Persuasive speeches revolve around propositions that can be defended through the use of data and reasoning. Persuasive propositions respond to one of three types of questions: questions of fact, questions of value, and questions of policy. These questions can help the speaker determine what forms of argument and reasoning are necessary to support a specific purpose statement.

Propositions of Fact

Questions of fact ask whether something "can potentially be verified as either true or false| (Herrick, 2011). These questions can seem very straightforward—something is or it is not—but in reality, the search for truth is a complex endeavor. Questions of fact rarely address simple issues such as, "is the sky blue?" They tend to deal with deep-seated controversies such as the existence of global warming, the cause of a major disaster, or someone's guilt or innocence in a court of law. To answer these questions, a **proposition of fact** may focus on whether or not something exists. For example, there is a debate over the prevalence of racial profiling, the practice of law enforcement officers targeting people for investigation and arrest based on skin color. On one hand, the American Civil Liberties Union advances the proposition: "Racial profiling continues to be a prevalent and egregious form of discrimination in the United States" (American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 2012). They verify this claim using data from government studies, crime statistics, and personal narratives. However, journalist Heather MacDonald (2003) proposes that studies confirming racial profiling are often based in "junk science"; in fact she says, "there's no credible evidence that racial profiling exists." To substantiate her proposition, MacDonald relies on a study of traffic stops on the New Jersey turnpike along with personal narratives, policy analysis, and testimony from a criminologist. The claim that racial profiling exists is either true or false, but there is evidence for and against both propositions; therefore no consensus exists.

While some propositions of fact deal with the existence of a particular phenomenon or the accuracy of a theory, others focus on causality. For example, the U.S. government appointed a commission to evaluate the causes of the nation's recent economic crisis. In their report the commission concluded by proposing that recklessness in the financial industry and failures on the part of government regulators caused the economic crisis. However, former Congressman Paul Ryan has proposed that Medicare is to blame, and the chief investment officer at JP Morgan has proposed that U.S. housing policy is the root cause of the problem(Angelides, 2011). Each of these three propositions of fact is backed by its own set of historical and economic analysis.

Propositions of fact may also be used to make predictions concerning what will happen in the future. In the summer of 2011, ten miles of a popular Southern California freeway were closed for an entire weekend. Motorists, news outlets, and government officials called the closure "Carmageddon" because they proposed there would be an "inevitable and likely epic traffic tie- up" (Kandel, 2011). As a result of the predictions motorists stayed off the roads and made alternative plans that weekend resulting in much lighter traffic than expected. The proposition may have been true, but the prediction was not fulfilled because people were persuaded to stay off the freeway. When advancing propositions of fact, you should focus on the evidence you can offer in support of your proposition. First, make sure that your speech contains sufficient evidence to back up your proposition. Next, take the time to interpret that evidence so that it makes sense to your audience. Last, emphasize the relationship between your evidence and your proposition as well as its relevance to the audience (Herrick, 2011).

Propositions of Value

Persuasive speakers may also be called to address questions of value, which call for a proposition judging the (relative) worth of something. These propositions make an evaluative claim regarding morality, aesthetics, wisdom, or desirability. For example, some vegetarians propose that eating meat is immoral because of the way that animals are slaughtered. Vegetarians may base this claim in a philosophy of utilitarianism or animal rights (DeGrazia, 2009).

Sometimes a **proposition of value** compares multiple options to determine which is best. Consumers call for these comparisons regularly to determine which products to buy. Car buyers may look to the most recent Car and Driver "10 Best Cars" list to determine their next purchase. In labeling a car one of the best on the market for a given year, Car and Driver says that the cars "don't have to be the newest, and they don't have to be expensive . . . They just have to meet our abundant needs while satisfying our every want" (Car and Driver, 2011).

Both the vegetarian and car examples offer standards for evaluating the proposition. Since propositions of value tend to be more subjective, speakers need to establish **evaluation criteria** by which the audience can judge and choose to align with their position. When advancing a proposition of value, offer a clear set of criteria, offer evidence for your evaluation, and apply the evidence to demonstrate that you have satisfied the evaluation criteria (Herrick, 2011).

The 2005 disagreement between family members over removing a woman's feeding tube after she had been in a coma for 15 years sparked a national debate over the value of life that highlights the importance of evaluation criteria. After years of failed medical treatments and rehabilitation attempts, Terri Schiavo's husband petitioned the court to remove her feeding tube, initiating a legal battle with her parents that went all the way to the President of the United States (Cerminara & Goodman, 2012). Opposing sides in the debate both claimed to value life. To support his proposition that his wife had a right to die, Mr. Schaivo applied the evaluation criteria of quality of life and argued that she would not want to continue to live in a vegetative state (Caplan, 2005). Ms. Schiavo's parents vehemently disagreed with his argument. They also claimed to value life and, with the support of religious groups, relied on the evaluation criteria of the sanctity of life to contend that she should be kept alive (Catholic Culture, 2005). Both sides gained widespread support based on people's agreement or disagreement with their evaluation criteria. Despite intervention on behalf of both state and federal legislators, the courts eventually ruled that Mr. Schiavo had the right to have his wife's feeding tube removed and allow her to die.

A policy is a temporary creed liable to be changed, but while it holds good, it has got to be pursued with apostolic zeal.

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Propositions of Policy

Although the Schiavo case was rooted in a question of value, the debate resulted in a question of policy. **Questions of policy** ask the speaker to advocate for an appropriate course of action. This form of persuasive speech is used every day in Congress to determine laws, but it is also used interpersonally to determine how we ought to behave. A proposition of policy may call for people to stop a particular behavior, or to start one. For example, some U.S. cities have started banning single use plastic bags in grocery stores. Long before official public policy on this issue was established, organizations such as The Surfrider Foundation and the Earth Resource Foundation advocated that people stop using these bags because of the damage plastic bags cause to marine life. In this case, local governments and private organizations attempted to persuade people to stop engaging in a damaging behavior—shopping with single use plastic bags. However, the organizations also attempted to persuade people to start a new behavior—shopping with reusable bags. Similarly, many restaurants have implemented a new policy of not providing straws to their customers, unless asked. Many of these straws are now environmentally friendly and no longer made of plastic. Today, students may deliver policy speeches which advocate for the use of silicone straws that can be purchased online and carried with you. These are speeches that call for true changes in policy.

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14.4: Choosing a Persuasive Speech Topic

In order to offer a persuasive speech, you must decide precisely what it is you want to talk about, to whom you will be speaking, and to what ends you hope the speech will lead. Persuasive speeches do not normally happen within a vacuum, even in a public speaking course where that might seem to be the case. In fact, most persuasive speeches serve as a response to larger circumstances — gas prices increase dramatically and drivers cannot afford to fill up their tanks; war veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can find little governmental assistance for the necessary treatments; an election is forthcoming and candidates need to secure votes. These are just a few times when a persuasive speech would make sense. A driver might try to persuade their employer to embrace telecommuting as a response to the high rate of gasoline. Veterans with PTSD might stage speeches to a national audience imploring them to advocate for better mental health care for people who have fought in wars. And candidates, of course, will give many speeches during a campaign that tease out the various reasons they, and not another candidate, should be elected. Appendix A (at the end of the chapter) offers a lengthier list of possible topics for persuasive speaking, but keep in mind the advice that Burnett offers in Chapter 8 (public speaking: the virtual text) regarding topic selection. The topics in Appendix A are written as propositions that can be defended. Some are propositions of fact, others are propositions of value, and yet others are propositions of policy.

Approaching Audiences

When choosing a topic for your persuasive speech, it is crucial to consider the composition of your audience. Because persuasive speeches are intended to influence or reinforce an audience's thoughts or behaviors, speakers must consider what and how the audience thinks, feels, and does. Your audience might be ambivalent about your topic, or they may be strongly opposed, in strong agreement, or somewhere along the spectrum. In persuasive speeches, it matters where they fall on this continuum. For instance, if you want to argue that abortion should be illegal and your audience is composed of pro-life advocates, your speech might seem like you are preaching to the choir. But if your audience is made up of staunch pro-choice activists, your speech would be raising a significant objection to a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and actions the audience was already committed to.

Decaro, Adams and Jefferis offer advice for carrying out a thorough audience analysis in the other chapter of this book. Some questions you might ask before giving a speech include, "Who is hosting the speech?" Often this can provide a great deal of information about who will be in the audience. Audience members at a National Rifle Association gathering probably do not need to be convinced that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—the right to keep and bear arms—is worth upholding. You should also ask, "Is the audience fairly heterogeneous?" In a public speaking class, you may be able to gauge that through your interactions with your fellow classmates before you make your way to the podium; but in other settings this may not be the case. If an organization is sponsoring or has invited you to speak, this is a question that can be directed to organizational staff with access to demographic information. Some **demographics** that may be useful as you craft your speech include age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, and political affiliation. Each of these characteristics is known to influence a listener's beliefs, attitudes, values, and actions.

Receptive Audiences

Persuasive speakers will not generally address an audience that already fully agrees with them and is behaving in the way they would like, because that audience no longer needs to be persuaded. However, you may find yourself in situations that allow you to appeal to a **receptive audience** which already knows something about your topic and is generally supportive of, or open to, the point you are trying to make. For example, parents are generally interested in keeping their children safe. If you seek to persuade them that they should work with their kids to prevent them from being taken advantage of on social networking sites, they are likely to welcome what you have to say. Although they are already convinced that it is important to keep their children safe, this audience may not yet be persuaded that they have the need or ability to keep their kids safe in an online environment. In order to persuade this receptive audience, you should first attempt to foster **identification** with them by highlighting things you have in common. If you are a parent you might say something like, "I have two children and one of my biggest concerns is making sure they are safe." If you are not a parent you might say, "one of the things I appreciate most about my parents is that I know they are always trying to keep me safe." With these statements, you not only relate to the audience, but also demonstrate that you share a common concern.

If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect.

~ Benjamin Franklin

Next, offer a clear statement of purpose and tell the audience what you would like them to do in response to your message. If the audience is already likely to agree with your point, they will be looking for ways to act on it. Offer practical steps that they can take. Even if the steps must be carried out later (i.e. the parents in our example may have to wait to get home and start talking with their child about social networking habits), give them a way to respond to the message immediately and show their support. In this case you may have them write down the first thing they will say to their child, or practice saying it to the person next to them. Having them act on your message before leaving reinforces their already favorable response to what you are asking (Beebe & Beebe 2003).

Neutral Audiences

Most of the groups that a persuasive speaker addresses are **neutral audiences**. These audiences are not passionate about the topic or speaker, often because they do not have enough information or because they are not aware that they should be concerned. Beebe & Beebe explain that the challenge in addressing a neutral audience is to foster their interest in your proposition (Beebe & Beebe 2003). They offer a few tips for cultivating interest in a neutral audience. Begin by gaining their attention. To do this you might offer a story or statistic that relates the topic directly to the dominant demographic in the audience. If you are trying to convince first-year college students to avoid credit card solicitors on campus you might start with something like, "I know those t-shirts the credit card vendors are handing out are stylish and, best of all, free!

But that t-shirt could cost you thousands of dollars before you even graduate." Rather than beginning with a diatribe on the evils of debt, which many of them may not yet have experienced, you relate to their desire for a free t-shirt and a common belief they are likely to share, that "free" should not translate to "expensive." If you cannot relate the topic directly to the audience, another approach is to relate the topic to someone they care about, like a family member or friend. Keep in mind that, while the receptive audience may be eager to respond immediately, the neutral audience may simply be more concerned about the topic or more inclined to consider the behavior change you are advocating (Beebe & Beebe 2003). In this case, consider offering resources for more information, or a few minor steps they can take when they are ready.

Hostile Audiences

Unfortunately, some audiences may be resistant or even hostile to your persuasive speech. A **hostile audience** may take issue with your topic or with you as a speaker. In this case, your primary goal is to persuade the audience to listen to what you have to say (Beebe & Beebe 2003). Once they are willing to listen, then you will have the ability to change their minds in the future. Later in this chapter we will address ways that you can foster a better relationship with the audience by building your ethos. However, if the audience is opposed to your proposition, there are a few steps that you can take to encourage them to at least hear you out. If the audience is not likely to agree with your proposition, wait until later in the speech to offer it. Opening with a clear statement of purpose, which a receptive audience welcomes, will make an unreceptive audience more hostile to your goals. For example, if you begin by telling business owners that you think they should pay workers more, they are likely to think of all the reasons that will threaten their livelihood rather than listening to your message. Instead, begin by highlighting issues on which you agree. You might open with a discussion of the challenges businesses face in attempting to retain quality workers and increase productivity.

I have spent many years of my life in opposition, and I rather like the role.

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Once you have identified areas of agreement, you can offer your proposition as a way of addressing your shared goals. To promote an increase in wages, you might explain that a study of more than 10,000 workers and managers in a variety of industries demonstrated that companies who pay their workers more were also more motivated to invest in new technology, enhance their management techniques, better train workers, and better deliver their services, all of which lead to higher productivity and increased profits (Applebaum &Berhardt, 2004). Focusing on areas of agreement will make the audience more receptive to your proposition, but they will still hold some reservations. Acknowledge those reservations and demonstrate that you have given them ample consideration. Cite credible evidence that supports your proposition in light of those reservations. Showing that you understand and respect their opposing position is the most important step toward encouraging a hostile audience to at least hear you out.

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14.5: Persuasive Strategies

Ethos

In addition to understanding how your audience feels about the topic you are addressing, you will need to take steps to help them see you as credible and interesting. The audience's perception of you as a speaker is influential in determining whether or not they will choose to accept your proposition. Aristotle called this element of the speech **ethos**, "a Greek word that is closely related to our terms ethical and ethnic" (Campbell & Huxman, 2009). He taught speakers to establish credibility with the audience by appearing to have good moral character, common sense, and concern for the audience's well-being (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Campbell and Huxman (2009) explain that ethos is not about conveying that you, as an individual, are a good person. It is about "mirror[ing] the characteristics idealized by [the] culture or group" (ethnic), and demonstrating that you make good moral choices with regard to your relationship within the group (ethics).

While there are many things speakers can do to build their ethos throughout the speech, "assessments of ethos often reflect superficial first impressions," and these first impressions linger long after the speech has concluded (Zarefsky, 2005). This means that what you wear and how you behave, even before opening your mouth, can go far in shaping your ethos. Be sure to dress appropriately for the occasion and setting in which you speak. Also work to appear confident, but not arrogant, and be sure to maintain enthusiasm about your topic throughout the speech. Give great attention to the crafting of your opening sentences because they will set the tone for what your audience should expect of your personality as you proceed.

I covered two presidents, LBJ and Nixon, who could no longer convince, persuade, or govern, once people had decided they had no credibility; but we seem to be more tolerant now of what I think we should not tolerate.

~ Helen Thomas

Logos

Another way to enhance your ethos, and your chances of persuading the audience, is to use sound arguments. In a persuasive speech, the **argument** will focus on the reasons for supporting your specific purpose statement. This argumentative approach is what Aristotle referred to as **logos**, or the logical means of proving an argument (Braet, 1992).

When offering an argument you begin by making an assertion that requires a logical leap based on the available evidence (Campbell & Huxman 2009). One of the most popular ways of understanding how this process works was developed by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin (Herrick, 2011). Toulmin explained that basic arguments tend to share three common elements: claim, data, and warrant. The **claim** is an assertion that you want the audience to accept. **Data** refers to the preliminary evidence on which the claim is based. For example, if I saw large gray clouds in the sky, I might make the claim that "it is going to rain today." The gray clouds (data) are linked to rain (claim) by the **warrant**, an often unstated general connection, that large gray clouds tend to produce rain. The warrant is a connector that, if stated, would likely begin with "since" or "because." In our rain example, if we explicitly stated all three elements, the argument would go something like this: There are large gray clouds in the sky today (data). Since large gray clouds tend to produce rain (warrant), it is going to rain today (claim). However, in our regular encounters with argumentation, we tend to only offer the claim and (occasionally) the warrant.

To strengthen the basic argument, you will need backing for the claim. Backing provides foundational support for the claim (Herrick, 2011) by offering examples, statistics, testimony, or other information which further substantiates the argument. To substantiate the rain argument we have just considered, you could explain that the color of a cloud is determined by how much light the water in the cloud is reflecting. A thin cloud has tiny drops of water and ice crystals which scatter light, making it appear white. Clouds appear gray when they are filled with large water droplets which are less able to reflect light (Brill, 2003).

Table 14.5.1: The Toulmin Model

Basic Argument	
DATA	**CLAIM**
A hard time finding a place to park on campus	The school needs more parking spaces
WARRANT	
If I can't find a place to park, there must be a shortage of spaces	
Argument with Backing	
DATA	**CLAIM**
Obesity is a serious problem in the U.S.	U.S. Citizens should be encouraged to eat less processed foods.
WARRANT	
Processed foods contributed to obesity more than natural or unprocessed foods.	
BACKING	
"As a rule processed foods are more 'energy dense' than fresh foods: they contain less water and fiber but more added fat and sugar, which makes them both less filling and more fattening." (Pollan, 2007)	

The elements that Toulmin identified (see Table above) may be arranged in a variety of ways to make the most logical argument. As you reason through your argument you may proceed inductively, deductively, or causally, toward your claim (See chapter 13). To review, **inductive reasoning** moves from specific examples to a more general claim. For example, if you read online reviews of a restaurant chain called Walt's Wine & Dine and you noticed that someone reported feeling sick after eating at a Walt's, and another person reported that the Walt's they visited was understaffed, and another commented that the tables in the Walt's they ate at had crumbs left on them, you might conclude (or claim) that the restaurant chain is unsanitary. To test the validity of a general claim, Beebe and Beebe encourage speakers to consider whether there are "enough specific instances to support the conclusion," whether the specific instances are typical, and whether the instances are recent (Beebe & Beebe, 2003).

The opposite of inductive reasoning is **deductive reasoning**, moving from a general principle to a claim regarding a specific instance. In order to move from general to specific we tend to use **syllogisms**. If you recall, a syllogism begins with a major (or general) premise, then moves to a minor premise, then concludes with a specific claim. For example, if you know that all dogs bark (major premise), and your neighbor has a dog (minor premise), you could then conclude that your neighbor's dog barks (specific claim). To verify the accuracy of your specific claim, you must verify the truth and applicability of the major premise. What evidence do you have that all dogs bark? Is it possible that only most dogs bark? Next, you must also verify the accuracy of the minor premise. If the major premise is truly generalizable, and both premises are accurate, your specific claim should also be accurate.

Your reasoning may also proceed causally. **Causal reasoning** examines related events to determine which one caused the other. You may begin with a cause and attempt to determine its effect. For example, when the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, scientists explained that because many animals in the Gulf were nesting and reproducing at the time, the spill could wipe out "an entire generation of hundreds of species" (Donovan, 2010). Their argument reasoned that the spill (cause) would result in species loss (effect). Two years later, the causal reasoning might be reversed. If we were seeing species loss in the Gulf (effect), we could reason that it was a result of the oil spill (cause). Both of these claims rely on the evidence available at the time. To make the first claim, scientists not only offered evidence that animals were nesting and reproducing, but they also looked at the effects of an oil spill that occurred 21 years earlier in Alaska (Donovan, 2010). To make the second claim, scientists could examine dead animals washing up on the coast to determine whether their deaths were caused by oil.

Pathos

While we have focused heavily on logical reasoning, we must also recognize the strong role that emotions play in the persuasive process. Aristotle called this element of the speech **pathos**. Pathos draws on the emotions, sympathies, and prejudices of the

audience to appeal to their non-rational side (Beebe & Beebe, 2003; Reike, Sillars, Peterson, 2009). Human beings are constantly in some emotional state, which means that tapping into an audience's emotions can be vital to persuading them to accept your proposition (Dillard & Meijnders, 2002).

One of the most helpful strategies in appealing to your audience's emotions is to use clear examples that illustrate your point. Illustrations can be crafted verbally, nonverbally, or visually. To offer a verbal illustration, you could tell a compelling story. For example, when fundraising for breast cancer research, Nancy Brinker, creator of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, has plenty of compelling statistics and examples to offer. Yet, she regularly talks about her sister, explaining:

> *Susan G. Komen fought breast cancer with her heart, body and soul. Throughout her diagnosis, treatments, and endless days in the hospital, she spent her time thinking of ways to make life better for other women battling breast cancer instead of worrying about her own situation. That concern for others continued even as Susan neared the end of her fight.*

Brinker promised her sister that she would continue her fight against breast cancer. This story compels donors to join her fight.

Speakers can also tap into emotions using nonverbal behaviors to model the desired emotion for their audience. In the summer of 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives debated holding the Attorney General in contempt for refusing to release documents concerning a controversial gun-tracking operation. Arguing for a contempt vote, South Carolina Representative Trey Gowdy did not simply state his claim; instead he raised his voice, slowed his pace, and used hand motions to convey anger with what he perceived as deception on the part of the Attorney General (Gowdy, 2012). His use of volume, tone, pace, and hand gestures enhanced the message and built anger in his audience.

Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

In addition to verbal and nonverbal illustrations, visual imagery can enhance the emotional appeal of a message. For example, we have all heard about the dangers of drugs, and there are multiple campaigns that attempt to prevent people from even trying them. However, many young adults experiment with drugs under the assumption that they are immune from the negative effects if they only use the drug recreationally. To counter this assumption regarding methamphetamines, the Montana Meth project combines controversial statements with graphic images on billboards to evoke fear of the drug (see the Montana Meth Project for some disturbing examples). Young adults may have heard repeated warnings that meth is addictive and that it has the potential to cause sores, rotten teeth, and extreme weight loss, but Montana Meth Project's visual display is more compelling because it turns the audience's stomach, making the message memorable. This image, combined with the slogan, "not even once," conveys the persuasive point without the need for other forms of evidence and rational argument.

Appeals to fear, like those in the Montana Meth Project ads, have proven effective in motivating people to change a variety of behaviors. However, speakers must be careful with their use of this emotion. Fear appeals tend to be more effective when they appeal to a high-level fear, such as death, and they are more effective when offered by speakers with a high level of perceived credibility (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Fear appeals are also more persuasive when the speaker can convince the audience they have the ability to avert the threat. If audiences doubt their ability to avoid or minimize the threat, the appeal may backfire (Witte & Allen, 2000).

I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone.

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

All of Aristotle's strategies, ethos, logos, and pathos, are interdependent. The most persuasive speakers will combine these strategies to varying degrees based on their specific purpose and audience.

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14.6: Ethics of Persuasion

In addition to considering their topic and persuasive strategy, speakers must take care to ensure that their message is ethical. Persuasion is often confused with another kind of communication that has similar ends, but different methods—coercion. Like persuasion, **coercion** is a process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered. But in coercive acts, deceptive or harmful methods propel the intended changes, not reason. Strong and Cook contrasted the two: "persuasion uses argument to compel power to give way to reason while coercion uses force to compel reason to give way to power" (Strong & Cook, 1992). The "force" that Strong and Cook mention frequently manifests as promises for reward or punishment, but sometimes it arises as physical or emotional harm. Think of almost any international crime film you have seen, and you are likely to remember a scene where someone was compelled to out their compatriots by way of force. Jack Bauer, the protagonist in the American television series 24, became an infamous character by doing whatever it took to get captured criminals to talk. Although dramatic as an example, those scenes where someone is tortured in an effort to produce evidence offer a familiar reference when thinking about coercion. To avoid coercing an audience, speakers should use logical and emotional appeals responsibly.

Persuasive speakers must be careful to avoid using **fallacies** in their reasoning (See Chapter 13). There are some positive steps you can take to avoid these pitfalls of persuasive speaking and ensure that you are presenting your message in the most ethical manner. We have already discussed some of these, such as offering credible evidence for your arguments and showing concern for the audience's wellbeing. However, you should also offer a transparent goal for your speech. Even with a hostile audience, where you may wait until later in the speech to provide the specific purpose statement, you should be forthcoming about your specific purpose. In fact, be truthful with your audience throughout the speech.It is appropriate to use fictional scenarios to demonstrate your point, but tell the audience that is what you are doing. You can accomplish this by introducing fictional examples with the phrase, "hypothetically," or "imagine," to signal that you are making it up (Herrick, 2011). Additionally, be sure to offer a mix of logical and emotional appeals. Blending these strategies insures that you have evidence to back up emotional claims, and that you are sensitive to the audiences' emotional reactions to your logical claims. Attending to both aspects will help you be more ethical and more persuasive.

The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity.

~ Zig Ziglar

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14.7: Organizing Persuasive Messages

Once you have selected your topic, know who your audience is, and have settled on an end goal for your persuasive speech, you can begin drafting your speech. Outlines are organized according to the particular speech, and the following organizational patterns are used routinely for persuasive speeches.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence Pattern

Monroe's Motivated Sequence is an organizational pattern that attempts to convince the audience to respond to a need that is delineated in the speech. Five separate steps characterize the Motivated Sequence organization style:

1. The **attention step** should get the audience's attention as well as describe your goals and preview the speech.
2. The **need step** should provide a description of the problem as well as the consequences that may result if the problem goes unresolved. In this step, the speaker should also alert audience members to their role in mitigating the issue.
3. The **satisfaction step** is used to outline your solutions to the problems you have previously outlined as well as deal with any objections that may arise.
4. In the **visualization step**, audience members are asked to visualize what will happen if your solutions are implemented and what will happen if they do not come to fruition. Visualizations should be rich with detail.
5. The **action appeal step** should be used to make a direct appeal for action. In this step, you should describe precisely how the audience should react to your speech and how they should carry out these actions. As the final step, you should also offer a concluding comment.

The following example illustrates a Monroe's Motivated Sequence Pattern:

1. **Attention Step**
   A. When was the last time you saw a dog chained to a tree in a neighbor's yard, heard about a puppy mill in your town, or went into a pet store only to find dogs and cats for sale?
   B. I work with the Morris County Animal Protection Group, and I would like to share some ways in which you can help prevent these travesties.
   C. First, I will describe some of the major problems in Morris County, and then I will tell you how you can get involved.
2. **Need step**: Many animals in Morris County are abused and neglected.
   A. There are too many stray animals that are neither spayed nor neutered, resulting in an overabundance of cats and dogs.
   B. These animals often cannot find enough food to survive, and the local shelter cannot accommodate such high populations.
   C. The cost of local spay/neuter programs is too high for our agency to handle.
3. **Satisfaction step**: Raising $1 million for the Morris County Animal Protection Agency can effectively solve these problems.
   A. We could afford to spay or neuter most stray animals.
   B. Obtained animals could be fed and accommodated until a home can be secured for them.
   C. Additionally, we could subsidize spay/neuter costs for local citizens.
4. **Visualization step**: Imagine what we can do for our animals with this money.
   A. What will it be like if we can carry out these actions?
   B. What will it be like if we cannot do these things?
5. **Action appeal step**: Donate to the Morris County Animal Protection Agency.
   A. If you want to help protect the many struggling stray animals in Morris County, make a donation to our organization.
   B. Your donation will make a real difference in the lives of our animals.
   C. We cannot effect real change for the animals of our county without each and every one of you.

Problem-Solution Pattern

Sometimes it is necessary to share a problem and a solution with an audience. In cases like these, the **problem-solution speech** is an appropriate way to arrange the main points of a speech. Problems can exist at a local, state, national, or global level. It's important to reflect on what is of interest to you, but is also critical to engage your audience. Today, the nation has become much more aware of the problem of human sex trafficking. Although we have been aware that this has been a global problem for some

time, many communities are finally learning that this problem is occurring in their own backyards. Colleges and universities have become involved in the fight. Student clubs and organizations are getting involved and bringing awareness to this problem. Let's look at how you might organize a problem-solution speech centered on this problem.

Topic: Human Sex Trafficking

Thesis (Central Idea): Human sex trafficking is no longer a problem that exists on a global level, but it has hit us here where we live with at least two girls being kidnapped and sold into sex slavery each month.

Preview: First, I will define and explain the extent of the problem of sex trafficking within our community while examining the effects this has on the victims, and then I will offer possible solutions that will take the predators off the streets and allow the victims to get their lives back.

1. The problem of human sex trafficking is best understood by looking at the methods by which traffickers kidnap, or lure their victims into this life, how severe the problem has become, and how it impacts the victims.
2. The problem of human sex trafficking can be solved by changing the laws currently in place for prosecuting the pimps, working with local law enforcement and advocacy groups that help rescue and restore victims, and raising funds to help agencies and victims.

Of course, you would research the topic and develop your subpoints and sub-subpoints for each main point in this example.

Claim-to-Proof Pattern

A claim to proof approach basically provides the audience with a statement of reasons for the acceptance of a speech proposition. The policy is presented at the beginning of the speech, and in the preview the audience is told how many reasons they will be provided for the claim, but not what those reasons are. Why not? We will be using fact claims and value claims to support our overall policy, and some of the value claims can often be the source of a hotbed issue. If it is revealed before the speaker has had time to defend it, the audience can shut down and stop listening. So, do not reveal too much information until you get to that point in your speech. For example, I once had a student do s policy speech on handguns. We all hear stories on the news about someone who is killed by a handgun, but it is not everyday that it affects us directly, or that we know someone who is affected by it. My student had a cousin who was killed in a drive by shooting, and he was not even a member of a gang.

Here is how the set up for this speech would look:

Central Idea (Thesis) and Policy Claim: Handgun ownership in America continues to be a controversial subject, as some people feel it is their constitutional right to own handguns, however, I believe that private ownership of handguns ***should*** be illegal.

Preview: I will provide you with three reasons why handgun ownership should be illegal.

When presenting the reasons for accepting the claim, it is important to consider the use of **primacy-recency**. If the audience is against your claim, put your most important argument first. In this example, most of the class believed in gun ownership, so here is an example of how the first main point may be written to try and capture the audience quickly and hold their attention.

1. The first reason why private ownership of handguns should be illegal is because handguns are used to kill people at an alarming rates during the commission of a crime.
2. A second reason why private ownership of handguns should be illegal is because handguns can be easily found in homes, leading to the accidental and unnecessary death of children.

Moving forward, the speaker would select one or two other reasons to bring into the speech and support them with evidence. The decision on how many main points to have will depend on how much time you have, and how much research you are able to find on the topic. If this is a pattern your instructor allows, speak with him or her about sample outlines.

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14.8: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

The primary goal of persuasive speaking is to influence an audience's beliefs or behaviors so that they can make necessary or positive change. Persuasive speaking is a vital skill in all areas of life, whether it is a political candidate convincing voters to elect them, an employee convincing the boss to give them a promotion, or a sales person convincing a consumer to buy a product, individuals must understand what persuasion is and how it functions.

When formulating a persuasive speech, remember to determine the type of question you seek to answer so that you can decide whether to offer a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, or a proposition of policy. Weave the topic and the proposition together to create a compelling argument for your specific audience.

Knowing your audience can help when it comes to choosing the appropriate strategies for convincing them that you are a credible speaker. Once you have established your credibility, you can advance both logical and emotional appeals to move your audience toward the belief or behavior you hope they will adopt. As you weave these appeals together, be sure to offer the most ethical arguments by avoiding fallacies and supporting emotional appeals with relevant evidence.

Once you have compiled the most relevant arguments and emotional appeals for a given audience, take care to organize your message effectively. Give thought to your persuasive goals and determine whether they can be best achieved through the use of one of the patterns of organization explained in this chapter.

Module Activities

Review Questions

1. Early in the chapter the prevalence of persuasion was discussed. Think of an instance in which you knew you were being persuaded. What were you being persuaded to do? Was the persuader focused on changing your beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions? How do you know?
2. Imagine you are giving a persuasive speech on _____ [you fill in the blank]. Draft a specific purpose statement on this topic for a speech to convince. Next, draft a specific purpose statement on the same topic for a speech to actuate.
3. Draft a proposition of fact, proposition of value, and proposition of policy for one or more of the following topics:
    a. Shortening class time
    b. Pro-anorexia images on social networking sites
    c. Airline fees
4. You have been invited to speak to administrators about increasing alumni support for the school. What steps will you take to build your ethos for this audience? What logical appeals will you make? How will you appeal to their emotions?
5. Imagine you are giving a speech in which you hope to convince audience members to begin retirement planning while they are still in their twenties. Which of the organizational patterns described above best fits this topic? Why? Describe its advantages over the other organization styles for the specific purpose.

Activities

1. Using a recent newspaper, locate an example of a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, and a proposition of policy, and underline each one. Then, see if you can locate the data, warrant, and backing for each of these claims. If you cannot locate one or more of the elements, write your own based on the information provided in the article.

Glossary

Argument

A proposition supported by one or more reasons or pieces of evidence.

Backing

Foundational evidence which supports a claim, such as examples, statistics, or testimony.

Causal reasoning

Examines related events to determine which one caused the other.

Claim

The proposition you want the audience to accept.

Coercion

A process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered through deceptive or harmful methods.

Data

Preliminary evidence on which a claim is based.

Deductive Reasoning

The process of formulating an argument by moving from a general premise to a specific conclusion.

Demographics

Statistical information that reflects the make-up of a group, often including age, sex, ethnic or cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, and political affiliation.

Ethos

The audience's perception of a speaker's credibility and moral character.

Evaluation Criteria

A set of standards for judging the merit of a proposition.

Fallacies

Errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument.

Hostile Audience

An audience that is opposed to the speaker or to the persuasive proposition.

Identification

A connection that is fostered between the speaker and their audience by highlighting shared attributes or attitudes.

Inductive Reasoning

The process of formulating an argument by moving from specific instances to a generalization.

Logos

The logical means of proving an argument.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

An organizational pattern that attempts to convince the audience to respond to a need that is delineated in the speech through five sequential steps.

Neutral Audience

An audience that is neither open nor opposed to the persuasive proposition.

Pathos

The use of emotional appeals to persuade an audience.

Persuasion

The art of influencing or reinforcing people's beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions.

Persuasive Speeches

Speeches which aim to convince an audience to think or behave in a particular way.

Problem-Solution Speech

A speech in which problems and solutions are presented alongside one another with a clear link between a problem and its solution.

Proposition of Fact

An argument that seeks to establish whether something is true or false.

Proposition of Policy

An argument that seeks to establish an appropriate course of action.

Proposition of Value

An argument that seeks to establish the relative worth of something.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

An organization style that is designed to motivate the audience to take a particular action and is characterized by a five-step sequence: (1) attention, (2) need, (3) satisfaction, (4), visualization, and (5) action appeal.

Receptive Audience

An audience that is generally supportive of, or open to, the persuasive proposition.

Speeches to Actuate

Persuasive speeches which seek to change or motivate particular behaviors.

Speeches to Convince

Persuasive speeches which seek to establish agreement about a particular topic.

Status Quo

The current situation.

Syllogisms

Reasoning beginning with a major premise, then moving to a minor premise, before establishing a specific claim.

Warrant

The (often unstated) connection between data and claim.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Special Occasion Speaking

15.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Understand the purpose of entertaining speeches.
- Explain the four ingredients of a good entertaining speech.
- Identify the different types of ceremonial speaking.
- Describe the different types of inspirational speaking.
- Describe the purpose and types of motivational speeches.

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15.1: The Nature of Entertainment

Often the speaking opportunities life brings our way have nothing to do specifically with informing or persuading an audience; instead, we are asked to speak to entertain. Whether you are standing up to give an award speech or a toast, knowing how to deliver speeches in a variety of different contexts is the nature of entertaining speaking. In this chapter, we are going to explore what entertaining speeches are; we will also examine two specific types of entertaining speeches: special-occasion speeches and keynote speeches.

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15.2: Understanding Entertaining Speeches

In broad terms, an entertaining speech is a speech designed to captivate an audience's attention and regale or amuse them while delivering a message. Like more traditional informative or persuasive speeches, entertaining speeches should communicate a clear message, but the manner of speaking used in an entertaining speech is typically different.

Entertaining speeches are often delivered on special occasions (e.g., a toast at a wedding, an acceptance speech at an awards banquet, a motivational speech at a conference), which is why they are sometimes referred to as special-occasion speeches. However, they can also be given on more mundane occasions, where their purpose is primarily to amuse audience members or arouse the emotionally in some way. Remember, when we use the word "entertain," we are referring not just to humor but also to drama.

The goal of an entertaining speech is to stir an audience's emotions. Of all the types of speeches we come in contact with during our lives, the bulk of them will probably fall into the category of entertainment. If you spend just one evening watching a major awards show (e.g., the Grammys, the Tonys, the Oscars), you'll see dozens of acceptance speeches. While some of these acceptance speeches are good and others may be terrible, they all belong in the category of speaking to entertain.

Other speeches that fall into the entertaining category are designed to inspire or motivate an audience to do something. These are, however, different from a traditional persuasive speech. While entertaining speeches are often persuasive, we differentiate the two often based on the rhetorical situation itself. Maybe your school has hired a speaker to talk about his or her life story in an attempt to inspire the audience to try harder in school and reach for the best that life has to offer. You can imagine how this speech would be different from a traditional persuasive speech focusing on, say, the statistics related to scholastic achievement and success later in life.

Entertaining speeches are definitely very common, but that doesn't mean they don't require effort and preparation. A frequent trap is that people often think of entertaining speeches as corny. As a result, they don't prepare seriously but rather stand up to speak with the idea that they can "wing it" by acting silly and telling a few jokes. Instead of being entertaining, the speech falls flat. To help us think through how to be effective in delivering entertaining speeches, let's look at four key ingredients: preparation, adaptation to the occasion, adaptation to the audience, and mindfulness about the time.

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15.3: How to Effectively Deliver Special Occasion Speeches

Be Prepared

First, and foremost, the biggest mistake you can make when standing to deliver an entertaining speech is to underprepare or simply not prepare at all. We've stressed the need for preparation throughout this text, so just because you're giving a wedding toast or a eulogy doesn't mean you shouldn't think through the speech before you stand up and speak out. If the situation is impromptu, even jotting some basic notes on a napkin is better than not having any plan for what you are going to say.

Remember, when you get anxious, as it inevitably happens in front of an audience, your brain doesn't function as well as when you are having a relaxed conversation with friends. You often forget information. By writing down some simple notes, you'll be less likely to deliver a bad speech.

Be Adaptive to the Occasion

Not all content is appropriate for all occasions. If you are asked to deliver a speech commemorating the first anniversary of a school shooting, then obviously using humor and telling jokes wouldn't be appropriate. But some decisions about adapting to the occasion are less obvious. Consider the following examples:

- You are the maid of honor giving a toast at the wedding of your younger sister.
- You are receiving a Most Valuable Player award in your favorite sport.
- You are a sales representative speaking to a group of clients after a mistake has been discovered.
- You are a cancer survivor speaking at a high school student assembly.

How might you adapt your message and speaking style to successfully entertain these various audiences?

Remember that being a competent speaker is about being both personally effective and socially appropriate. Different occasions will call for different levels of social appropriateness. One of the biggest mistakes entertaining speakers can make is to deliver one generic speech to different groups without adapting the speech to the specific occasion.

Be Adaptive to Your Audience

Once again, we cannot stress the importance of audience adaptation enough in this text. Different audiences will respond differently to speech material, so the more you know about your audience the more likely you'll succeed in your speech. One of our coauthors was once at a conference for teachers of public speaking. The keynote speaker stood and delivered a speech on the importance of public speaking. While the speaker was good and funny, the speech really fell flat. The keynote speaker basically told the public speaking teachers that they should take public speaking courses because public speaking is important. Right speech, wrong audience!

Be Mindful of the Time

The last major consideration for delivering entertaining speeches successfully is to be mindful of your time. Different entertaining speech situations have their own conventions and rules with regard to time. Acceptance speeches and toasts, for example, should be relatively short (typically under five minutes). A speech of introduction should be extremely brief—just long enough to tell the audience what they need to know about the person being introduced in a style that prepares them to appreciate that person's remarks. In contrast, commencement speeches and speeches to commemorate events can run ten to twenty minutes in length.

It's also important to recognize that audiences on different occasions will expect speeches of various lengths. For example, although it's true that graduation commencement speakers generally speak for ten to twenty minutes, the closer that speaker heads toward twenty minutes the more fidgety the audience becomes. To hold the audience's attention and fulfill the goal of entertaining, a commencement speaker would do well to make the closing minutes of the speech the most engaging and inspiring portion of the speech. If you're not sure about the expected time frame for a speech, either ask the person who has invited you to speak or do some quick research to see what the average speech times in the given context tend to be.

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15.4: Types of Special Occasion Speeches

Many entertaining speeches fall under the category of special-occasion speeches. All the speeches in this category are given to mark the significance of particular events. Common events include weddings, bar mitzvahs, awards ceremonies, funerals, and political events. In each of these different occasions, speakers are asked to deliver speeches relating to the event.

Ceremonial Speaking

Speeches of Introduction

- A mini-speech given by the host of a ceremony that introduces another speaker and his or her speech.
- Find something that can grab the audience's attention and make them excited about hearing them.
- The body of your introductory speech should be devoted to telling the audience about the speaker's topic, why the speaker is qualified, and why the audience should listen (notice we now have our three body points).

Speeches of Presentation

- A brief speech given to accompany a prize or honor.
- First, you should explain what the award or honor is and why the presentation is important.
- Second, you can explain what the recipient has accomplished in order for the award to be bestowed.

Speeches of Acceptance

- A speech given by the recipient of a prize or honor.
- There are three typical components of a speech of acceptance: thank the givers of the award or honor, thank those who helped you achieve your goal, and put the award or honor into perspective.
- Tell the people listening to your speech why the award is meaningful to you.

Toasts

- A toast is a speech designed to congratulate, appreciate, or remember.
- The goal of a toast is to focus attention on the person or persons being toasted

Eulogies

- A eulogy is a speech given in honor of someone who has died.
- Tell the audience about who this person was and what the person stood for in life. The more personal you can make a eulogy, the more touching it will be for the deceased's friends and families.
- The eulogy should remind the audience to celebrate the person's life as well as mourn their death.

Roasts

- Designed to both praise and good-naturedly insult a person being honored.
- Generally, roasts are given at the conclusion of a banquet in honor of someone's life achievements.

Speeches of Dedication

- A speech of dedication is delivered when a new store opens, a building is named after someone, a plaque is placed on a wall, a new library is completed, and so on.
- These speeches are designed to highlight the importance of the project and possibly those to whom the project has been dedicated.

Just like any other speech, ceremonial speeches should be a complete speech and have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion—and you should do it all in under two minutes. When preparing ceremonial speeches, it's always important to ask how long the speech should be. Once you know the time limit, then you can set out to create the speech itself.

Inspirational Speaking

The goal of an inspirational speech is to elicit or arouse an emotional state within an audience.

Speeches for Commencement

- Designed to recognize and celebrate the achievements of a graduating class or other group of people.
- Place the commencement speech into the broader context of the graduates' lives. Show the graduates how the advice and wisdom you are offering can be utilized to make their own lives better.
- Overall, it's important to make sure that you have fun when delivering a commencement speech. Remember, it's a huge honor and responsibility to be asked to deliver a commencement speech, so take the time to really think through and prepare your speech.

Speeches to Ensure Goodwill

- Often given in an attempt to get audience members to view the person or organization more favorably and follow three basic styles:
- The speaker is speaking to enhance one's own image or the image of his or her organization.
- Someone attempts to defend why certain actions were taken or will be taken.
- Honestly taking responsibility, apologizing, and offering restitution.

Motivational Speaking

After Dinner Speaking

- The goal of this type of speech is to entertain and create an atmosphere of amusement.

Keynote Addresses

- Delivered to set the underlying tone and summarize the core message of an event.
- Typically experts in a given area who are invited to speak at a conference, convention, banquet, meeting, or other kind of event for the purpose of setting a specific tone for the occasion.

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15.5: Conclusion

No matter which special occasion type speech you end up delivering, there are certain characteristics and criteria that should be met and identified. Just as with every other speech you may deliver, preparation, organization, and delivery are key to a successful special occasion speech.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

16: Appendix

16.1: Appendix A

Persuasive Speech Topic Ideas

Environmental Topics

- Citizens should try to reuse items before recycling them
- The U.S. should ban mountaintop removal as a mode of harvesting coal.
- Contemporary climate change is human-caused.
- Governmental funding for clean energy should be increased.
- All municipalities should offer public transportation.
- The U.S. should ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
- Bottled water should undergo the same quality testing as municipal water.
- Preservation is a better environmental sustainability model than is conservation.
- Hunting should be banned on all public lands.

Social Justice Topics

- The right to marry should be extended to gays and lesbians.
- Abortion should be illegal.
- State colleges should be free to attend.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most influential leader of the civil rights movement
- The death penalty should be abolished.
- Convicted rapists should be sentenced to the death penalty.
- Women should receive equal pay for equal work.
- Affirmative action does not work and should be ended.
- Individuals and communities affected by environmental injustices should receive compensation.

Campus Life

- Dorm rooms should have individual thermostats.
- Professors' office hours should be held at reasonable hours, not 7 a.m. on Mondays.
- Free coffee should be provided in all classroom buildings before noon.
- Student fees at universities are too high.
- Dining halls should provide nutritional information for all meals.
- Student government leaders should host regular forums to answer questions from the general student population.
- Plagiarism should be prosecuted to the fullest extent.

Everyday Life Topics

- The legal drinking age should be lowered to 18.
- Frequent flyers should not be required to remove their shoes in airport security lines.
- Eating five meals a day is better than eating three.
- Smoking should be illegal in all public areas.
- Gmail is the best email service.
- All restaurants should offer vegan and vegetarian options or substitutes.
- Netflix and Hulu are better ways to watch movies and television shows.
- ATM fees should be outlawed.
- Proximity to religious facilities should have no bearing on alcohol sales.

Economic Topics

- Social security benefits should be guaranteed for those who pay in to the program.
- All multi-year jobs should include pension plans.
- The U.S. should spend less on wars and more on education.
- Everyone should be required to pay an equal percentage of taxes.

- A consumption tax is more just than an income tax.
- The minimum wage in the U.S. is too low.
- Multi-million dollar bonuses for corporate executives are unjust because they preclude better wages/reduced prices for others.

Organizing and Outlining

EXAMPLE PREPARATION (Full Sentence) OUTLINE SAMPLE INTRODUCTION SPEECH

INTRODUCTION:

Attention Getter: By looking at me, you might think I'm just a middle aged white woman, but we've all heard you shouldn't judge a book by its cover!

Central Idea (Thesis): Diversity and experience have made me the person that I am, and sharing this with you will help you see beyond the surface and learn more about who I am.

Credibility/Relevance: Obviously, I know myself well enough to talk about myself, but you'd be surprised how one person's experience can actually help you in your own life.

Preview: First, I'm going to tell you about my background and family. Then, I'm going to tell you about the main hobbies in my life. Finally, I'm going to tell you about a really sad and scary incident that happened when I was just 19 years old.

BODY:

I. First, let me tell you a little about my background and family.

A. I'm a first-generation American, born to parents who came to the United States from China during the late 1930's.
B. I have one older brother who is in the medical field.
C. I'm married to my husband of 30 years.
D. I have two children: a son who lives in the UK with his family, and a daughter who is a college professor.

1. **Internal Summary/Preview**: Now that you know a little about my background and family, let me tell you about my special hobbies.

II. In my spare time, I have hobbies that involve party planning and crafting.

A. I own enough fine China, crystal stemware, silver flatware, napkins, napkin rings, chair covers, sashes, and more to do a party for 150 people.

i. I have thrown wedding showers, baby showers, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and other special events like birthdays celebrating milestone years.
ii. Though I don't charge for my services, maybe someday that will become a business for me.

B. I also enjoy hobbies that tap into my creative side.

i. I do chalk painting, which is a special paint that is used to go over any surface.
ii. I also repurpose furniture by turning a piece into something different than it was originally.

1. **Internal Summary/Preview**: So, now that you know about my background and family, and my special hobbies, let me tell you about one of the scariest and saddest events in my young adult life.

III. At the age of 19, I learned that a "friend" of my brother and our family, was more than he professed to be.

A. After being friends for two years, we found out a terrible secret about my brother's friend Paul.

1. We thought we knew all we had to know: Paul was a Sheriff's deputy, and third year law student.
2. Paul was a friend who came over to our house all the time; and hung out with us, or sometimes just me.
3. One day we opened up the newspaper only to read that Paul had been arrested on several counts of rape, and that the "ski mask rapist" had been caught.

a. He was caught coming out of the apartment of the last woman he had raped.

B. He was carrying the ski mask in his hand.

C. That day I learned never to judge a book by its cover.

Conclusion

Summary: Today, I've shared a little bit about myself. I told you about my background and family, my hobbies, and about my experience in learning that things aren't always as they seem.

Closing Statement: I hope next time you encounter something you think is obvious, you'll look twice before passing judgment.

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16.2: Appendix B

EXAMPLE SPEAKING OUTLINE (Excluding Introduction and Conclusion)

I. Background and Family

A. First Generation American
B. Older Brother
C. Married to Scott
D. Two Children
E. My mom

Internal Summary/Preview: Now that you know a little about my background and family, let me tell you about my special hobby.

II. In my spare time, I have a hobby that centers on party planning.

A. All the china, crystal, etc. I own
B. Parties I have thrown.
C. Possible business someday

Internal Summary/Preview: So, now that you know about my background and family, and my special hobby, let me tell you about one of the scariest and saddest events in my young adult life.

III. At the age of 19, I learned that a "friend" of my brother and our family, was more than he professed to be.

A. Secret about Paul (his background, who he was, what he had done, how he was caught)
B. Don't judge a book by its cover.

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16.3: Appendix C

Since there are three sections to your speech— introduction, body, and conclusion— your outline needs to include all of them. **Each of these sections is titled, but it is up to your individual instructor as to whether or not the introduction and conclusion will be outlined. Check with your instructor but note the examples below**:

SAMPLE OUTLINE WITH INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION NOT OUTLINED

(**Note**: Some professors may ask for the introduction in a slightly different order.)

SPEECH TITLE: How to Outline a Speech

SPECIFIC PURPOSE STATEMENT: To inform my audience how they can outline a speech

INTRODUCTION:

Attention Getter: Tell a story about the time when outlining helped me pass an essay exam.

Thesis: Tell the audience what the purpose of the speech is; what they will know or learn about when you are done.

Credibility: Tell the audience why you are qualified to speak on the topic.

Relevance or relationship to audience: Tell the audience why the topic is important for them to hear about.

Preview: Tell the audience what main points you will cover in your speech.

BODY:

I. Main point I

A. Subpoint 1

1. Sub-subpoint 1
2. Sub-subpoint 2

B. Subpoint 2

1. Sub-subpoint 1
2. Sub-subpoint 2

(**Internal Summary/Internal Preview**)

II. Main point II

1. Subpoint 1

a. Sub-subpoint 1

b. Sub-subpoint 2

2. Subpoint 2

a. Sub-subpoint 1

b. Sub-subpoint 2

CONCLUSION:

Signal/Transition to Conclusion – This can be a verbal or nonverbal signal

Restatement of Thesis and Preview - Summarize what you covered in the speech by restating what your speech purpose was and what you covered.

Closing statement – You can use a technique that is used for an attention getter. This is an opportunity to be impactful and leave the audience in the proper frame of mind so that they think about what you said during the speech.

SAMPLE OUTLINE WITH INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION OUTLINED

SPEECH TITLE: How to outline a speech

SPECIFIC PURPOSE STATEMENT: To inform my audience how they can outline a speech

INTRODUCTION:

Attention Getter - Tell a story about the time when outlining helped me pass an essay exam.

Thesis - Tell the audience what the purpose of the speech is; what they will know or learn about when you are done.

Credibility - Tell the audience why you are qualified to speak on the topic.

Relevance - Tell the audience why the topic is important for them to hear about.

Preview - Tell the audience what main points you will cover in your speech.

BODY:

I. Main point I

A. Subpoint 1

1. Sub-subpoint 1
2. Sub-subpoint 2

B. Subpoint 2

1. Sub-subpoint 1
2. Sub-subpoint 2

(**Internal Summary/Internal Preview**)

II. Main point II

A. Subpoint 1

1. Sub-subpoint 1
2. Sub-subpoint 2

B. Subpoint 2

1. Sub-subpoint 1
2. Sub-subpoint 2

CONCLUSION:

Signal/Transition to Conclusion – This can be a verbal or nonverbal signal

Restatement of Thesis and Preview - Summarize what you covered in the speech by restating what your speech purpose was and what you covered.

Closing statement – You can use a technique that is used for an attention getter. This is an opportunity to be impactful, and leave the audience in the proper frame of mind so that they think about what you said during the speech.

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16.4: Glossary, References

Glossary

Central Idea

A one-sentence encapsulation of the main points of a speech, also called the thesis.

Chronological Speech

A speech in which the main points are delivered according to when they happened and could be traced on a calendar or clock.

Comparative Speech

A speech in which two or more objects, ideas, beliefs, events, places, or things are compared or contrasted with one another.

Causal Speech

A speech that informs audience members about causes and effects that have already happened.

General Purpose Statement

The overarching goal of a speech; for instance, to inform, to persuade, to inspire, to celebrate, to mourn, or to entertain.

Internal Summaries and Previews

Short descriptions of what a speaker has said and what will be said between main points.

Main Points

The key pieces of information or arguments contained within a talk or presentation.

Organizational Styles

Templates for organizing the main points of a speech that are rooted in the traditions of public discourse and can jumpstart the speechwriting process.

Outline

Hierarchical textual arrangement of all the various elements of a speech.

Parallel Structure

Main points that are worded using the same structure.

Preparation Outline

A full-sentence outline that is used during the planning stages to flesh out ideas, arrange main points, and to rehearse the speech; could be used as a script if presenting a manuscript style speech.

Preview Statement

The road map that you provide the audience of the main points you will cover during your speech. The sentences that detail what your main points will be (e.g. First, I will describe…, Second, I will explain…. Finally, I will let you know…)

Refutation Speech

A speech that anticipates the audience's opposition, then brings attention to the tensions between the two sides, and finally refutes them using evidential support.

Signposts

Words and gestures that allow you to move smoothly from one idea to the next throughout your speech, showing relationships between ideas and emphasizing important points" (Beebe & Beebe, 2003).

Spatial Speech

A speech in which the main points are arranged according to their physical and geographic relationships.

Speaking Outline

A succinct outline that uses words or short phrases to represent the components of a speech and that is used during speech delivery.

Specific Purpose Statement

A sentence or two that describe precisely what the speech is intended to do.

Subpoints

Information that is used to support the main points of a speech.

Summaries

Short recaps of what has already been said; used to remind the audience of the points already addressed.

Thesis Statement

A one-sentence encapsulation of the main points of a speech, also called the central idea.

Topical Speech

A speech in which main points are developed separately and are generally connected together within the introduction and conclusion.

Transitional Statements

Phrases or sentences that lead from one distinct-but-connected idea to another.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Ethics

2.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define ethics and explain why ethics are important in public speaking.
- Differentiate between morality and ethical dilemma.
- Identify the three types of plagiarism and understand how to avoid them.
- Explain how to cite sources in written and oral speech materials.
- Develop responsible language use by avoiding hate language and using inclusive language.
- Use a speech platform to promote diversity, raise social awareness, and understand free speech.
- Develop patterns of ethical feedback through praise and constructive criticism.
- Apply ethical communication skills to public speaking situations.
- Apply module concepts in final questions and activities.

Ethics in Public Speaking: Introduction

Maggie is helping her older sister plan for her wedding. She loves event planning and decides to give an informative speech to her classmates on "Selecting a Florist." She knows all the other women in class will adore the topic and her visual aids (an assortment of flowers and a rose for everyone to take home). As Maggie begins the speech, she creates a listener relevance link that relates mostly to the women in the class. In fact, most of the speech is directed at female listeners.

Figure \(\PageIndex{1}\)

As she moves through the main points of her speech, Maggie realizes that she is running out of time and only has 1 minute left or the instructor will penalize her. During her third main point, she skips over some citations but shares the statistics of saving money on a trustworthy florist. The listeners don't notice that Maggie neglected to provide oral source citations, so she feels confident of the "expertise" she has derived. After Maggie finishes her final main point, she concludes and reminds the ladies to find her later if they have any questions about the prices of quality florists in the area.

When preparing for this speech, Maggie attempted an audience analysis, which we will study in chapter 5. However, she failed to adequately involve all audience members by choosing a traditionally female topic and tailoring the language to females in the class.

A second unethical decision made by Maggie was to omit oral citations, thereby failing to give credit to those who deserved it. Maggie's practices in her speech are just a few ways in which unethical public speaking can occur. The evolution of ethics is central to public speaking because it is through communication that our ideas about right and wrong or good and bad are formed.

Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.

~ Potter Stewart

Issues related to honesty, integrity, and morality are present in our everyday lives. We recognize a crafty speaker when we hear one. Ethics, however, aren't just important for presidents and other public figures. Ethical concerns arise in a variety of public speaking contexts, as this chapter portrays.

The National Communication Association (NCA) suggests that communicators should be committed to following principles of ethical communication. According to the NCA Credo of Ethical Communication (1999), "Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media." Ethical communication also yields positive outcomes, such as truthfulness, respect, and accuracy of information. You can see that ethics is a very important part of the communication process. Likewise, it is an important part of the public speaking process.

Unethical communication can lead to poor decision-making or a lack of respect for self and others, and threaten the well-being of individuals and society. Early scholars of ethical communication, most notably Nielsen (1966) and Johannesen (1967), began to incorporate a discussion of ethics in all aspects of communication. These forerunners began exploring ethics in the area of public speaking. Communication experts agree that ethical communication is an important responsibility of the speaker.

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2.1: Defining Ethics

Some of the early leaders in philosophy—Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato—spoke extensively about morality and ethical principles. Aristotle is frequently cited as a central figure in the development of ethics as we discuss them today in the communication discipline.

Aristotle claimed that a person who had **ethos**, or credibility, was not only able to convey good sense and good will, but also good morals. Great philosophers have debated the merits of living well, doing good, and even communicating skillfully. Smitter describes early Greeks and Romans as teachers of public speaking; these philosophers argued that public communication is "a means of civic engagement," and ethics are "a matter of virtue." Ethics and ethical communication are not only an important part of our lives and our decision-making but also are crucial to the public speaking process.

Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

~ Aristotle

Morality is the process of discerning between right and wrong. Ethics involves making decisions about right and wrong within a dilemma. Sometimes, ethical dilemmas are simple. Other times, they require complex choices, such as the decision to report your immediate boss for misrepresenting expenses or the decision to move your grandmother into a retirement community. These scenarios are more complex than simple choices between right and wrong. Instead, these examples are ethical dilemmas because two "right" choices are pitted against one another. It's good to report an unethical supervisor, but it's also good to keep your job. It's good that your grandmother feels independent, but it's also positive for her to receive extra assistance as her health deteriorates.

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2.2: Ethics and Ethical Standards

As public speakers, we make ethical choices when preparing and delivering a speech. We can easily be faced with a moral dilemma over what information to provide or how to accurately represent that information. Knowing the speaking setting, the audience, and our knowledge of the topic, we are able to confront ethical dilemmas with a strong moral compass.

This process is made easier by our ethical standards. Ethical standards, or moral principles, are the set of rules we abide by that make us "good" people and help us choose right from wrong. The virtuous standards to which we adhere influence our ethical understanding.

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

~ Dalai Lama

This stance informs one's ethical standards. In fact, Merrill (2009) explains that the holy Dalai Lama, the Buddhist spiritual leader, believes compassion is even more essential than truth. Therefore, it is justifiable to be untruthful when the deception is part of the process of caring for another. This example illustrates how one's belief system influences his or her ethical standards.

These ethical standards are the guidelines we use to interpret rightness and wrongness in life, in relationships, and in public speaking. Wallace (1955) claims, "ethical standards of communication should place emphasis upon the means used to secure the end, rather than upon achieving the end itself." This argument suggests that speakers must consider moral standards through every step of the speech process.

"Questions of right and wrong arise whenever people communicate (NCA Credo for Ethical Communication, 1999). Once we have identified our ethical standards, we can apply these to make sure that we are communicating ethically.

Ethical communication is an exchange of responsible and trustworthy messages determined by our moral principles. Ethical communication can be enacted in written, oral, and non-verbal communication. In public speaking, we use ethical standards to determine what and how to exchange messages with our audience. As you read further in this chapter, you will begin to understand the guidelines for how ethical communication should occur in the public speaking process.

Ethical Speaking

Ethical public speaking is not a one-time event. It does not just occur when you stand to give a 5-minute presentation to your classmates or co-workers. Ethical public speaking is a process. This process begins when you begin brainstorming the topic of your speech. Every time you plan to speak to an audience—whether it is at a formal speaking event or an impromptu pitch at your workplace—you have ethical responsibilities to fulfill. The two most important aspects in ethical communication include your ability to remain honest while avoiding plagiarism and to set and meet responsible speech goals.

Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.

~ Spencer Johnson

Be Honest and Avoid Plagiarism

Credible public speakers are open and honest with their audiences. Honesty includes telling your audience why you're speaking (central idea - your thesis statement) and what you'll address throughout your speech (preview). For instance, one example of dishonest speech is when a vacation destination offers "complimentary tours and sessions" which are really opportunities for a sales person to pitch a timeshare to unsuspecting tourists. In addition to being clear about the speech goal, honest speakers are clear with audience members when providing supporting information.

Figure **2.2.1**

The first step of ethical speech preparation is to take notes as you research your speech topic. Careful notes will help you remember where you learned your information. Recalling your sources is important because it enables speaker honesty.

Passing off another's work as your own or neglecting to cite the source for your information is considered **plagiarism**. This unethical act can result in several consequences, ranging from a loss in credibility to academic expulsion, or job loss.

Even with these potential consequences, plagiarism is unfortunately common. In a national survey, "87 percent of students claimed that their peers plagiarized from the Internet at least some of the time" (Cruikshank, 2004). This statistic does not take into account whether or not the plagiarism was intentional, occurring when the writer or speaker knowingly presented information as his or her own; or unintentional, occurring when careless citing leads to information being uncredited or miscredited. However, it is important to note that being unaware of how to credit sources should not be an excuse for unintentional plagiarism.

In other words, speakers are held accountable for intentional and unintentional plagiarism. The remainder of this section discusses how to ensure proper credit is given when preparing and presenting a speech.

There are three distinct types of plagiarism—global, patchwork, and incremental plagiarism (Lucas, 2001). **Global plagiarism**, the most obvious form of plagiarism, transpires when a speaker presents a speech that is not his or her own work. For example, if a student finds a speech on the Internet or borrows a former speech from a roommate and recites that speech verbatim, global plagiarism has occurred. Global plagiarism is the most obvious type of theft. However, other forms of plagiarism are less obvious but still represent dishonest public speaking.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

~ Mark Twain

Sometimes a student neglects to cite a source simply because she or he forgot where the idea was first learned. Shi (2010) explains that many students struggle with plagiarism because they've reviewed multiple texts and changed wording so that ideas eventually feel like their own. Students engage in "'**patchwriting**'" by copying from a source text and then deleting or changing a few words and altering the sentence structures" (Shi, 2010).

Patchwork plagiarism is plagiarism that occurs when one "patches" together bits and pieces from one or more sources and represents the end result as his or her own. Michael O'Neill (1980) also coined the term "**paraplaging**" to explain how an author simply uses partial text of sources with partial original writing. An example of patchwork plagiarism is if you create a speech by pasting together parts of another speech or author's work. Read the following hypothetical scenario to get a better understanding of subtle plagiarism.

Three months ago, Carley was talking to her coworkers about expanding their company's client base. Carley reported some of the ideas she'd been pondering with Stephen and Juan. The three employees shared ideas and provided constructive criticism in order to perfect each notion, and then mentioned they'd revisit the conversation over lunch sometime soon. A week later, Carley shared one of her ideas during the company's Monday morning staff meeting. Carley came up with the idea, but Stephen and Juan helped her think through some of the logistics of bringing in more clients. Her peers' input was key to making Carley's client-building idea work. When Carley pitched her idea at the company staff meeting, she didn't mention Stephen or Juan. She shared her idea with senior management and then waited for feedback.

Did Carley behave unethically? Some would say: "No!" since she shared her own idea. Did Carley speak honestly? Perhaps not because she didn't account for how her idea took shape—with the help of Stephen and Juan. This scenario is an example of how

complicated honesty becomes when speaking to an audience.

The third type of plagiarism is **incremental plagiarism**, or when most of the speech is the speaker's original work, but quotes or other information have been used without being cited. Incremental plagiarism can occur if, for example, you provide a statistic to support your claim, but do not provide the source for that statistic. Another example would be if a student included a direct quote from former president Ronald Reagan without letting the audience know that those were Reagan's exact words.

Understanding the different types of plagiarism is the first step in ensuring that you prepare an honest speech.

Table **2.2.1**: Purdue OWL APA Guide for Citing Sources

Cite	Do Not Cite
Words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, Web page, advertisement, or any other medium.	Your own lived experiences, your own observations and insights, your own thoughts, and your own conclusions about a subject.
Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person, face to face, over the phone, or in writing.	When you are writing up your own results obtained through lab or field experiments.
When you copy the exact words or a unique phrase.	When you use your own artwork, digital photographs, video, audio, etc.
When you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials.	When you use common knowledge – e.g. folklore, common sense observations, myths, and historical events.
When you reuse or repost any electronically available media, including images, audio, video, or other media.	When you are using generally accepted facts.

The following pages will provide you will the appropriate guidelines and resources for making sure that your speech follows the format your instructor requires. When in doubt, make certain you check with your instructor to see if she or he is asking you to write in APA or MLA format.

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2.3: Decide When to Cite

Ethical speakers are not required to cite commonly known information (e.g., skin is the largest human organ; Barack Obama was elected President of the U.S. in 2008). When speaking publicly you must orally cite all information that isn't general knowledge. For example, if your speech claims that the sun is a star, you do not have to cite that information since it's general knowledge. If your speech claims that the sun's temperature is 15.6 million Kelvin, then you should cite that source aloud (Nine Planets, 2011).

The OWL, an online writing lab at Purdue University, provides an excellent guide for when you need to cite information (see Table 2.1).

Understanding when to include source material is the first step in being able to ethically cite sources. The next step in this process is to determine how to appropriately cite sources orally and in written materials.

Understand Paraphrasing and Direct Quotations

Next, it is important to understand the process for paraphrasing and directly quoting sources in order to support your speech claims. First, what is the difference between paraphrasing and directly quoting a source?

If you research and learn information from a source—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for instance— then share that information in your own words; you don't use quotation marks; but you do credit the CDC as your source. This is known as a **paraphrase**—a sentence or string of sentences that shares learned information in your own words. A **direct quote** is any sentence or string of sentences that conveys an author's idea word-for-word.

According to the APA (American Psychological Association), when writing speech content, you must include quotation marks around an author's work when you use his or her keywords, phrases, or sentences. This would be relevant for a speech outline, a handout, or a visual aid.

Develop Accurate Citations

Ethical speakers share source information with the audience to attribute information correctly, and to build or maintain credibility. On written materials, such as handouts or speech outlines, citations are handled much like they would be in any essay. Oral citations will look and sound different, as the audience usually does not have your outline in front of them.

You should provide enough information so that an audience member understands where the information came from and is able locate the source. To give the most thorough and supportive oral citation, you should include the author(s) name or source, the publication, the date, and the credibility of the author(s).You may choose to briefly describe the author to lend credibility to your supporting information.

Table **2.3.1**: Citations

Type of Citation	Example
Sample **Oral** Citation	Professor of Communication Studies, Elena Ruiz's 2015 article in Communication Monographs states that …(enter direct quote or paraphrase here).
Sample **Reference** Citation	Ruiz, E. (2015). Communication apprehension in the classroom and beyond. Communication Monographs, 63 (2), 413-450.

As you can see, there is information in both the reference citation and the oral citation that is not included in the other. Ethical speakers provide written, oral, and visual citations to their audience.

Visual aids, just like speech content, must be displayed ethically for the audience. It is not sufficient to include a "Sources" or "References" slide at the end of your PowerPoint because that does not accurately link each author to his or her work. Instead, ethical presenters provide an author reference on the slide in which the cited content is shown. Similarly, you should cite sources on your PowerPoint throughout the presentation. Visual aids will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9, include posters, objects, models, PowerPoints, and handouts.

It's also important to understand how copyright law might affect what and how you include information in your speech and on your visual aid. The fair use provision allows for copyrighted information to be shared if it is used for educational benefits, news reporting, research, and in other situations.

Note

Nolo (2010) explains, "In its most general sense, a fair use is any copying of copyrighted material done for a limited and 'transformative' purpose, such as to comment upon, criticize, or parody a copyrighted work. Such uses can be done without permission from the copyright owner" (Nolo, 2010). In order to determine if the use of content falls under the fair use provision, there are four factors to consider:

1. How will this be used?
2. What is to be used?
3. How much will be used?
4. What effect does this have?

You can find more about these four factors at the U.S. Copyright website.

Ethics and equity and the principles of justice do not change with the calendar.

~ David Herbert Lawrence

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2.4: Set Responsible Speech Goals

Jensen coined the term “rightsabilities” to explain how a communicator must balance tensions between speaker rights and responsibility to others. Ensuring that you have responsible speech goals is one way to achieve ethical communication in public speaking. There are several speech goals that support this mission. This section will focus on five goals:

1. promote diversity
2. use inclusive language
3. avoid hate speech
4. raise social awareness
5. employ respectful free speech.

Promote Diversity

One important responsibility speakers have is fostering **diversity**, or an appreciation for differences among individuals and groups. Diversity in public speaking is important when considering both your audience and your speech content.

Promoting diversity allows audience members who may be different from the speaker to feel included and can present a perspective to which audience members had not previously been exposed. Speakers may choose a speech topic that introduces a multicultural issue to the audience or can promote diversity by choosing language and visual aids that relate to and support listeners of different backgrounds. Because of the diversity present in our lives, it is necessary to consider how speakers can promote diversity.

One simple way of promoting diversity is to use both sexes in your hypothetical examples and to include co-cultural groups when creating a hypothetical situation. For example, you can use names that represent both sexes and that also stem from different cultural backgrounds. In the story about Carley and her co-workers, her co-workers were deliberately given male names so that both sexes were represented.

Ethical speakers also encourage diversity in races, socioeconomic status, and other demographics. These choices promote diversity. In addition, ethical speakers can strive to break stereotypes. For instance, if you’re telling a hypothetical story about a top surgeon in the nation, why not make the specialized surgeon a female from a rural area? Or make the hypothetical secretary a man named Frank? You could also include a picture in your visual aid of the female surgeon or the male secretary at work. Ethical speakers should not assume that a nurse is female or that a firefighter is male. Sexist language can alienate your audience from your discussion (Driscoll & Brizee, 2010).

Another way that sexist language occurs in speeches is when certain statements or ideas are directed at a particular sex. For example, some audience members could find the “Selecting a Florist” speech described at the beginning of this chapter to be sexist. Another example is the following statement, which implies only males might be interested in learning how to fix a car: “I think that fixing a car is one of the most important things you can learn how to do. Am I right, guys?” Rather, you can say, “I think that fixing a car is one of the most important things that everyone can learn to do.” Promoting diversity is related to using inclusive language, discussed in the following sections.

Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism.

~Oprah Winfrey

Use Inclusive Language

Avoiding sexist language is one way to use inclusive language. Another important way for speakers to develop responsible language is to use inclusionary pronouns and phrases.

For example, novice speakers might tell their audience: “One way for you to get involved in the city’s Clean Community Program is to pick up trash on your street once a month.” Instead, an effective public speaker could exclaim: “One way for all of us to get involved in our local communities is by picking up trash on a regular basis.”

This latter statement is an example of “**we**” **language**—pronouns and phrases that unite the speaker to the audience. “We” language (instead of “I” or “You” language) is a simple way to build a connection between the speaker, speech content, and audience.

Table 2.4.1: “You” vs. “We” Language

Type of Language	Sample statement
“You” Language	You may say that you’re too busy to volunteer, but I don’t agree. I’m here to tell you that you should be volunteering in your community.
“We” Language	As college students, we all get busy in our daily lives and helpful acts such as volunteering aren’t priorities in our schedules. Let’s explore how we can be more active volunteers in our community.

In this exchange, the “you” language sets the speaker apart from the audience and could make listeners defensive about their time and lack of volunteering. On the other hand, the “we” language connects the speaker to the audience and lets the audience know that the speaker understands and has some ideas for how to fix the problem. This promotes a feeling of inclusiveness, one of the responsible speech goals.

Avoid Hate Speech

Another key aspect of ethical speaking is to develop an awareness of spoken words and the power of words. The NCA Credo of Ethical Communication highlights the importance of this awareness: “We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred” (1999).

Words can be powerful—both in helping you achieve your speech goal and in affecting your audience in significant ways. It is essential that public speakers refrain from hate or sexist language.

Hate speech, according to Verderber, Sellnow, and Verderber (2012) is “the use of words and phrases not only to demean another person or group but also to express hatred and prejudice.” **Hate language** isolates a particular person or group in a derogatory manner.

Michael Richards, famous for the role of Cosmo Kramer on Seinfeld, came under fire for his hate speech during a comedy routine in 2006. Richards used several racial epithets and directed his hate language towards African-Americans and Mexicans (Farhi, 2006). Richards apologized for his outbursts, but the damage to his reputation and career was irrevocable. Likewise, using hate speech in any public speaking situation can alienate your audience and take away your credibility, leading to more serious implications for your grade, your job, or other serious outcomes. It is your responsibility as the speaker to be aware of sensitive material and be able to navigate language choices to avoid offending your audience.

No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.

~ Robin Williams

Raise Social Awareness

Speakers should consider it their ethical responsibility to educate listeners by introducing ideas of racial, gender, or cultural diversity, but also by raising **social awareness**, or the recognition of important issues that affect societies.

Raising social awareness is a task for ethical speakers because educating peers on important causes empowers others to make a positive change in the world. Many times when you present a speech, you have the opportunity to raise awareness about growing social issues. For example, if you’re asked to present an informative speech to your classmates, you could tell them about your school’s athletic tradition or you could discuss Peace One Day—a campaign that promotes a single of worldwide cease-fire, allowing crucial food and medicine supplies to be shipped into warzone areas (PeaceOneDay.org).

If your assignment is to present a persuasive speech, you could look at the assignment as an opportunity to convince your classmates to (a) stop texting while they drive, (b) participate in a program that supports US troops by writing personal letters to deployed soldiers or (c) buy a pair of TOMS (tomsshoes.com) and find other ways to provide basic needs to impoverished families around the world.

Of course, those are just a few ideas for how an informative or persuasive speech can be used to raise awareness about current social issues. It is your responsibility, as a person and speaker, to share information that provides knowledge or activates your

audience toward the common good (Mill, 1987).

One way to be successful in attaining your speech goal while also remaining ethical is to consider your audience's moral base. Moon (1993) identifies a principle that allows the speaker to justify his or her perspective by finding common moral ground with the audience. This illustrates to the audience that you have goodwill but allows you to still use your moral base as a guide for responsible speech use.

For example, even though you are a vegetarian and believe that killing animals for food is murder, you know that the majority of your audience does not feel the same way. Rather than focusing on this argument, you decide to use Moon's principle and focus on animal cruelty. By highlighting the inhumane ways that animals are raised for food, you appeal to the audience's moral frame that abusing animals is wrong—something that you and your audience can both agree upon.

If we lose love and self-respect for each other, this is how we finally die.

~ Maya Angelou

Employ Respectful Free Speech

We live in a nation that values freedom of speech. Of course, due to the First Amendment, you have the right and ability to voice your opinions and values to an audience. However, that freedom of speech must be balanced with your responsibility as a speaker to respect your audience.

Offending or degrading the values of your audience members will not inform or persuade them. For example, let's say you want to give a persuasive speech on why abortion is morally wrong. It's your right to voice that opinion. Nevertheless, it's important that you build your case without offending your audience members— since you don't know everyone's history or stance on the subject.

Showing disturbing pictures on your visual aid may not "make your point" in the way you intended. Instead, these pictures may send audience members into an emotional tailspin (making it difficult for them to hear your persuasive points because of their own psychological noise). Freedom of speech is a beautiful American value, but ethical speakers must learn to balance their speech freedom with their obligation to respect each audience member.

Fortunately for serious minds, a bias recognized is a bias sterilized.

~ Benjamin Haydon

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2.5: Provide Ethical Feedback

Ethical speakers and listeners are able to provide quality feedback to others. **Ethical feedback** is a descriptive and explanatory response to the speaker. Brownell explains that a response to a speaker should demonstrate that you have listened and considered the content and delivery of the message. Responses should respect the position of the speaker while being honest about your attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Praising the speaker's message or delivery can help boost his or her confidence and encourage good speaking behaviors. However, ethical feedback does not always have to be completely positive in nature.

Constructive criticism acknowledges that a speaker is not perfect and can improve upon the content or delivery of the message. In fact, constructive criticism is helpful in perfecting a speaker's content or speaking style. Ethical feedback always explains the listener's opinion in detail. Unethical feedback can be false, or inauthentic as it may only provide positive comments, but no specific information on what you experienced as a listener. Table **2.5.1** provides examples of unethical and ethical feedback.

Table **2.5.1**: Unethical and Ethical Feedback

Type of Feedback	Examples
Unethical Feedback	• I really enjoyed your speech. (Not specific). • Your speech lacks supportive information. (Not specific). • You are the worst public speaker ever. (Inappropriate)
Ethical Feedback	• I really enjoyed your speech because your topic was personally interesting to me. • I did not hear source citations in your speech. • I had difficulty discerning your main points, perhaps because I did not hear transitions between them.

As you can see from the example feedback statements (Table **2.5.1**), ethical feedback is always explanatory. Ethical statements explain why you find the speaker effective or ineffective.

Another guideline for ethical feedback is to "phrase your comments as personal perceptions" by using "I" language (Sellnow, 2009). Feedback that employs the "I" pronoun displays personal preference regarding the speech and communicates responsibility for the comments. Feedback can focus on the speaker's delivery, content, style, visual aid, or attire. Be sure to support your claims —by giving a clear explanation of your opinion—when providing feedback to a speaker.

Feedback should also support ethical communication behaviors from speakers by asking for more information and pointing out relevant information (Jensen, 1997). It is clear that providing ethical feedback is an important part of the listening process and, thus, of the public speaking process.

A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.

~ Albert Camus

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2.6: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

This chapter addresses ethics in public speaking. As ethics is an important part of our daily lives, it also plays a significant role in any public speaking situation. This chapter defines ethics and provides guidelines for practicing ethics in public speaking and listening. An ethical public speaker considers how to be honest and avoid plagiarism by taking notes during the research process, identifying sources, and deciding when it is appropriate to cite sources. Ethical public speakers also cite sources properly by understanding how to paraphrase and directly quote sources. In addition, they know how to cite in written speech materials, during oral presentations, and on visual aids.

Ethical speakers strive to achieve responsible speech goals by promoting gender, racial, and cultural diversity, using inclusive language, refraining from using hate speech, raising social awareness about important issues when possible, and understanding the balance of free speech with responsibility to audience members. Ethical listeners consider their responsibilities when both listening and providing feedback to speakers. Ethical feedback is explanatory and descriptive. With this improved understanding of how to prepare and present a speech ethically, you can accomplish the goal of ethical public speaking. Consider ethics as you learn about the public speaking process in upcoming chapters.

Review Questions and Activities

1. Where did ethics originate? How are ethics used in public speaking?
2. What is plagiarism? What is the difference between global and patchwork plagiarism?
3. What is the difference between paraphrasing and directly quoting a source?
4. What free speech rights are granted to a speaker?
5. Why is raising social awareness an ethical concern when preparing a speech?
6. What are some ways to use language ethically in presentations?

Glossary

Direct Quote

A direct quote is any sentence that conveys the primary source's idea word-for-word.

Diversity

Diversity is an appreciation for differences among individuals and groups.

Ethical Feedback

Ethical feedback is descriptive and explanatory feedback for a speaker. Ethical feedback can be positive praise or constructive criticism.

Ethical Listener

A listener who actively interprets shared material and analyzes the speech content and speaker's effectiveness.

Ethical Communication

Ethical communication is an exchange of responsible and trustworthy messages determined by our moral principles.

Ethical Standards

Rules of acceptable conduct, that when followed promote values such as trust, good behavior, fairness and/or kindness.

Ethics

Ethics is the process of determining what is good or bad, right or wrong in a moral dilemma.

Global Plagiarism

Global plagiarism is plagiarism that occurs when a speaker uses an entire work that is not his/her own.

Hate Language

Hate language is the use of words or phrases that isolate a particular person or group in a derogatory manner.

Incremental Plagiarism

Incremental plagiarism is plagiarism that occurs when most of the speech is the speaker's original work, but quotes or other information have been used without being cited.

Listening

Listening is the process of interpreting, or making sense of, sounds.

Morality

Morality is the process of discerning between right and wrong.

Paraphrase

A paraphrase is any sentence that shares learned information in the speaker's own words.

Patchwork Plagiarism

Patchwork plagiarism is plagiarism that occurs when one patches together bits and pieces from one or more sources and represents the end result as his or her own.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when one passes off another's work as his/her own or neglects to cite a source for his/her information.

Social Awareness

Social awareness is the recognition of important issues that affect societies.

"We" Language

"We" Language includes the use of pronouns and phrases that unite the speaker to the audience.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Speaking With Confidence

3.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the nature of communicative apprehension (CA), and be in a better position to deal with your particular "brand" of CA
- Apply cognitive restructuring (CR) techniques to create a more positive frame of reference
- Understand the importance of customized practice to become conversant in your topic
- Create a personal preparation routine to minimize your apprehension

Speaking With Confidence: Introduction

"I have to do what?"

You receive your syllabus on the first day of history class, and you see that a significant percentage of your overall grade for the semester depends upon one, ten-minute oral presentation in front of the class. The presentation is to be based on an original research project and is due in eight weeks.

You are excited to get an email after a very positive job interview. They ask you to come to a second interview prepared to answer a number of questions from a panel made up of senior management. The questions are contained in an attachment. "Please be ready to stand in the front of the room to answer," the email reads; ending with "See you next week!"

The plans are finalized: You will have dinner to meet your new fiancé's family on Saturday night – just days away. But, then you are told that your fiancé's father, a former Marine and retired police officer, will want to talk about politics and current events – and that he will likely judge what sort of person you are based on how well you can defend your ideas.

In this chapter, you will learn about dealing with one of the most common fears in our society: **the fear of public speaking**. Fear of public speaking is associated with **communication apprehension** (CA), which is an individuals level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCrosky, 1977).

If you are one of those folks – take comfort in the fact that you are not alone! Research indicates that 20% or more of the U.S. population has a high degree of communicative apprehension (McCroskey, 1976).

CA is a real phenomenon that represents a well-documented obstacle not only to academic, but also to professional success. CA can impact many diverse areas; from one's level of self-esteem (Adler, 1980) and how you are perceived by others (Dwyer & Cruz, 1998), to success in school, achieving high grade-point averages, and even landing job interview opportunities (Daly & Leth, 1976).

People with higher levels of CA have demonstrated that they will avoid communicative interaction in personal and professional relationships, social situations, and importantly, classrooms. Such avoidance can result in miscommunication and misunderstanding, which only becomes compounded by further avoidance.

CA left unaddressed can even lead to a negative disposition toward public interaction, which leads to a lesser degree of engagement, thus perpetuating the fear and further compounding the situation (Menzel & Carrell, 1994). The anxiety creates a vicious cycle and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. But it is a cycle that need not continue.

By reading this chapter, you will learn about CA; not necessarily how it develops, as that can be different in every individual, but rather about how people can deal with it effectively. CA is not something that can easily be eliminated – turned "off" as if controlled by an internal toggle switch. But it doesn't have to remain an obstacle to success either.

Effective public speaking is not simply about learning what to say, but about developing the confidence to say it. For many, it all comes down to overcoming those nerves and convincing yourself that you can actually get up there and speak! Each individual deals with CA most effectively through increased self-awareness and a willingness to work on reducing its impact. To conquer the

nervousness associated with public speaking, one must identify the factors that lead to this anxiety, and then take specific steps to overcome this apprehension.

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3.1: Classifying Communication Apprehension (CA)

CA is not the result of a single cause, and so the phenomenon itself comes in many forms. It is important for each person to recognize that their particular sort of CA (we'll call it a "personal brand") is a phenomenon that has developed uniquely through each of their lives and experiences.

Trait-anxiety

Some researchers (McCroskey, et al. 1976) describe CA as **trait-anxiety**, meaning that it is a type of anxiety that is aligned with an individual's personality. People who would call themselves "shy" often seek to avoid interaction with others because they are uncertain of how they will be perceived. Avoiding such judgment is generally not difficult, and so becomes a pattern of behavior. These folks, according to researchers, are likely view any chance to express themselves publicly with skepticism and hesitation. This personal tendency is what is known as trait-anxiety.

State-anxiety

Other researchers (Beatty, 1988) describe CA as **state-anxiety**, meaning that it is a type of anxiety that is derived from the external situation which individuals find themselves. While some may fear public speaking due to some personal trait or broader social anxiety, researchers have found that CA more often stems from the fear associated with scrutiny and negative evaluation.

Some people may have had a negative experience in public at an early age – they forgot a line in a play, they lost a spelling bee, they did poorly when called on in front of their class – something that resulted in a bit of public embarrassment. Others may have never actually experienced that stress themselves, but may have watched friends struggle and thus empathized with them. These sorts of experiences can often lead to the formation of a state-anxiety in an individual.

Scrutiny Fear

Still other researchers (Mattick et al., 1989) discuss CA as what is called a **scrutiny fear**; which stems from an activity that does not necessarily involve interacting with other people, but is simply the fear of being in a situation where one is being watched or observed, or one perceives him or herself as being watched, while undertaking an activity. When asked to categorize their own type of CA, many people will identify with this phenomenon.

In order for anybody to effectively deal with CA, the first step is to consider what may be its primary cause. CA is what is known as a **resultant condition**; and those who are dealing with the challenge will recognize different intensities associated with different situations or triggers. This means that overcoming the condition requires first that you recognize, and then minimize, the cause. Each person is different, and so each case of CA is personal and unique.

Trait-anxiety can be one contributing factor to CA, but is often part of a much larger condition. It is important to understand that, while the techniques discussed here would help in improving an individual's approach to public speaking opportunities, we do not claim that these techniques would work with more significant personality disorders. However, both the presence of state-anxiety, and the appearance of scrutiny fear, can be effectively addressed through the application of cognitive restructuring (CR) and careful, deliberate experience.

Cognitive Restructuring

Since the major difference between "presenting" to a public audience versus "presenting" to a small group of close friends involves one's attitude about the situation. Overcoming CA is as much a matter of changing one's attitude as it is developing one's skills as a speaker. A change in attitude can be fostered through a self- reflective regimen called **cognitive restructuring** (CR), which is an internal process through which individuals can deliberately adjust how they perceive an action or experience (Mattick et al., 1989). Cognitive Restructuring is a three-step, internal process:

1. Identify objectively what you think
2. Identify any inconsistencies between perception and reality
3. Replace destructive thinking with supportive thinking

These steps are easy to understand, but perhaps may be a bit difficult to execute! The first step is to identify objectively what you are thinking as you approach a public speaking opportunity. Recall your habitual frame of reference. The first step in CR is to shine

a bright light directly on it. This will be different for each student as this is an internal process.

Sources of Apprehension

After years of interviewing students from my classes, the two concerns most often described are the feeling of being the center of attention – as if you are under some collective microscope with everybody's eyes on you; and the feeling that the audience is just waiting for you to make a mistake or slip up somehow – and that their disapproval will be swift, immediate, and embarrassing. Let's discuss how CR might be applied to each of these widely held perceptions.

Impact of Apprehension

Probably the most common concern people have is being the "center of attention." When people describe this specific scrutiny fear, they use phrases like "everyone just stares at me," or "I don't like having all eyes on me." Consider for a moment what your experiences have been like when you have been a member of the audience for another speaker. Where did you look while the person spoke? Did you look at the speaker?

Direct eye contact can mean different things in different cultures, but in U.S. culture, eye contact is the primary means for an audience to demonstrate that they are listening to a speaker. Nobody likes to be ignored, and most members of an audience would not want to be perceived as ignoring the speaker – that would be rude!

Compare: before CR, the frame of reference reflects the idea that "everyone is staring at me"; after CR, the perception is altered to "the audience is looking at me to be supportive and polite – after all, I'm the one doing the talking."

Another common concern is the fear of being judged harshly or making an embarrassing mistake. Go back to that memory of you as a member of the audience, but this time reflect on what sort of expectations you had at the time. Did you expect the speaker to be flawless and riveting? Did you have in mind some super-high level of performance – below which the speaker would have disappointed you? You probably did not (unless you had the chance to watch some prominent speaker).

Think back to any experiences you may have had watching another speaker struggle – perhaps a classmate during one of their presentations. Witnessing something like that can be uncomfortable. Did you feel empathy for the person struggling? Isn't it a much more pleasant experience when the speaker does well? Again, the vast majority of people empathize with the speaker when it comes to the quality of the presentation. They are willing to give the speaker a chance to say what they want to say.

Thus: before CR, the frame of reference reflects the idea that "everyone is judging me harshly"; and after CR, the perception is altered to "the audience is willing to listen to what I have to say because it's a more pleasant experience for them if the speaker is successful."

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3.2: Learning Confidence

Consider what comes into your mind if you are to deliver a public presentation. Are your thoughts consumed with many uncertainties? What if I make a mistake? What if they don't like what I'm talking about? What if? Try your own version of CR. Put yourself in the role of audience member and ask yourself whether your fears as a speaker are consistent with your expectations as an audience member. Remember that, just like you, the audience wants the speaker to succeed.

Of course CR, unfortunately, is always easier said than done. It is a process that takes time, patience, and practice. The most important thing to remember is that you are trying CR as a means of breaking a habit, and habits are formed over periods of time, never instantaneously. The breaking of a habit, similarly, cannot be done instantaneously, but gradually, over time and with deliberate effort.

Changing your attitude is only one element in overcoming CA. The other involves improving your skills as a speaker. The presence of CA in any student brings with it the need to prepare more deliberately and more diligently. The other chapters in this book deal with the importance of preparation in all areas of public presentation. Readers should consider how the challenges involved with overcoming CA can impact the preparation process.

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3.3: Techniques for Building Confidence

Prepare Well

The correlation between preparation and nervousness is consistent. More practice results in less nervousness. The best, most consistent and direct way to minimize the level of nervousness you feel is through effective preparation. This is always true.

Michael Jordan was once asked the best way to learn how to shoot free throws. To everyone's surprise, the first step he described did not entail actually shooting the ball. He described how the first step in learning to shoot free throws is to run sprints. Most importantly, his advice was to run until your body was under the same stress as it would be in a game when you needed to make those free throws – because only under those conditions would your practice become truly productive. Only then do you pick up the ball and shoot.

All types of preparation and practice yield some benefits, but there is a significant difference between practice that is merely helpful and practice that is sufficient. There is a difference between "knowing what you are talking about," and "knowing what you are going to say."

Thinking about your presentation can be helpful, but that sort of preparation will not give you a sense of what you are actually going to say. Athletes know that the best practices will re-create game conditions and test their abilities to perform in real-life scenarios.

Many students do not practice effectively, and this can result in the wrong idea that practice isn't helpful. Unfortunately, these same students usually have had little, if any, training in how one might prepare for a presentation, and so they employ the scholastic training they are most familiar with – how to write a paper. This is not the same activity as presenting, and so the lack of proper preparation only contributes to the lack of confidence. Let's look at a few elements of effective practice.

Visualize Success

Athletes and performers are often coached to visualize what they are trying to do as a way to perform correctly. Football and basketball players must envision how each member of the team will move during a particular play because team success depends on speedy and flawless coordination between individuals. Dancers and divers are trained to visualize the form and positioning of their bodies as they execute their moves. Engaging the imagination in this way can be beneficial to performance.

Speakers too, should visualize success. As you practice, visualize yourself presenting with confidence to a receptive audience. "See" your relaxed facial expressions and "hear" your confident tone of voice. Imagine yourself moving gracefully, complementing what you say with expressive gestures.

Imagine the audience reacting appropriately – nodding appreciatively and giving thoughtful consideration to your points. Imagine the gratification of watching the audience really "get it." When you can honestly envision yourself performing at this level, you are taking an important step toward achieving that goal.

Avoid Gimmicks

Some acting coaches (and speech teachers) encourage their students to practice in front of mirrors, so that they can watch themselves perform and evaluate how they move. In acting, this can be very useful; but in speaking, it is less so.

When you practice your presentation, the most important element is expressiveness. You want to become more familiar with the volume of material, the order in which you plan to present it, and the phrasing you think would be most effective to express it.

Watching yourself perform in a mirror will focus your attention on your appearance first – and on what you express second. This makes using a mirror during practice a distraction from what the practice ought to achieve.

For some reason, the myth persists that imagining your audience in their pajamas – or something similarly silly – is an effective way to make standing in front of them seem less scary. These sorts of gimmicks don't work! In fact, concentrating on anything other than what you are doing is distracting and not beneficial at all. Do your best to avoid such advice. Visualize success!

Breathe and Release

One type of pre-presentation exercise that might be helpful is based on a therapeutic idea called systematic de-sensitization. A multi-stage regimen to help patients deal with phobias through coping mechanisms, which involves gradual exposure to what produces the anxiety, long-term self- reflection, and mental discipline.

Here, we will discuss a shortened version called “breathe and release.” This relaxation technique could be useful for nervous speakers – especially those who are concerned with the physical manifestations of nervousness, such as shaky hands or knees.

The key to “breathe and release” is to understand that when nervous tension results in minor trembling, the effort of trying to keep one’s hands from shaking can contribute to the whole situation – that is, trying to stop literally can make it worse! Therefore, the best approach is through relaxation.

How to Breathe and Release

1. Imagine the nervousness within your body. Imagine the energy bubbling inside you, like boiling water.
2. Draw that energy to a high point within your body through a deep, cleansing breath. Imagine this cleansing breath like a vacuum, inhaling all of the bubbling liquid.
3. Release the energy by deliberately relaxing your upper body, all the way from your fingertips to your shoulder blades. Imagine how keeping any part of your upper extremities tense would result in a “kink” in the release valve, and so complete relaxation is the key to success.

Minimize What You Memorize

One important hint for speech preparation involves avoiding the writing of an entirely scripted version of the presentation. A speech outline is not a monologue or manuscript; it is a guideline and should be used as a roadmap for your speech.

Remember that lunch with your friends? When you were describing the movie plot, you were being conversant in a prepared way. This means that you knew what you were describing, but you were not concerned with the specific words you were using. Being conversant is the condition of being prepared to discuss an issue intelligently.

A well-prepared speaker is with regard to her topic. Consider how being conversant in this manner allows freer, more fluid communication, with no stress associated with your ability to remember what words you wanted to use. Being conversant also gives the speaker the best chance to recognize and react to audience feedback.

If you are completely focused on the integrity of scripted comments, then you will be unable to read and react to your audience in any meaningful way. Imagine how frustrating it would be for your friends at that lunch if you would not respond to any of their questions until you were finished reading a few descriptive paragraphs about the movie. They would probably just wait until you were done reading and then try to engage you in a conversation!

Practice Out Loud

Remember the very first time you tried to do anything – a game, a sport, an activity, anything at all. How good were you out of the gate? Perhaps you had talent or were gifted with a “feel” for what you were doing. But even then, didn’t you get better with more experience? Nobody does anything the very best they can on their very first attempt, and everyone – even the most talented among us – benefit from effective practice.

Speaking in public is no different from any other activity in this way. To maximize the chance that your presentation will come out smooth and polished, you will need to hear it all the way through. By practicing out loud, from the beginning to the ending, you will be able to listen to your whole speech and properly gauge the flow of your entire presentation.

Additionally, without at least one complete out-loud practice, there will be no way to accurately estimate the length of your speech and your preparation will remain insufficient.

When dealing with CA, the last thing you want is to leave some questions unanswered in your own mind! The out-loud “dress rehearsal” is the single, most important element to your preparation. Without it, you will be delivering your presentation in full for the first time when it counts the most. Putting yourself at that sort of disadvantage isn’t wise, and is easily avoided.

You might even consider trying that initial practice without the benefit of any notes. Stand up; start speaking; see what comes out! During your initial practice consider these questions:

1. Where, during your presentation, are you most – and least – conversant?
2. Where, during your presentation, are you most in need of supportive notes?
3. What do your notes need to contain?

Prepare for your public presentation by speaking and listening to yourself, rather than by writing, editing, and rewriting. Remember that when you are having a conversation, you never use the same sort of language and syntax as you do when you are writing a formal paper. Practice with the goal of becoming conversant in your topic, not fluent with a script.

Customize Your Practice

Depending on your personal level of CA, you may choose to implement techniques previously mentioned in different ways. Take a moment to reflect on what causes your CA. Do you dislike the feeling of being the center of attention? Are you more concerned with who is in the audience and what they might think of you? Or are you worried about "freezing" in front of the audience and forgetting what you wanted to say?

Write some of these concerns down and put them into a priority order. If you are worried about a particular issue or problem, how might you prepare to minimize the chance of that issue arising?

Now, consider your current method of preparation. Do you prepare more for a written paper than for an oral presentation? Do you have the goal of presenting a scripted message? Do you practice out loud? When, during your process, do you practice aloud? Do you practice at all before you begin to compose your speaking notes; or do you only practice after? Remember that dealing with CA often involves the breaking of a mental habit. It is a good idea to change what you have done previously. Be deliberate. Observe what works for your situation.

As stated earlier in the chapter: Each individual deals with CA most effectively through increased self-awareness and a willingness to take each of the steps in the entire process. After you acknowledge your reality, then you take the steps necessary to overcome apprehension.

When you've read about the ways to overcome the debilitating impact of CA, the next steps in your process involve seeing what works best for you. Do not continue to prepare in exactly the same way as before. Speak more; write and revise less. Be sure to practice out-loud at least once during your preparation, in order to prepare yourself sufficiently. Reflect on your personal concerns and try Cognitive Restructuring on those concerns. Take your time. Do the work. Have confidence that your preparation will yield positive results.

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3.4: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

In this chapter, we've discussed Communication Apprehension or CA. This difficult condition can be the result of many, varied causes. Even professional researchers don't always agree on whether CA is inherent in the person, or the result of what the person experiences or perceives – with some calling it "trait-anxiety;" others "state-anxiety;" and still others classifying it as "scrutiny fear." The first step for any person to address this condition is self-reflection. Try to identify what has caused you to feel the way you do about public speaking. Careful introspection can result in a more productive level of self-awareness. Whatever the root cause of CA might be for any particular individual, the first step in addressing CA is to objectively view the habitual frame of reference that has emerged in your mind regarding public speaking. Consider all those "what-if's" that keep cropping up in your mind and how you might begin to address them productively, rather than simply to ignore them and hope they go away. Go through the steps of Cognitive Restructuring or CR. Consider how many of those "what-if's" are nothing more than invented pressure that you place upon yourself.

Relaxation techniques, such as "Breathe and Release," have proven to be effective for many speakers, especially those concerned with the physical manifestations of nervousness like trembling hands or shaky knees. Remember that those sorts of tremors can often be exacerbated by efforts to hold still. Don't force yourself to hold still! Relax instead.

Lastly, we discussed the most effective means to prepare – which is toward the goal of becoming conversant in your topic, rather than being able to recite a memorized script. By familiarizing yourself with your topic, you become better able to consider the best way to talk to your audience, rather than becoming "married to your script" and ultimately consumed with saying

the words in the right order. Practicing out-loud, without a mirror to distract you, is the best way to prepare yourself.

CA is a real issue, but it need not be an obstacle to success. Take the time to become more aware of your personal brand of CA. Take positive steps to minimize its impact. Your willingness to work and your positive attitude are the keys to your success.

The author of this chapter says that one of the keys to overcoming nervousness is preparation. Make a list of the barriers to your own preparation process (e.g. "I don't know how to use the library," or "I have young children at home who make demands on my time"). Having identified some of the things that make it difficult for you to prepare, now think of at least one way to overcome each obstacle you have listed. If you need to, speak with other people to get their ideas too.

Review Activities

- Prior to a speech, practice the following relaxation technique from Williams College (from wso.williams.edu/orgs/peerh/stress/relax.html):
- Tighten the muscles in your toes. Hold for a count of 10. Relax and enjoy the sensation of release from tension.
- Flex the muscles in your feet. Hold for a count of 10. Relax.
- Move slowly up through your body- legs, abdomen, back, neck, and face- contracting and relaxing muscles as you go.
- Breathe deeply and slowly.
- After your speech, evaluate the technique. Did you find that this exercise reduced your nervousness? If so, why do you think it was effective? If not, what technique do you think would have been more effective?
- Together with a partner or in a small group, generate a list of relaxation techniques that you currently use to relieve stress. Once you have run out of ideas, review the list and eliminate the techniques that would not work for helping you cope with nervousness before a speech. Of the remaining ideas, select the top three that you believe would help you personally and that you would be willing to try.

Review Questions

1. What percentage of the general population is likely dealing with CA?
2. What are some of the potential issues or problems that can result from CA?
3. What are some of the different ways researchers classify CA? What are the differences between these ideas?
4. What are some of your sources of CA? Would you classify these as examples of trait- anxiety or state-anxiety?
5. How does Cognitive Restructuring work? Does it work the same for every person who tries it?

6. What does it mean to become conversant in your topic?
7. Why is memorizing a presentation a risky move? Is there any part of your presentation that should be memorized?

Glossary

"Breathe and Release"

This is a short-cut version of systematic de-sensitization appropriate for public speaking preparation.

Cognitive Restructuring (CR)

CR is an internal process through which individuals can deliberately adjust how they perceive an action or experience.

Communication Apprehension

CA is an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons.

Conversant

Being conversant is the condition of being able to discuss an issue intelligently with others.

Scrutiny Fear

Anxiety resulting from being in a situation where one is being watched or observed, or where one perceives themselves as being watched, is known as scrutiny fear. This sort of anxiety does not necessarily involve interacting with other people.

State-Anxiety

State-anxiety is derived from the external situation within which individuals find themselves.

Systematic De-sensitization

Systematic de-sensitization is a multi-stage, therapeutic regimen to help patients deal with phobias through coping mechanisms.

Trait-Anxiety

Trait-anxiety is anxiety that is aligned with, or a manifestation of, an individual's personality.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Listening Effectively

4.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- explain the difference between listening and hearing
- understand the value of listening
- identify the three attributes of active listeners
- recognize barriers to effective listening
- employ strategies to engage listeners
- provide constructive feedback as a listener

“You’re not listening!” An unhappy teen shouts at a concerned parent. A frustrated parent yells this as a toddler runs through a parking lot. A woman offers these three words as a parting shot before hanging up on her significant other. We can imagine all these scenarios and more; all of them rooted in a speaker wondering if his or her audience is truly listening.

Public speaking requires an audience to hear. What makes public speaking truly effective is when the audience hears and listens. You might think the two are synonymous. But they aren’t, as you will soon understand. In a classic listening text, Adler (1983) notes, “How utterly amazing is the general assumption that the ability to listen well is a natural gift for which no training is required.” Since listening requires great effort, this chapter offers the skills needed to listen effectively.

Developing your listening skills can have applications throughout your educational, personal, and professional lives. You will begin by examining the difference between hearing and listening. This module will also help you understand your role as a listener, not only in a public speaking class, but also in the world. You’ll read about attributes of an active listener, barriers to listening, and strategies to listen better. Finally, building on valuable lessons regarding listening, this chapter concludes with suggestions public speakers can use to encourage audiences to listen more attentively.

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4.1: Hearing Versus Listening

A mother takes her four-year-old to the pediatrician reporting she's worried about the girl's hearing. The doctor runs through a battery of tests, checks in the girl's ears to be sure everything looks good, and makes notes in the child's folder. Then, she takes the mother by the arm. They move together to the far end of the room, behind the girl. The doctor whispers in a low voice to the concerned parent: "Everything looks fine. But, she's been through a lot of tests today. You might want to take her for ice cream after this, as a reward. " The daughter jerks her head around, huge grin on her face, "Oh, please, Mommy! I love ice cream!" The doctor, now speaking at a regular volume, reports, "As I said, I don't think there's any problem with her hearing, but she may not always choose to listen."

Hearing is something most everyone does without even trying. It is a physiological response to sound waves moving through the air at up to 760 miles per hour. First, we receive the sound in our ears. The wave of sound causes our eardrums to vibrate, which engages our brain to begin processing. The sound is then transformed into nerve impulses so that we can perceive it in our brains.

Hearing has kept our species alive for centuries. When you are asleep but wake in a panic having heard a noise downstairs, an age-old self- preservation response is kicking in. Hearing is unintentional, whereas **listening** (by contrast) requires you to pay conscious attention. Our bodies hear, but we need to employ intentional effort to actually listen.

Listening is one of the first skills infants gain, using it to acquire language and learn to communicate with their parents. Bommelje (2011) suggests listening is the activity we do most in life, second only to breathing. Nevertheless, the skill is seldom taught.

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4.2: Three A's of Active Listening

Effective listening is about self-awareness. You must pay attention to whether or not you are only hearing, passively listening, or actively engaging. Effective listening requires concentration and a focused effort that is known as active listening. Active listening can be broken down into three main elements; attention, attitude, adjustment.

Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly.

~ Plutarch

Attention

We know now that attention is the fundamental difference between hearing and listening. Paying attention to what a speaker is saying requires intentional effort on your part. Nichols (1957), credited with first researching the field of listening, observed, "listening is hard work. It is characterized by faster heart action, quicker circulation of the blood, a small rise in bodily temperature."

Consider that we can process information four times faster than a person speaks. Yet, tests of listening comprehension show the average person listening at only 25% efficiency. A typical person can speak 125 words- per-minute, yet we can process up to three times faster, reaching as much as 500 words-per-minute. The poor listener grows impatient, while the effective listener uses the extra processing time to process the speaker's words, distinguish key points, and mentally summarize them (Nichols, 1957).

Hoppe (2006) advises active listening is really a state of mind requiring us to choose to focus on the moment, being present and attentive while disregarding any of our anxieties of the day. He suggests listeners prepare themselves for active attention by creating a **listening reminder**. This might be to write "Listen" at the top of a page in front of you in a meeting.

While reading a book, or having a discussion with an individual, you can go back and reread or ask a question to clarify a point. This is not always true when listening. Listening is of the moment, and we often only get to hear the speaker's words once. The key then, is for the listener to quickly ascertain the speaker's central premise or controlling idea. Once this is done, it becomes easier for the listener to discern what is most important. Of course, distinguishing the speaker's primary goal, his or her main points, and the structure of the speech are all easier when the listener is able to listen with an open mind.

Attitude

Even if you are paying attention, you could be doing so with the wrong attitude, the second A. Telling yourself this is all a waste of time is not going to help you to listen effectively. You'll be better off determining an internal motivation to be attentive to the person speaking.

Approaching the task of listening with a positive attitude and an open- mind will make the act of listening much easier. Bad listeners make snap judgments that justify the decision to be inattentive. Yet, since you're already there, why not listen to see what you can learn?

Kaponya (1991) warns against psychological **deaf spots**, which impair our ability to perceive and understand things counter to our convictions. It can be as little as a word or phrase that might cause "an emotional eruption" causing communication efficiency to drop rapidly.

For instance, someone who resolutely supports military action as the best response to a terrorist action may be unable to listen objectively to a speaker endorsing negotiation as a better tool. Even if the speaker is effectively employing logic, drawing on credible sources, and appealing to emotion with a heartrending tale of the civilian casualties caused by bombings, this listener would be unable to keep an open mind. Failing to acknowledge your deaf spots will leave you at a deficit when listening.

You will always need to make up your own mind about where you stand—whether you agree or disagree with the speaker—but it is critical to do so after listening. Adler (1983) proposes having four questions in mind while listening:

1. "What is the whole speech about?"
2. "What are the main or pivotal ideas, conclusions, and arguments?"
3. "Are the speaker's conclusions sound or mistaken?"
4. "What of it?"

Once you have an overall idea of the speech, determine the key points, and gauge your agreement, you can decide why it matters, how it affects you, or what you might do as a result of what you have heard. Yet, he notes it is “impossible” to answer all these questions at the same time as you are listening (Adler, 1983). Instead, you have to be ready and willing to pay attention to the speaker’s point of view and changes in direction, patiently waiting to see where she is leading you.

Adjustment

Often when we hear someone speak, we don’t know in advance what he or she is going to be saying. So, we need to be flexible, willing to follow a speaker along what seems like a verbal detour down a rabbit hole until we are rewarded by the speaker reaching his or her final destination. If the audience members are more intent on reacting to or anticipating what is said, they will be poor listeners indeed.

Take time now to think about your own listening habits by completing the listening profile (Figure 4.3.1), adapted from Brownell (1996). The next section will consider ways to address the challenges of listening effectively.

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4.3: Barriers to Effective Listening

We get in our own way when it comes to effective listening. While listening may be the communication skill we use foremost in formal education environments, it is taught the least (Brownell, 1996). To better learn to listen it is first important to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses as listeners.

Figure 4.3.1: Effective Listening

Anticipating

Anticipating, or thinking about what the listener is likely to say, can detract from listening in several ways. On one hand, the listener might find the speaker is taking too long to make a point and try to anticipate what the final conclusion is going to be. While doing this, the listener has stopped actively listening to the speaker.

A listener who knows too much, or thinks they do, listens poorly. The only answer is humility, and recognizing there is always something new to be learned. Anticipating what we will say in response to the speaker is another detractor to effective listening.

Listening Profile

The questions below correspond to each of the six listening components in HURIER: Hearing, Understanding, Remembering, Interpreting, Evaluating, and Responding. Before answering the questions, first guess which of the six you will do best at. In which area will you likely score lowest? Now respond to the following prompts gauging your listening behavior on a five-point scale (1 = almost never, 2 = infrequently, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = almost always).

_____1. I am constantly aware that people and circumstances change over time.

_____2. I take into account the speaker's personal and cultural perspective when listening to him or her.

_____3. I pay attention to the important things going on around me.

_____4. I accurately hear what is said to me.

_____5. I understand the speaker's vocabulary and recognize that my understanding of a work is likely to be somewhat.

_____6. I adapt my response according to the needs of the particular situation.

_____7. I weigh all evidence before making a decision.

_____8. I take time to analyze the validity of my partner's reasoning before arriving at my own conclusion.

_____9. I can recall what I have heard, even when in stressful situations.

_____10. I enter communication situations with a positive attitude.

_____11. I ask relevant questions and restate my perceptions to make sure I have understood the speaker correctly.

_____12. I provide clear and direct feedback to others.

_____13. I do not let my emotions interfere with my listening or decision-making.

_____14. I remember how the speaker's facial expressions, body posture, and other nonverbal behaviors relate to the verbal message.

_____15. I overcome distractions such as the conversation of others, background noises, and telephones, when someone is speaking.

_____16. I distinguish between main ideas and supporting evidence when I listen.

_____17. I am sensitive to the speaker's tone in communication situations.

_____18. I listen to and accurately remember what is said, even when I strongly disagree with the speaker's viewpoint.

Add your scores for 4 + 10 + 15. This is your hearing total.

Add your scores for 5 + 11 + 16. This is your understanding total. Add your scores for 1 + 7 + 8. This is your evaluating total.

Add your scores for 3 + 9 + 18. This is your remembering total. Add your scores for 2 + 14 + 17. This is your interpreting total. Add your scores for 6 + 12 + 13. This is your responding total.

In which skill area do you score highest? Which is your lowest? How would these listening behaviors affect your interactions with peers, parents, instructors, or professional coworkers?

Judging

Jumping to conclusions about the speaker is another barrier to effective listening. Perhaps you've been in the audience when a speaker makes a small mistake; maybe it's mispronouncing a word or misstating the hometown of your favorite athlete. An effective listener will overlook this minor gaffe and continue to give the speaker the benefit of the doubt. A listener looking for an excuse not to give their full attention to the speaker will instead take this momentary lapse as proof of flaws in all the person has said and will go on to say.

This same listener might also judge the speaker based on superficialities. Focusing on delivery or personal appearance—a squeaky voice, a ketchup stain on a white shirt, mismatched socks, a bad haircut, or a proclaimed love for a band that no one of any worth could ever profess to like—might help the ineffective listener justify a choice to stop listening. Still, this is always a choice. The effective listener will instead accept that people may have their own individual foibles, but they can still be good speakers and valuable sources of insight or information.

Reacting Emotionally

When the speaker says an emotional trigger, it can be even more difficult to listen effectively. A guest speaker on campus begins with a personal story about the loss of a parent, and instead of listening you become caught up grieving a family member of your own. Or, a presenter takes a stance on drug use, abortion, euthanasia, religion, or even the best topping for a pizza that you simply can't agree with. You begin formulating a heated response to the speaker's perspective, or searing questions you might ask to show the holes in the speaker's argument. Yet, you've allowed your emotional response to the speaker interfere with your ability to listen effectively.

Bore (n): A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

~ Ambrose Bierce

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4.4: Strategies to Enhance Listening

Keep an Open Mind

The effective listener is calm with a focused and alert mind. You are not waiting to hear what you want to hear, but listening to "what is said as it is said" (Ramsland, 1992). Effective listeners remember that listening to a point of view is not the same as accepting that point of view. Recognizing this can help you to cultivate a more open perspective, helping you to better adjust as you listen actively to a speaker.

Identify Distractions

In any setting where you are expected to listen, you encounter numerous distractions. In the classroom setting, you might be distracted sitting beside friends who make sarcastic comments throughout the class. In a new product meeting with the sales team, you could be unnerved by the constant beep of your phone identifying another text, email, or phone message has arrived.

Identifying the things that will interrupt your attention, and making a conscious choice to move to a different seat or turn off your phone, can help position you to listen more effectively.

Come Prepared

Another useful strategy is to come prepared when you can. Any time you enter a listening situation with some advance working knowledge of the speaker and what might be expected of you as a listener, you will be better able to adjust and engage more deeply in what is being said.

For instance, you might read the assigned readings for class, read a biography of a guest speaker before you go to an event, or consult with a colleague about a client before going on-site to make a sale. Preparing for any speaking situation will help you retain information and be a more effective listener.

Take Notes

Taking notes can also advance your ability to be actively engaged in the speaker's words. You need not write down everything the speaker is saying. First, this is quite likely to be impossible. Second, once you are caught up in recording a speaker's every word, you are no longer listening. If you feel you really must capture every single word the speaker says, use a tape recorder after having asked the speaker's permission first.

You want to focus your efforts on really listening with an active mind. Learning to focus your attention on main points, key concepts, and gaining the overall gist of the speaker's talk is another skill to develop. You might endeavor to do this by jotting down a few notes or even drawing visuals that help you to recall the main ideas.

The manner in which you take the notes is up to you; what is important is the fact that you are listening and working to process what is being said. Writing down questions that come to mind and asking questions of the speaker when it is possible, are two more ways to guarantee effective listening as you have found an internal motivation to listen attentively.

Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.

~ Robert Frost

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4.5: Providing Feedback to Speakers

There are many ways in which a listener can offer feedback to a speaker, sometimes even wordlessly. Keeping an open mind is something you do internally, but you can also demonstrate openness to a speaker through your **nonverbal communication**.

Nonverbal Feedback

Boothman (2008) recommends listening with your whole body, not just your ears. While you might think speaking to a room full of people with their eyes closed, arms and legs crossed, and bodies bent in slouches would help you feel less anxious, these listeners are presenting nonverbal cues that they are uninterested and unimpressed. Meanwhile, a listener sitting up straight, facing you with an intent look on his face is more likely to offer reassurance that your words are being understood.

Eye contact is another nonverbal cue to the speaker that you are paying attention. You don't want to be bug-eyed and unblinking; as that can make the speaker uncomfortable or self-conscious. However, attentive eye contact can indicate you are listening, and help you to stay focused too.

There are some cultures where maintaining eye contact would cause discomfort, so keep that in mind. Also, you may be someone who listens better with eyes closed to visualize what is being said. This can be difficult for a speaker to recognize, so if this is you consider incorporating one of the following nonverbals while you listen with eyes closed.

Miller (1994) suggests the "listener's lean" demonstrates "ultimate interest. This joyous feedback is reflexive. It physically endorses our communiqué." Nevertheless, sending too many nonverbal responses to the speaker can go wrong too. After all, a conference room full of people shifting in their seats and nodding their heads may translate as a restless audience that the speaker needs to recapture.

The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them.

~ Kin Hubbard

Verbal Feedback

When providing feedback or asking questions of the speaker, approach the speaker in a positive, non-threatening way. A good listener does not seek to put the speaker on the defensive. You want to demonstrate your objectivity and willingness to listen to the speaker's response or clarification.

You can use questions to confirm your understanding of the speaker's message. If you're not entirely sure of a significant point, you might ask a clarifying question. These are questions such as "What did you mean?" "Can you be more specific?" or "What is a concrete example of your point?" These can help your comprehension, while also offering the speaker feedback.

While speakers sometimes want all questions held until the end of a presentation, asking appropriate questions when the opportunity presents itself can help you as a listener. For one, you have to listen in order to be able to ask a question. Your goal should be to ask open-ended questions ("What do you think about….?" rather than "We should do …., right?"). You can use questions to confirm your understanding of the speaker's message. If you're not entirely sure of a significant point, you might ask a clarifying question. These are questions such as "What did you mean?" "Can you be more specific?" or "What is a concrete example of your point?"

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4.6: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

Admittedly, this discussion of listening may add a layer of intimidation for public speakers. After all, it can be daunting to think of having to get an audience to not only hear, but also truly listen.

Nevertheless, once we recognize the difference and become aware of active listening and its barriers, we can better tailor our spoken words to captivate and engage an audience. A broader awareness of the importance of effective listening is another weapon in your arsenal as a public speaker. At the same time, building up your own effective listening skills can enhance your academic, professional, and personal success. Being heard is one thing, but speakers need listeners to complete the communication loop. Reap the rewards: Instead of saying "I hear you," try out "I'm listening."

Review Questions

1. What distinguished listening from hearing?
2. What are some benefits for you personally from effective listening?
3. Name and given an example for each of the three A's of listening.
4. Identify the three main barriers to listening. Which of these barriers is most problematic for you? What can you do about it?
5. How can you communicate nonverbally that you are listening?
6. What are considerations in offering constructive feedback?
7. What are strategies that help hold your listeners attention during your speech?

Glossary

Auditory Association

The process by which the mind sorts the perceived sound into a category so that heard information is recognized. New stimuli is differentiated by comparing and contrasting with previously heard sounds.

Communication Loop

A traditional communication model that has both sender and receiver sharing responsibility for communicating a message, listening, and offering feedback. The sender encodes a message for the receiver to decode. Effectiveness of the communication depends on the two sharing a similar interpretation of the message and feedback (which can be verbal or nonverbal).

Constructive Feedback

Focuses on being specific, applicable, immediate, and intends to help the speaker to improve. The feedback should be phrased as "The story you told about you and your sister in Disneyland really helped me to understand your relationship…" rather than "that was great, Jane."

"Deaf Spots"

The preconceived notions or beliefs a listener might hold dear that can interfere with listening effectively. These are barriers to having an open mind to receive the sender's message.

Emotional Trigger

A word, concept, or idea that causes the listener to react emotionally. When listeners react to a speaker from an emotional perspective, their ability to listen effectively is compromised.

Ethos

A speaker aims to establish credibility on the topic at hand with her audience by appealing to ethos. This reflects the speaker's character, her ability to speak to the values of the listener, and her competence to discuss the topic.

Hearing

Hearing is a three-step process. It involves receiving sound in the ear, perceiving sound in the brain, and processing the information offered by the sound to associate and distinguish it.

Intrinsic Motivation

Effective listeners will find a reason within themselves to want to hear, understand, interpret, and remember the speaker's message. Wanting to pass a possible quiz is an extrinsic motivation, while wanting to learn the material out of curiosity about the topic is intrinsic motivation.

"Listener's Lean"

Audience members who are intent on what is being said will lean forward. This is a nonverbal endorsement of the listener's attention and the effect of the speaker's message.

Listening

This is the conscious act of focusing on the words or sounds to make meaning of a message. Listening requires more intentional effort than the physiological act of hearing.

Listening Reminder

A note made by a listener acknowledging intent to focus on the speaker's message and tune out distractions. A reminder might also encourage a listener to keep an open mind, or to provide open and encouraging body language.

Nonverbal Communication

Physical behaviors that communicate the message or the feedback from the listener. These include leaning in, nodding one's head, maintaining eye contact, crossing arms in front of the body, and offering sounds of agreement or dissent.

Pathos

An appeal to the audience's emotions, trying to trigger sympathy, pity, guilt, or sorrow. Pathos, along with ethos, and logos, make up the rhetorical triangle of appeals, according to Aristotle. An effective speaker will appeal to all three.

Writing for the Ear

Keeping in mind, when writing a speech, that you must use language, pace, repetition, and other elements to help your audience to hear and see what you are speaking about. Remember, the listener must hear and understand your message as you speak it.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Audience Analysis

5.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- List techniques for analyzing a specific target audience.
- Explain audience analysis by direct observation.
- Describe audience analysis by inference.
- Identify the purpose of a basic questionnaire.
- Recognize and apply data sampling.
- Determine when to use a Likert-type test.
- Define the five categories of audience analysis.
- Summarize the purpose of the situational analysis.
- Explain audience analysis by demography.
- Recognize the difference between beliefs, attitudes and values.
- Identify reasons for sampling a multicultural audience.
- Apply the chapter concepts in final questions and activities.

Robert E. Mullins, a well-known local bank officer, was preparing a speech for the Rotary Club in Dallas, Texas on the topic of "finding the right loan" for a rather diverse audience. He knew his topic extremely well, had put a lot of hard work into his research, and had his visual aids completely in order. One of the things he had not fully considered, however, was the audience to which he would be speaking. On the day of the presentation, Mr. Mullins delivered a flawless speech on "secured" car and home loans, but the speech was not received particularly well. You see, on this particular week, a major segment of the audience consisted of the "Junior Rotarians" who wanted to hear about "personal savings accounts" and "college savings plans." It was a critical error. Had Mr. Mullins considered the full nature and demographic makeup of his audience prior to the event, he might not have been received so poorly.

In contemporary public speaking, the audience that you are addressing is the entire reason you are giving the speech; accordingly, the audience is therefore the most important component of all speechmaking. It cannot be said often or more forcefully enough: know your audience! Knowing your audience—their beliefs, attitudes, age, education level, job functions, language, and culture—is the single most important aspect of developing your speech strategy and execution plan.

Your audience isn't just a passive group of people who come together by happenstance to listen to you. Your audience is assembled for a very real and significant reason: they want to hear what you have to say. So, be prepared.

Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation.

~ Robert H. Schuller

We analyze our audience because we want to discover information that will help create a bond between the speaker and the audience. We call this bond "identification." Aristotle loosely called it "finding a common ground." This isn't a one-way process between the speaker and the audience; rather, it is a two-way transactional process.

When you ask an audience to listen to your ideas, you are inviting them to come partway into your personal and professional experience as an expert speaker. And, in return, it is your responsibility and obligation to go partway into their experience as an audience. The more you know and understand about your audience and their psychological needs, the better you can prepare your speech and your enhanced confidence will reduce your own speaker anxiety (Dwyer, 2005).

This chapter is dedicated to understanding how a speaker connects with an audience through audience analysis by direct observation, analysis by inference, and data collection (Clevenger, 1966). In addition, this chapter explores the five categories of

audience analysis:

1. the situational analysis
2. the demographic analysis
3. the psychological analysis
4. the multicultural analysis
5. the topic interest and prior knowledge analysis

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5.1: Approaches to Audience Analysis

Whenever thinking about your speech, it is always a good idea to begin with a thorough awareness of your audience and the many factors comprising that particular audience.

In speech communication, we simply call this “doing an audience analysis.”

An **audience analysis** is when you consider all of the pertinent elements defining the makeup and demographic characteristics (also known as **demographics**) of your audience (McQuail, 1997). We come to understand that there are detailed accounts of human population characteristics, such as age, gender/sec, education and intellect levels, occupation, socio-economic class, religion, political affiliation, language, ethnicity, culture, background knowledge, needs and interests, and previously held attitudes, beliefs, and values.

Demographics are widely used by advertising and public relations professionals to analyze specific audiences so that their products or ideas will carry influence. However, all good public speakers consider the demographic characteristics of their audience, as well. It is the fundamental stage of preparing for your speech.

So now you may be saying to yourself: “Gee, that’s great! How do I go about analyzing my particular audience?” First, you need to know that there are three overarching methods (or “**paradigms**”) for doing an audience analysis: audience analysis by direct observation, audience analysis by inference, and audience analysis through data collection. Once you get to know how these methods work, you should be able to select which one (or even combination of these methods) is right for your circumstances.

Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life.

~ Marcus Aurelius

Direct Observation

Audience analysis by direct observation, or direct experience, is the most simple of the three paradigms for “getting the feel” of a particular audience. It is a form of qualitative data gathering. We perceive it through one or more of our five natural senses—hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and smelling.

Knowledge that we acquire through personal experience has more impact on us than does knowledge that we learn indirectly. Knowledge acquired from personal experience is also more likely to affect our thinking and will be retained for a longer period of time. We are more likely to trust what we hear, see, feel, taste, and smell rather than what we learn from secondary sources of information (Pressat, 1972).

All you really need to do for this method of observation is to examine your audience. If you are lucky enough to be able to do this before speaking to your audience, you will be able to gather some basic reflective data (How old are they? What racial mix does this audience have? Does their non-verbal behavior indicate that they are excited to hear this speech?) that will help you arrange your thoughts and arguments for your speech (Nierenberg &Calero, 1994).

One excellent way to become informed about your audience is to ask them about themselves. Whenever possible, have conversations with them—interact with members of your audience—get to know them on a personal level (Where did you go to school? Do you have siblings/pets? What kind of car do you drive?)

Through these types of conversations, you will be able to get to know and appreciate each audience member as both a human being and as an audience member. You will come to understand what interests them, convinces them, or even makes them laugh. You might arouse interest and curiosity in your topic while you also gain valuable data.

For example, you want to deliver a persuasive speech about boycotting farm-raised fish. You could conduct a short attitudinal survey to discover what your audience thinks about the topic, if they eat farm-raised fish, and if they believe it is healthy for them. This information will help you when you construct your speech because you will know their attitudes about the subject. You would be able to avoid constructing a speech that potentially could do the opposite of what you intended.

Another example would be that you want to deliver an informative speech about your town’s recreational activities and facilities. Your focus can be aligned with your audience if, before you begin working on your speech, you find out if your audience has senior

citizens and/or high school students and/or new parents.

Not understanding the basic demographic characteristics of an audience, or further, that audience's beliefs, values, or attitudes about a given topic makes your presentation goals haphazard, at best. Look around the room at the people who will be listening to your speech. What types of gender, age, ethnicity, and educational- level characteristics are represented? What are their expectations for your presentation? This is all- important information you should know before you begin your research and drafting your outline. Who is it that I am going to be talking to?

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

~ Albert Einstein

Inference

Audience analysis by inference is merely a logical extension of your observations drawn in the method above. It is a form of critical thinking known as inductive reasoning, and another form of qualitative data gathering.

An inference is when you make a reasoned tentative conclusion or logical judgment on the basis of available evidence. It is best used when you can identify patterns in your evidence that indicate something is expected to happen again or should hold true based upon previous experiences.

As individuals we make inferences—or reasonable assumptions—all the time. For example, when we see someone wearing a Los Angeles Dodgers t-shirt, we infer that they are fans of the baseball team. When we see someone drinking coffee, we infer that they need a caffeine boost. These are reasoned conclusions that we make based upon the evidence available to us and our general knowledge about people and their traits.

When we reason, we make connections, distinctions, and predictions; we use what is known or familiar to us to reach a conclusion about something that is unknown or unfamiliar for it to make sense. Granted, of course, inferences are sometimes wrong and it is the speaker's responsibility to ensure their information is verifiable.

Data Sampling

Unlike audience analysis by direct observation and analysis by inference, audience analysis by *data sampling* uses statistical evidence to quantify and clarify the characteristics of your audience.

These characteristics are also known as variables, and are assigned a numerical value so we can systematically collect and classify them (Tucker, Weaver, & Berryman-Fink, 1981). They are reported as statistics, also known as quantitative analysis or quantitative data collection. Statistics are numerical summaries of facts, figures, and research findings. Audience analysis by data sampling requires you to survey you audience before you give a speech. You need to know the basics of doing a survey before you actually collect and interpret your data.

Basic Questionnaire

There are a great number of survey methods available to the speaker. However, we will cover three primary types in this section because they are utilized the most. The first type of survey method you should know about is the basic questionnaire, which is a series of questions advanced to produce demographic and attitudinal data from your audience.

Figure 5.1.1: Questionnaire is in the Public Domain.

Clearly, audience members should not be required to identify themselves by name on the basic questionnaire. Anonymous questionnaires are more likely to produce truthful information.

Remember, all you are looking for is a general read of your audience; you should not be looking for specific information about any respondent concerning your questionnaire in particular. It is a bulk-sampling tool, only.

While you can easily gather basic demographic data, we need to ask more focused questions in order to understand the audience's "presuppositions" to think or act in certain ways. For example, you can put an attitudinal extension on the basic questionnaire (See examples below). These questions probe more deeply into the psyche of your audience members, and will help you see where they stand on certain issues.

Ordered Categories

Another method of finding your audience's value set is to survey them according to their value hierarchy. A value hierarchy is a person's value structure placed in relationship to a given value set (Rokeach, 1968).

The way to determine a person's value hierarchy is to use the ordered categories sampling method. The audience member will put the given values in order based on what they deem most important. When analyzed by the speaker, common themes will present themselves. (See examples below).

Examples of Survey Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Academic Level
    a. Freshman
    b. Sophomore
    c. Junior
    d. Senior
2. Marital Status
    a. Single
    b. Married
    c. Divorced
    d. Widowed
3. Age

a. Less then 18
b. 18 – 30 years old
c. 31 – 45 years old
d. over 46 years of age

Attitudinal Questions

1. I regard myself as
    a. Conservative
    b. Liberal
    c. Socialist
    d. Independent
2. I believe that abortion
    a. Should be illegal
    b. Should remain legal
    c. Should be legal in certain cases
    d. Not sure
3. I think that prayer should be permitted in public schools
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. undecided

Value Ordered Questions

Place the following list of calues in order of importance, from most important (1) to least important (5).

Freedom

Liberty

Justive

Democracy

Safety

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Likert-Type Questions

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each question; 1 being strongly agree, 5 being strongly disagree.

1. Unsolicited email should be illegal.

    1 2 3 4 5

2. Making unsolicited email illegal would be fundamentally unfair to businesses.

    1 2 3 4 5

3. I usually delete unsolicited email before even opening it.

    1 2 3 4 5

Likert-Type Testing

The final method of asserting your audience's attitudes deals with Likert-type testing. Likert-type testing is when you make a statement, and ask the respondent to gauge the depth of their sentiments toward that statement positively, negatively, or neutrally. Typically, each scale will have 5 weighted response categories, being +2, +1, 0,-1, and -2.

What the Likert-type test does, that other tests do not do, is measure the extent to which attitudes are held. See how the Likert-type test does this in the example on "unsolicited email" above.

A small Likert-type test will tell you where your audience, generally speaking, stands on issues. As well, it will inform you as to the degree of the audience's beliefs on these issues. The Likert-type test should be used when attempting to assess a highly charged or polarizing issue, because it will tell you, in rough numbers, whether or not your audience agrees or disagrees with your topic.

No matter what kind of data sampling you choose, you need to allow time to collect the information and then analyze it. For example, if you create a survey of five questions, and you have your audience of 20 people complete the survey, you will need to deal with 100 survey forms.

If you are in a small community group or college class, it is more likely that you will be doing your survey "the old-fashioned way"–so you will need some time to mark each individual response on a "master sheet" and then average or summarize the results in an effective way to use in your speech-writing and speech-giving.

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5.2: Categories of Audience Analysis

No matter which of the above inquiry methods you choose to do your audience analysis, you will, at some point, need to direct your attention to the five “categories” of audience analysis.

Let’s now examine these categories and understand the variables and constraints you should use to estimate your audience’s information requirements.

Situational Analysis

The situational audience analysis category considers the situation for which your audience is gathered. This category is primarily concerned with why your audience is assembled in the first place (Caernarven-Smith, 1983). Are they willingly gathered to hear you speak? Have your audience members paid to hear you? Or, are your audience members literally “speech captives” who have somehow been socially or systematically coerced into hearing you?

These factors are decisively important because they place a major responsibility upon you as a speaker. The entire tone and agenda of your speech rests largely upon whether or not your audience even wants to hear from you.

Many audiences are considered captive audiences in that they are, for whatever reason, required to be present. While they must physically be present, it is your job as a speaker to keep them mentally present!

In stark contrast, a voluntary audience is willingly assembled to listen to a given message. As a rule, these audiences are much easier to address because they are interested in hearing the speech. With this type of audience, your job is to make sure they leave satisfied and informed.

Demographic Analysis

The second category of audience analysis is **demography**. As mentioned before, demographics are literally a classification of the characteristics of the people. Whenever addressing an audience, it is generally a good idea to know about its age, gender/sex, major, year in school, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, income levels, et cetera. There are two steps in doing an accurate demographic analysis: gathering demographic data and interpreting this data (Benjamin, 1969).

Consider for a moment how valuable it would be to you as a public speaker to know that your audience will be mostly female, between the ages of 25 and 40, mostly married, and Caucasian. Would this change your message to fit this demographic? Or would you keep your message the same, no matter the audience you were addressing? Chances are you would be more inclined to talk to issues bearing upon those gender, age, and race qualities.

Frankly, the smart speaker would shift his or her message to adapt to the audience. And, simply, that’s the purpose of doing demographics: to embed within your message the acceptable parameters of your audience’s range of needs.

Psychological Analysis

Unless your selected speech topic is a complete mystery to your audience, your listeners will already hold “attitudes, beliefs, and values” toward the ideas you will inevitably present. As a result, it is always important to know where your audience stands on the issues you plan to address ahead of time.

The best way to accomplish this is to sample your audience with a quick questionnaire or survey prior to the event. This is known as the third category of audience analysis, or **psychological description**.

Attitudes

In basic terms, attitudes are likes and dislikes. An **attitude** is a learned disposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a person, an object, an idea, or an event (Jastrow, 1918). Attitudes come in different forms. Attitudes can be as simple as saying “I like college” or “I don’t like pizza.” You are very likely to see an attitude present itself when someone says that they are “pro” or “anti” something. You may have a positive attitude toward the welfare system, or a negative attitudes.

Above all else, attitudes are learned and not necessarily enduring. Attitudes can change, and sometimes do, whereas beliefs and values do not shift as easily.

Beliefs

Beliefs are principles (Bem, 1970) or assumptions about the universe. They include statements we make regarding the validity of ideas (what is true or false). Beliefs are more durable than attitudes because beliefs are hinged to ideals and not issues.

For example, you may believe in the principle: “what goes around comes around.” If you do, you believe in the notion of karma. And so, you may align your behaviors to be consistent with this belief philosophy. You do not engage in unethical or negative behavior because you believe that it will “come back” to you. Likewise, you may try to exude behaviors that are ethical and positive because you wish for this behavior to return, in kind. You may not think this at all, and believe quite the opposite. Either way, there is a belief in operation driving what you think. In many instances, particularly in persuasion, we attempt to convince people to change beliefs by researching to see if the belief can be proved. Some examples of beliefs are located in Table **5.2.1**.

Table **5.2.1**: Examples of Beliefs

Examples of Beliefs	Examples of Beliefs
The world was created by God.	Smoking does not cause cancer.
Marijuana is an addictive gateway drug.	Only high-risk groups acquire HIV.
Ghosts are all around us.	Evolution is fact, not fiction.
Smoking causes cancer.	Marijuana is neither addictive or harmful.
Anyone can acquire HIV.	Ghosts are products of our imagination.

Values

A value, on the other hand, is an enduring belief that regulates our attitudes (Rokeach, 1968). Values are the core principles driving our behavior. If you probe into someone’s attitudes and beliefs far enough, you will inevitably find an underlying value. Importantly, you should also know that we structure our values in accordance to our own value hierarchy, or mental schema of values placed in order of their relative individual importance. Each of us has our own values that we subscribe to and a value hierarchy that we use to navigate the issues of the world. We look at the world through our own lens of what we believe is good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral, and ethical or unethical. That is why values are the most difficult to change.

Values aren’t buses… They’re not supposed to get you anywhere. They’re supposed to define who you are.

~ Jennifer Crusie

Multicultural Analysis

Demography looks at issues of race and ethnicity in a basic sense. However, in our increasingly diverse society, it is worthy to pay particular attention to the issue of speaking to a multicultural audience. Odds are that any real world audience that you encounter will have an underlying multicultural dimension.

As a speaker, you need to recognize that the perspective you have on any given topic may not necessarily be shared by all of the members of your audience (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative that you become a culturally effective speaker. Culturally effective speakers develop the capacity to appreciate other cultures and acquire the necessary skills to speak effectively to people with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Keep these factors in mind when writing a speech for a diverse audience: language, cognition, ethnocentricity, values, and communication styles.

Language

Many people speak different languages; so if you are translating words, do not use slang or jargon, which can be confusing. You could add a visual aid (a poster, a picture, a PowerPoint slide or two), which would show your audience what you mean – which instantly translates into the audience member’s mind.

Cognition

Realize that different cultures have different cultural- cognitive processes, or ways of looking at the very concept of logic itself. Accordingly, gauge your audience as to their diverse ways of thinking and be sensitive to these differing logics.

Ethnocentricity

Remember that in many cases you will be appealing to people from other cultures. Do not assume that your culture is dominant or better than other cultures. That assumption is called ethnocentrism, and ethnocentric viewpoints have the tendency to drive a wedge between you and your audience

Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman, Zoroastrian, stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the mystery, unique and not to be judged.

~ Rumi

Values

Not only do individuals have value systems of their own, but societies promote value systems, as well. Keep in mind the fact that you will be appealing to value hierarchies that are socially-laden, as well as those that are individually-borne.

Communication Styles

While you are trying to balance these language, cognition, cultural, and value issues, you should also recognize that some cultures prefer a more animated delivery style than do others. The intelligent speaker will understand this, and adapt his or her verbal and nonverbal delivery accordingly.

Interest and Knowledge Analysis

Finally, if the goal of your speech is to deliver a unique and stirring presentation (and it should be), you need to know ahead of time if your audience is interested in what you have to say, and has any prior knowledge about your topic.

You don't want to give a speech that your audience already knows a lot about. So, your job here is to "test" your topic by sampling your audience for their topic interest and topic knowledge. Defined, topic interest is the significance of the topic to a given audience; often related to the uniqueness of a speaker's topic. Likewise, topic knowledge is the general amount of information that the audience possesses on a given topic. These are not mere definitions listed for the sake of argument; these are essential analytical components of effective speech construction.

Unlike multicultural audience analysis, evaluating your audience's topic interest and topic knowledge is a fairly simple task. One can do this through informal question and answer dialogue, or through an actual survey. Either way, it is best to have some information, rather than none at all.

Anyone who teaches me deserves my respect, honoring and attention.

~ Sonia Rumzi

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5.3: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

When considering topics for your speech, it is critical for you to keep your audience in mind. Not doing so will put your speech at risk of not corresponding with the information needs of your audience, and further jeopardize your credibility as a speaker. This chapter examined methods of conducting an audience analysis and five categories of audience analysis: situational, demographic, psychological, multicultural, and interest & knowledge

In sum, this information equips you with the foundational knowledge and skill-set required to ensure that your topic complements your audience. And, after all, if we are not adapting to meet the needs of our audience, we are not going to be informative or convincing speakers. Winston Churchill is credited with the origin of the saying: “Fail to plan, plan to fail” (Lakein, 1989). We, your authors, believe that if you have failed to fully consider the nature, make-up, and characteristics of your audience, you are—for all intents and purposes—neglecting the spirit of the public speaking exercise.

Confidently speaking to audiences can be somewhat addictive. The experience, when properly executed, can be empowering and help you succeed personally and professionally throughout your life. But, you must first consider the audience you will be addressing and take their every requirement into account (Lewis, 1989). We are linked to, joined with, if not bound by, our audiences. Your main speaking ambition should be to seek identification with them, and for them to seek identification with you.

Review Questions & Activities

1. Why is it important to conduct an audience analysis prior to developing your speech?
2. What is the purpose of performing a demographics survey?
3. Why is audience analysis by direct observation the most simple of the three paradigms?
4. What are some problems a speaker faces when delivering an unacquainted-audience presentation?
5. Under what circumstances would a speaker make inferences about an audience during the course of an audience analysis?
6. What is a variable, and how is it used in data sampling?
7. Why are statistics considered to be a form of quantitative analysis and not qualitative analysis?
8. How does conducting a value hierarchy help the speaker when developing a speech?
9. What are the differences between beliefs, attitudes, and values?
10. Which of the five categories of audience analysis is most effective, and why do you think that?

Glossary

Attitude

An attitude is a learned disposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a person, an object, an idea, or an event.

Audience Analysis

A speaker analyzes an audience for demographics, dispositions and knowledge of the topic.

Beliefs

Beliefs are statements about the validity of a phenonmenon. They are more durable than attitudes because beliefs are hinged to ideals and not issues.

Demographics

Demographics are the most recent statistical characteristics of a population.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics are facts about the make-up of a population.

Demography

Demographics are literally a classification of the characteristics of the people.

Inference

Making an inference is the act or process of deriving logical conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true.

Ordered category

An ordered category is a condition of logical or comprehensible arrangement among the separate elements of a group.

Paradigm

A paradigm is a pattern that describes distinct concepts or thoughts in any scientific discipline or other epistemological context.

Psychological Description

A psychological description is a description of the audience's attitudes, beliefs, and values.

Quantitative Analysis

A quantitative analysis is the process of determining the value of a variable by examining its numerical, measurable characteristics.

Statistics

Statistics is the study of the collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation of data.

Unacquainted-Audience Presentation

An unacquainted-audience presentation is a speech when you are completely unaware of your audience's characteristics.

Uniqueness

Uniqueness occurs when a topic rises to the level of being exceptional in interest and knowledge to a given audience.

Variable

A variable is a characteristic of a unit being observed that may assume more than one of a set of values to which a numerical measure or a category from a classification can be assigned.

Value

A value is an enduring belief that regulates our behavior and can be seen through views that include whether something is good or bad, moral or immoral, right or wrong, and ethical or unethical.

Value Hierarchy

A value hierarchy is a person's value structure placed in relationship to a given value set.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Organizing and Outlining

6.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Select a topic appropriate to the audience and occasion.
- Formulate a specific purpose statement that identifies precisely what you will do in your speech.
- Craft a thesis statement (central idea) that clearly and succinctly summarizes the argument you will make in your speech.
- Identify and arrange the main points of your speech according to one of many organizational styles discussed in this chapter.
- Connect the points of your speech to one another.
- Create a preparation and speaking outline for your speech.

Meg jaunted to the front of the classroom—her trusty index cards in one hand and her water bottle in the other. It was the mid-term presentation in her entomology class, a course she enjoyed more than her other classes. The night before, Meg had spent hours scouring the web for information on the Woody Adelgid, an insect that has ravaged hemlock tree populations in the United States in recent years. But when she made it to the podium and finished her well-written and captivating introduction, her speech began to fall apart. Her index cards were a jumble of unorganized information, not linked together by any unifying theme or purpose. As she stumbled through lists of facts, Meg—along with her peers and instructor—quickly realized that her presentation had all the necessary parts to be compelling, but that those parts were not organized into a coherent and convincing speech.

Giving a speech or presentation can be a daunting task for anyone, especially inexperienced public speakers or students in introductory speech courses. Speaking to an audience can also be a rewarding experience for speakers who are willing to put in the extra effort needed to craft rhetorical masterpieces. Indeed, speeches and presentations must be crafted. Such a design requires that speakers do a great deal of preparatory work, like selecting a specific topic and deciding on a particular purpose for their speech. Once the topic and purpose have been decided on, a thesis statement, or central idea, can be prepared. After these things are established, speakers must select the main points of their speech, which should be organized in a way that illuminates the speaker's perspective, or approach to their speech. In a nutshell, effective public speeches are focused on particular topics and contain main points that are relevant to both the topic and the audience. For all of these components to come together convincingly, organizing and outlining must be done prior to giving a speech.

This chapter addresses a variety of strategies needed to craft the body of public speeches. The chapter begins at the initial stages of speechwriting— selecting an important and relevant topic for your audience. The more difficult task of formulating a purpose statement is discussed next. A purpose statement drives the organization of the speech since different purposes (e.g., informational or persuasive) necessitate different types of evidence and presentation styles. Next, the chapter offers a variety of organizational strategies for the body of your speech. Not every strategy will be appropriate for every speech, so the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational styles are also addressed. The chapter then discusses ways to connect your main points and to draw links between your main points and the purpose you have chosen. In the final section of this chapter, one of the most important steps in speechwriting, outlining your speech, is discussed. The chapter provides the correct format for outlines as well as information on how to write a preparation outline and a speaking outline.

Chaos is inherent in all compounded things. Strive on with diligence.

~ Buddha

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6.1: The Topic, General Purpose, Specific Purpose, and Thesis

Before any work can be done on crafting the body of your speech or presentation, you must first do some prep work—selecting a topic, formulating a general purpose, a specific purpose statement, and crafting a central idea, or thesis statement. In doing so, you lay the foundation for your speech by making important decisions about what you will speak about and for what purpose you will speak. These decisions will influence and guide the entire speechwriting process, so it is wise to think carefully and critically during these beginning stages.

Selecting a Topic

Generally, speakers focus on one or more interrelated topics—relatively broad concepts, ideas, or problems that are relevant for particular audiences. The most common way that speakers discover topics is by simply observing what is happening around them—at their school, in their local government, or around the world. Student government leaders, for example, speak or write to other students when their campus is facing tuition or fee increases, or when students have achieved something spectacular, like lobbying campus administrators for lower student fees and succeeding. In either case, it is the situation that makes their speeches appropriate and useful for their audience of students and university employees. More importantly, they speak when there is an opportunity to change a university policy or to alter the way students think or behave in relation to a particular event on campus.

But you need not run for president or student government in order to give a meaningful speech. On the contrary, opportunities abound for those interested in engaging speech as a tool for change. Perhaps the simplest way to find a topic is to ask yourself a few questions. See the textbox entitled “Questions for Selecting a Topic” for a few questions that will help you choose a topic.

Students speak about what is interesting to them and their audiences. What topics do you think are relevant today? There are other questions you might ask yourself, too, but these should lead you to at least a few topical choices. The most important work that these questions do is to locate topics within your pre-existing sphere of knowledge and interest. David Zarefsky (2010) also identifies brainstorming as a way to develop speech topics, a strategy that can be helpful if the questions listed in the textbox did not yield an appropriate or interesting topic. Starting with a topic you are already interested in will likely make writing and presenting your speech a more enjoyable and meaningful experience. It means that your entire speechwriting process will focus on something you find important and that you can present this information to people who stand to benefit from your speech.

Questions for Selecting a Topic

- What important events are occurring locally, nationally and internationally?
- What do I care about most?
- Is there someone or something I can advocate for?
- What makes me angry/happy?
- What beliefs/attitudes do I want to share?
- Is there some information the audience needs to know?

Once you have answered these questions and narrowed your responses, you are still not done selecting your topic. For instance, you might have decided that you really care about breeds of dogs. This is a very broad topic and could easily lead to a dozen different speeches. To resolve this problem, speakers must also consider the audience to whom they will speak, the scope of their presentation, and the outcome they wish to achieve.

Formulating the Purpose Statements

By honing in on a very specific topic, you begin the work of formulating your purpose statement. In short, a **purpose statement** clearly states what it is you would like to achieve. Purpose statements are especially helpful for guiding you as you prepare your speech. When deciding which main points, facts, and examples to include, you should simply ask yourself whether they are relevant not only to the topic you have selected, but also whether they support the goal you outlined in your purpose statement. The **general purpose statement** of a speech may be to inform, to persuade, to celebrate, or to entertain. Thus, it is common to frame a **specific purpose statement** around one of these goals. According to O’Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein, a specific purpose statement “expresses both the topic and the general speech purpose in action form and in terms of the specific objectives you hope to achieve (2004). For instance, the home design enthusiast might write the following specific purpose statement: **At the end of my speech, the audience will learn the pro’s and con’s of flipping houses**. In short, the general purpose statement lays out the broader goal

of the speech while the specific purpose statement describes precisely what the speech is intended to do. Some of your professors may ask that you include the general purpose and add the specific purpose.

Writing the Thesis Statement

The specific purpose statement is a tool that you will use as you write your talk, but it is unlikely that it will appear verbatim in your speech. Instead, you will want to convert the specific purpose statement into a central idea, or **thesis statement** that you will share with your audience.

Depending on your instructor's approach, a thesis statement may be written two different ways. A thesis statement may encapsulate the main points of a speech in just a sentence or two, and be designed to give audiences a quick preview of what the entire speech will be about. The thesis statement for a speech, like the thesis of a research-based essay, should be easily identifiable and ought to very succinctly sum up the main points you will present. Some instructors prefer that your thesis, or central idea, be a single, declarative statement providing the audience with an overall statement that provides the essence of the speech, followed by a separate preview statement.

If you are a Harry Potter enthusiast, you may write a thesis statement (central idea) the following way using the above approach: **J.K. Rowling is a renowned author of the Harry Potter series with a Cinderella like story having gone from relatively humble beginnings, through personal struggles, and finally success and fame**.

Writing the Preview Statement

However, some instructors prefer that you separate your thesis from your preview statement. A preview statement (or series of statements) is a guide to your speech. This is the part of the speech that literally tells the audience exactly what main points you will cover. If you were to open your Waze app, it would tell you exactly how to get there. Best of all, you would know what to look for! So, if we take our J.K Rowling example, let's rewrite that using this approach separating out the thesis and preview:

> ***J.K. Rowling is a renowned author of the Harry Potter series with a Cinderella like rags to riches story. First, I will tell you about J.K. Rowling's humble beginnings. Then, I will describe her personal struggles as a single mom. Finally, I will explain how she overcame adversity and became one of the richest women in the United Kingdom.***

There is no best way to approach this. This is up to your instructor.

Writing the Body of Your Speech

Once you have finished the important work of deciding what your speech will be about, as well as formulating the purpose statement and crafting the thesis, you should turn your attention to writing the body of your speech. All of your main points are contained in the body, and normally this section is prepared well before you ever write the introduction or conclusion. The body of your speech will consume the largest amount of time to present; and it is the opportunity for you to elaborate on facts, evidence, examples, and opinions that support your thesis statement and do the work you have outlined in the specific purpose statement. Combining these various elements into a cohesive and compelling speech, however, is not without its difficulties, the first of which is deciding which elements to include and how they ought to be organized to best suit your purpose.

Good design is making something intelligible and memorable. Great design is making something memorable and meaningful.

~ Dieter Rams

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6.2: Organizational Patterns of Arrangement

After deciding which main points and subpoints you must include, you can get to work writing up the speech. Before you do so, however, it is helpful to consider how you will organize the ideas. There are many ways you can organize speeches, and these approaches will be different depending on whether you are preparing an informative or persuasive speech. These are referred to as organizational patterns for arranging your main points in a speech. The chronological (or temporal), topical, spatial, or causal patterns may be better suited to informative speeches, whereas the Problem-Solution, Monroe's Motivated Sequence (Monroe, 1949), Claim-to-Proof (Mudd & Sillar, 1962), or Refutation pattern would work best for persuasive speeches.

Chronological Pattern

When you speak about events that are linked together by time, it is sensible to engage the chronological organization pattern. In a **chronological speech**, main points are delivered according to when they happened and could be traced on a calendar or clock. Some professors use the term **temporal** to reflect any speech pattern dealing with taking the audience through time. Arranging main points in chronological order can be helpful when describing historical events to an audience as well as when the order of events is necessary to understand what you wish to convey. Informative speeches about a series of events most commonly engage the chronological style, as do many process speeches (e.g., how to bake a cake or build an airplane). Another time when the chronological style makes sense is when you tell the story of someone's life or career. For instance, a speech about Oprah Winfrey might be arranged chronologically. In this case, the main points are arranged by following Winfrey's life from birth to the present time. Life events (e.g., early life, her early career, her life after ending the Oprah Winfrey Show) are connected together according to when they happened and highlight the progression of Winfrey's career. Organizing the speech in this way illustrates the interconnectedness of life events. Below you will find a way in which you can organize your main points chronologically:

Topic: Oprah Winfrey (Chronological Pattern)

Thesis: Oprah's career can be understood by four key, interconnected life stages.

Preview: First, let's look at Oprah's early life. Then, we will look at her early career, followed by her years during the Oprah Winfrey show. Finally, we will explore what she is doing now.

1. Oprah's childhood was spent in rural Mississippi, where she endured sexual abuse from family members
2. Oprah's early career was characterized by stints on local radio and television networks in Nashville and Chicago.
3. Oprah's tenure as host of the Oprah Winfrey Show began in 1986 and lasted until 2011, a period of time marked by much success.
4. Oprah's most recent media venture is OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network, which plays host to a variety of television shows including Oprah's Next Chapter.

Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment.

~ Oprah Winfrey

Topical Pattern

When the main points of your speech center on ideas that are more distinct from one another, a topical organization pattern may be used. In a **topical speech**, main points are developed according to the different aspects, subtopics or topics within an overall topic. Although they are all part of the overall topic, the order in which they are presented really doesn't matter. For example, you are currently attending college. Within your college, there are various student services that are important for you to use while you are here. You may use the library, The Learning Center (TLC), Student Development office, ASG Computer Lab, and Financial Aid. To organize this speech topically, it doesn't matter which area you speak about first, but here is how you could organize it.

Topic: Student Services at College of the Canyons

Thesis and Preview: College of the Canyons has five important student services, which include the library, TLC, Student Development Office, ASG Computer Lab, and Financial Aid.

1. The library can be accessed five days a week and online and has a multitude of books, periodicals, and other resources to use.
2. The TLC has subject tutors, computers, and study rooms available to use six days a week.

3. The Student Development Office is a place that assists students with their ID cards, but also provides students with discount tickets and other student related needs.
4. The ASG computer lab is open for students to use for several hours a day, as well as to print up to 15 pages a day for free.
5. Financial Aid is one of the busiest offices on campus, offering students a multitude of methods by which they can supplement their personal finances paying for both tuition and books.

Spatial Pattern

Another way to organize the points of a speech is through a **spatial speech**, which arranges main points according to their physical and geographic relationships. The spatial style is an especially useful organization pattern when the main point's importance is derived from its location or directional focus. Things can be described from top to bottom, inside to outside, left to right, north to south, and so on. Importantly, speakers using a spatial style should offer commentary about the placement of the main points as they move through the speech, alerting audience members to the location changes. For instance, a speech about The University of Georgia might be arranged spatially; in this example, the spatial organization frames the discussion in terms of the campus layout. The spatial style is fitting since the differences in architecture and uses of space are related to particular geographic areas, making location a central organizing factor. As such, the spatial style highlights these location differences.

Topic: University of Georgia (Spatial Pattern)

Thesis: The University of Georgia is arranged into four distinct sections, which are characterized by architectural and disciplinary differences.

1. In North Campus, one will find the University's oldest building, a sprawling tree- lined quad, and the famous Arches, all of which are nestled against Athens' downtown district.
2. In West Campus, dozens of dormitories provide housing for the University's large undergraduate population and students can regularly be found lounging outside or at one of the dining halls.
3. In East Campus, students delight in newly constructed, modern buildings and enjoy the benefits of the University's health center, recreational facilities, and science research buildings.
4. In South Campus, pharmacy, veterinary, and biomedical science students traverse newly constructed parts of campus featuring well-kept landscaping and modern architecture.

Causal Pattern

A **causal speech** informs audience members about causes and effects that have already happened with respect to some condition, event, etc. One approach can be to share what caused something to happen, and what the effects were. Or, the reverse approach can be taken where a speaker can begin by sharing the effects of something that occurred, and then share what caused it. For example, in 1994, there was a 6.7 magnitude earthquake that occurred in the San Fernando Valley in Northridge, California. Let's look at how we can arrange this speech first by using a **cause-effect pattern**:

Topic: Northridge Earthquake

Thesis: The Northridge earthquake was a devastating event that was caused by an unknown fault and resulted in the loss of life and billions of dollars of damage.

1. The Northridge earthquake was caused by a fault that was previously unknown and located nine miles beneath Northridge.
2. The Northridge earthquake resulted in the loss of 57 lives and over 40 billion dollars of damage in Northridge and surrounding communities.

Depending on your topic, you may decide it is more impactful to start with the effects, and work back to the causes (effect-cause pattern). Let's take the same example and flip it around:

Thesis: The Northridge earthquake was a devastating event that was that resulted in the loss of life and billions of dollars in damage, and was caused by an unknown fault below Northridge.

1. The Northridge earthquake resulted in the loss of 57 lives and over 40 billion dollars of damage in Northridge and surrounding communities.
2. The Northridge earthquake was caused by a fault that was previously unknown and located nine miles beneath Northridge.

Why might you decide to use an effect-cause approach rather than a cause-effect approach? In this particular example, the effects of the earthquake were truly horrible. If you heard all of that information first, you would be much more curious to hear about what caused such devastation. Sometimes natural disasters are not that exciting, even when they are horrible. Why? Unless they affect us directly, we may not have the same attachment to the topic. This is one example where an effect-cause approach may be very impactful.

Good communication does not mean that you have to speak in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn't about slickness. Simple and clear go a long way.

~ John Kotter

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6.3: Outlining Your Speech

Most speakers and audience members would agree that an organized speech is both easier to present as well as more persuasive. Public speaking teachers especially believe in the power of organizing your speech, which is why they encourage (and often require) that you create an outline for your speech. **Outlines**, or textual arrangements of all the various elements of a speech, are a very common way of organizing a speech before it is delivered. Most extemporaneous speakers keep their outlines with them during the speech as a way to ensure that they do not leave out any important elements and to keep them on track. Writing an outline is also important to the speechwriting process since doing so forces the speakers to think about the main ideas, known as main points, and subpoints, the examples they wish to include, and the ways in which these elements correspond to one another. In short, the outline functions both as an organization tool and as a reference for delivering a speech.

Outline Types

There are two types of outlines. The first outline you will write is called the **preparation outline**. Also called a skeletal, working, practice, or rough outline, the preparation outline is used to work through the various components of your speech in an organized format. Stephen E. Lucas (2004) put it simply: “The preparation outline is just what its name implies—an outline that helps you prepare the speech.” When writing the preparation outline, you should focus on finalizing the specific purpose and thesis statement, logically ordering your main points, deciding where supporting material should be included, and refining the overall organizational pattern of your speech. As you write the preparation outline, you may find it necessary to rearrange your points or to add or subtract supporting material. You may also realize that some of your main points are sufficiently supported while others are lacking. The final draft of your preparation outline should include full sentences. In most cases, however, the preparation outline is reserved for planning purposes only and is translated into a speaking outline before you deliver the speech. **Keep in mind though, even a full sentence outline is not an essay**.

A **speaking outline** is the outline you will prepare for use when delivering the speech. The speaking outline is much more succinct than the preparation outline and includes brief phrases or words that remind the speakers of the points they need to make, plus supporting material and signposts (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). The words or phrases used on the speaking outline should briefly encapsulate all of the information needed to prompt the speaker to accurately deliver the speech. Although some cases call for reading a speech verbatim from the full-sentence outline, in most cases speakers will simply refer to their speaking outline for quick reminders and to ensure that they do not omit any important information. Because it uses just words or short phrases, and not full sentences, the speaking outline can easily be transferred to index cards that can be referenced during a speech. However, check with your instructor regarding what you will be allowed to use for your speech.

Main Points

Main points are the main ideas in the speech. In other words, the main points are what your audience should remember from your talk, and they are phrased as single, declarative sentences. These are never phrased as a question, nor can they be a quote or form of citation. Any supporting material you have will be put in your outline as a subpoint. Since this is a public speaking class, your instructor will decide how long your speeches will be, but in general, you can assume that no speech will be longer than 10 minutes in length. Given that alone, we can make one assumption. All speeches will fall between **2 to 5 main** points based simply on length. If you are working on an outline and you have ten main points, something is wrong, and you need to revisit your ideas to see how you need to reorganize your points.

All main points are preceded by **Roman numerals** (I, II, III, etc.). Subpoints are preceded by capital letters (A, B, C, etc.), then Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.), lowercase letters (a, b, c, etc.). You can subordinate further than this. Speak with your instructor regarding his or her specific instructions. Each level of subordination is also differentiated from its predecessor by indenting a few spaces. **Indenting makes it easy to find your main points, subpoints, and the supporting points and examples below them**.

Let’s work on understanding how to take main points and break them into smaller ideas by subordinating them further and further as we go by using the following outline example:

Topic: Dog

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about characteristics of dogs

Thesis: There are many types of dogs that individuals can select from before deciding which would make the best family pet.

Preview: First, I will describe the characteristics of large breed dogs, and then I will discuss characteristics of small breed dogs.

I. **First, let's look at the characteristics of large breed dogs**.
   A. Some large breed dogs need daily activity.
   B. Some large breed dogs are dog friendly.
   C. Some large breed dogs drool.
      1. If you are particularly neat, you may not want one of these.
         a. Bloodhounds drool the most.
            1. After eating is one of the times drooling is bad.
            2. The drooling is horrible after they drink, so beware!
         b. English bloodhounds drool a lot as well.
      2. If you live in an apartment, these breeds could pose a problem.

II. **Next, let's look at the characteristics of small breed dogs**.
   A. Some small breed dogs need daily activity.
   B. Some small breed dogs are dog friendly.
   C. Some small breed dogs are friendly to strangers.
      1. Welsh Terriers love strangers.
         a. They will jump on people.
         b. They will wag their tails and nuzzle.
      2. Beagles love strangers.
      3. Cockapoos also love strangers.

Subordination and Coordination

You should have noticed that as ideas were broken down, or subordinated, there was a hierarchy to the order. To check your outline for coherence, think of the outline as a staircase. All of the points that are beneath and on a diagonal to the points above them are subordinate points. So using the above example, points A, B, and C dealt with characteristics of large breed dogs, and those points are all **subordinate** to main point I. Similarly, points 1 and 2 under point C both dealt with drool, so those are subordinate. If we had discussed food under point C, you would know that something didn't make sense. You will also see that there is **coordination** of points. As part of the hierarchy, coordination simply means that all of the numbers or letters should represent the same idea. In this example, A, B, and C were all characteristics, so those are all coordinate to each other. Had C been "German Shepherd," then the outline would have been incorrect because that is a type of dog, not a characteristic.

Parallelism

Another important rule in outlining is known as parallelism. This means that when possible, you begin your sentences in a similar way, using a similar grammatical structure. For example, in the previous example on dogs, some of the sentences began "some large breed dogs." This type of structure adds clarity to your speaking. Students often worry that parallelism will sound boring. It's actually the opposite! It adds clarity. However, if you had ten sentences in a row, we would never recommend you begin them all the same way. That is where transitions come into the picture and break up any monotony that could occur.

Division

The principle of division is an important part of outlining. When you have a main point, you will be explaining it. You should have enough meaningful information that you can divide it into two subpoints A and B. If subpoint A has enough information that you can explain it, then it, too, should be able to be divided into two subpoints. **So, division means** this: If you have an A, then you need a B; if you have a 1, then you need a 2, and so on. What if you cannot divided the point? In a case like that you would simply incorporate the information in the point above.

Connecting Your Main Points

One way to connect points is to include **transitional statements**. Transitional statements are phrases or sentences that lead from one distinct- but-connected idea to another. They are used to alert the audience to the fact that you are getting ready to discuss something else. When moving from one point to another, your transition may just be a word or short phrase, known as a sign post. For instance, you might say “next,” “also,” or “moreover.” You can also enumerate your speech points and signal transitions by starting each point with “First,” “Second,” “Third,” et cetera. You might also incorporate non-verbal transitions, such as brief pauses or a movement across the stage. Pausing to look at your audience, stepping out from behind a podium, or even raising or lowering the rate of your voice can signal to audience members that you are transitioning.

Another way to incorporate transitions into your speech is by offering **internal summaries and internal previews** within your speech. Summaries provide a recap of what has already been said, making it more likely that audiences will remember the points that they hear again. For example, an internal summary may sound like this:

So far, we have seen that the pencil has a long and interesting history. We also looked at the many uses the pencil has that you may not have known about previously.

Like the name implies, **internal previews** lay out what will occur next in your speech. They are longer than transitional words or signposts.

Next, let us explore what types of pencils there are to pick from that will be best for your specific project.

Additionally, summaries can be combined with internal previews to alert audience members that the next point builds on those that they have already heard.

Now that I have told you about the history of the pencil, as well as its many uses, let’s look at what types of pencils you can pick from that might be best for your project.

It is important to understand that if you use an internal summary and internal preview between main points, you need to state a clear main point following the internal preview. Here’s an example integrating all of the points on the pencil:

I. First, let me tell you about the history of the pencil.

So far we have seen that the pencil has a long and interesting history. Now, we can look at how the pencil can be used (internal summary, signpost, and internal preview).

II. The pencil has many different uses, ranging from writing to many types of drawing.

Now that I have told you about the history of the pencil, as well as its many uses, let’s look at what types of pencils you can pick from that might be best for your project (Signpost, internal summary and preview).

III. There are over fifteen different types of pencils to choose from ranging in hardness and color.

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex… It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.

~ Albert Einstein

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6.4: Conclusion and Activities

Conclusion

Had Meg, the student mentioned in the opening anecdote, taken some time to work through the organizational process, it is likely her speech would have gone much more smoothly when she finished her introduction. It is very common for beginning speakers to spend a great deal of their time preparing catchy introductions, fancy PowerPoint presentations, and nice conclusions, which are all very important. However, the body of any speech is where the speaker must make effective arguments, provide helpful information, entertain, and the like, so it makes sense that speakers should devote a proportionate amount of time to these areas as well. By following this chapter, as well as studying the other chapters in this text, you should be prepared to craft interesting, compelling, and organized speeches.

Module Activities

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name three questions you should ask yourself when selecting a topic.
2. What is the difference between a general and specific purpose statement? Write examples of each for each of these topics: dog training, baking a cake, climate change.
3. How does the thesis statement differ from the specific purpose statement?
4. Which speech organization style arranges points by time? Which one arranges points by direction? Which one arranges points according to a five-step sequence?
5. Which speech organization styles are best suited for persuasive speeches?
6. Define signpost. What are three types of signposts?
7. What is the correct format for a speech outline?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Introductions and Conclusions

7.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- List and describe the four functions of an introduction
- List and describe the common types of attention getters
- Describe and implement strategies for preparing introductions
- List and describe the four functions of a conclusion
- List and describe common types of conclusions
- Describe and implement strategies for preparing conclusions
- Apply chapter concepts in review questions and activities

First impressions count. Carlin Flora, writing in Psychology Today, recounts an experiment in which people with no special training were shown 20 to 32-second video clips of job applicants in the initial stages of a job interview. After watching the short clips, the viewers were asked to rate the applicants on characteristics including self-assurance and likability— important considerations in a job interview. These ratings were then compared with the findings from the trained interviewers who spent 20 minutes or more with the job applicants. The result: The 20- to 32- second ratings were basically the same as the ratings from the trained interviewers (2004). This all to say, your introduction is your first chance to make a good first impression with your audience.

He has the deed half done who has made a beginning.

~ Horace

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7.1: Functions of Introductions

Speech introductions are an essential element of an effective public speech. Introductions have specific functions that need to be met in a very short period of time. Introductions must gain the audience's attention and their goodwill, they must state the purpose of the speech and they must preview the main points.

These first two functions of the introduction, gaining the attention of the audience and the good will of the audience, have most to do with getting the audience to want to listen to you. You need to state your credibility and relate the topic to your audience. The other two functions of the introduction, stating the purpose of the speech (thesis or central idea) and previewing the structure of the speech, have to do with helping the audience understand you.

Gain Attention and Interest

The first function of the introduction is to get the attention AND the interest of the audience. The "and" here is important. Anyone can walk into a room full of people sitting quietly, and YELL AT THE TOP OF THEIR LUNGS. That will get attention. However, it will probably not garner much interest—at least not much positive interest. Gaining attention and interest is essential if you want the audience to listen to what you have to say, and audiences will decide fairly quickly if they want to pay attention.

Table 7.1.1: Strategies for Gaining the Audience's Attention

Strategy	Examples
Tell a Story	Human beings love stories. They can be real or hypothetical; concluded in the introduction, or used as a cliffhanger; vivid language and descriptions, paired with timing and pace are key when telling a story.
Use a Reference	• Previous speeches: Referencing speeches that happened just before yours can build credibility as you demonstrate your understanding of the topic and your ability to make connections. • Personal interest: By showing your experience and interest in the topic your enthusiasm sets a positive tone for the audience, and you enhance your credibility based on your knowledge. • Historical or recent events: Referencing these events connects the audience to the topic and provides the context that will be elaborated on in your speech. • Current occasion: Referring to the occasion is often used as an introduction to tribute speeches, toasts, dedication ceremonies and historical events.
Startle the Audience	• Use a startling statistic. You can use a real statistic that brings attention to the importance of your topic. Make sure it is accurate and relevant.
Use a Quotation	A quote from a well-known, or lesser known, author can be effective if it nicely sets up your speech topic and is something to which your audience can relate. More well-known authors enhance your credibility.
Ask a Question	• Rhetorical questions: are designed to allow you to get the audience to think about your topic without actually answering the question. • Real questions: Using questions that ask for real responses can work if a speaker feels comfortable with his or her audience, and is able to handle some impromptu situations based their response.
Use a Visual Aid	• A size appropriate photo can effectively introduce your topic. • A video from YouTube or a DVD that relates to your topic can show the audience content that brings them into the speech without you having to say anything. • Using other visual aids, such as doing a Tahitian dance when you are going to speak about Tahiti, or juggling to introduce your process speech on juggling can be entertaining and capture the attention and interest of your audience quickly.

Standing in front of an audience, slouched, hands in pockets, cap pulled low over your head, and mumbling, “my name is… and I am going to tell you about…” is an effective method of NOT getting attention and interest. Before you even open your mouth, your attire, stance, and physical presence are all sending out loud signals that you have no interest in the speech, so why should the audience.

Gain the Goodwill of the Audience

Over 2000 years ago, probably the pre-eminent speech teacher of all time, Aristotle noted the importance of gaining the goodwill of the audience:

> *…it is not only necessary to consider how to make the speech itself demonstrative and convincing, but also that the speaker should show himself to be of a certain character…and that his hearers should think that he is disposed in a certain way toward them; and further, that they themselves should be disposed in a certain way towards him (Freese, 1982).*

When an audience has decided to listen to you—when you have gained their attention and interest—you still need them to think favorably of you. The most effective way of doing this is by establishing your credibility to speak. Credibility is your believability. You are credible when the audience thinks you know what you are talking about. There are a number of methods for developing credibility, and you will use them throughout the speech. In the introduction, however, since you have comparatively little time to develop this credibility, your options are a bit more limited.

To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful.

~ Hellmut Walters

Essentially, credibility has two elements: external credibility and internal credibility. **External credibility** is the type of credibility you as a speaker gain by association: use of sources that the audience finds credible, for example. In an introduction, you may be able to develop external credibility by this means, as we will see later in this section.

More importantly, given the immediate nature of an introduction, is internal credibility. You develop **internal credibility** as the speaker through specific actions. First, be appropriately attired for a public presentation. Second, make eye contact with the audience before you speak. Third, speak clearly, fluently and confidently.

You can also demonstrate internal credibility by demonstrating personal experience with or knowledge of the topic of your speech. Audiences are more positively disposed toward a speaker who has had experience with the topic of his or her speech. You can also demonstrate credibility and goodwill by showing a connection to your audience, demonstrating shared experiences or shared values.

A student giving a speech to a class about a month before spring break, right in the middle of an extended cold spell of a long Midwestern winter, offered this introduction as a way to show shared values and experiences:

> *I need everyone to close his or her eyes. All right, now I need everyone to picture how he or she got to school today. Did you bundle up with a hat, some mittens, boots, and two jackets because it's so cold outside before you left for class? While walking to class, was it cold? Did your ears burn from the icy wind blowing through the air? Were your hands cold and chapped? Now I want you all to think about the sun beating down on your body. Picture yourself lying on the beach with sand between your toes and the sound of the ocean in the background. Or picture yourself poolside, with a Pina Coloda perhaps, with tropical music playing in the background. Picture yourself in Mazatlan, Mexico (Townsend, 2007).*

When speakers can identify with the audience and can show how the audience and the speaker share experiences, then the audience is more receptive to what the speaker has to say. The speaker is both more credible and more attractive to the audience.

The secret of success is constancy of purpose.

~ Benjamin Disraeli

Clearly State the Purpose

This seems like such a basic step, yet it is one too often missed; and without this step, it is difficult for the audience to follow, much less evaluate and comprehend, a speech. In both basic composition classes and basic public speaking classes, this function is much the same: State the thesis or central idea of your speech. In all speeches, there should be that one sentence, that one statement that succinctly and accurately lets the audience know what the speech will be about and what the speaker plans to accomplish in the speech.

Preview the Speech

The thesis statement lets the audience know what the speech is about and what you want to accomplish. The preview statement lets the audience know HOW you will develop the speech. A preview can be understood as a roadmap—a direction for the speech that leads to a successful conclusion. A preview lets the audience know what will come first, what comes next, and so on, to the end of the speech. The preview is essentially an outline—an oral outline—of the basic organizational pattern of the main points. Previews help the audience follow the content because they already know the structure.

Speakers who talk about what life has taught them never fail to keep the attention of their listeners.

~ Dale Carnegie

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7.2: Preparing the Introduction

Construct the Introduction Last

While this may seem both counter-intuitive and somewhat strange, you really do want to leave the development of the introduction for the last part of your speech preparation. Think of it this way: You can't introduce the ideas in your speech until you have determined these ideas.

The introduction is prepared last because you want to make sure that the body of the speech drives the introduction, not the other way around. The body of the speech contains most of your content, your arguments, your evidence, and your source material: The introduction sets up the body, but it should not overwhelm the body of the speech, nor should it dictate the content or structure of the speech.

Once you have the body of the speech complete, then you consider the introduction. With the body of the speech complete, it is relatively simple to complete two of the four functions of the introduction. You already know the purpose of the speech, so now you need to put it in a one-sentence statement. And you already know the structure and main points of the speech, so you can put that structure into the preview.

With the structural functions of the introduction complete, you can carefully choose and craft the type of introduction you wish to use, and concentrate on making sure that the introduction also fulfills the other two necessary functions: gaining the attention and interest of the audience, and gaining the goodwill of the audience.

Make It Relevant

Another reason why your introduction should be the last part of your speech you prepare is so that the introduction can relate to the speech. If you prepare the introduction before you prepare the body of the speech, your introduction may be wonderful—but completely disconnected from the rest of the speech.

When you consider the type of introduction you wish to use, you might note that many of the types could easily lend themselves to disconnection from the speech. A startling statistic may shock and get an audience's attention—but if it is not relevant to the speech itself, the introduction is at best wasted and more likely distracting to the audience. A quotation may be both profound and catchy—but if the quotation has little to do with the speech itself, the introduction is once again wasted or distracting.

Now, because your introduction will contain the thesis statement and preview, at least part of the introduction will be relevant to the rest of the speech. However, the entire introduction needs to be relevant. If your audience hears an introduction that they perceive to lack connection to the rest of the speech, they will have difficulty following your main ideas, any attention and interest you may have gained will be more than off- set by the loss of goodwill and personal credibility, and your speech will not make the positive impression you desire.

The wise ones fashioned speech with their thought, sifting it as grain is sifted through a sieve.

~ Buddha

Be Succinct

In most classroom speeches, and in most speech situations outside the classroom, the speaker will be on a time limit. Even if you are giving a speech in a setting where there is no stated time limit, most people will simply not pay attention to a speech that goes on and on and on.

Since you are on a time limit, and since, as noted above, the body of the speech is the heart of your speech, the introduction of your speech needs to be concise and succinct. There is no magic formula for the length of an introduction, and you do need to meet all four functions in your introduction. Many authors suggest that the introduction be no more than 10-15% of the total speaking time.

Most audiences expect you to introduce your speech and then move quickly into the body of the speech. While the expectations vary from culture to culture, most of the speaking situations in which you will find yourself will involve audiences that have been taught to listen for an introduction with a main thesis statement of some type. This is the standard speech format with which the majority of your audience will be familiar and comfortable.

Write It out Word for Word

In another chapter, you may have read and studied speech delivery techniques, and in your class, you may be encouraged to use an extemporaneous style of delivery for your speeches. That is good advice. However, introductions are best written out word for word and then delivered as memorized to ensure all relevant information is delivered to set up your speech.

Introductions are succinct (as we learned above), and introductions have to do a lot of work in a short period of time. Because of this, you as a speaker need to carefully consider every word of your introduction. The best method for doing so is to write your introduction out word for word. Then you can more easily see if you have met all four functions, and can also have a very good idea just how long the introduction will be. Just as importantly, memorizing and then delivering the introduction word for word gives you the most control over this important (yet short) part of your speech.

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7.3: Functions of Conclusions

> *So: You are at the end of your speech, and you can't wait to sit down and be done! You start speeding up your rate of delivery, but your volume goes down a bit because you are rushing and running out of breath. You finish the last main point of your speech and race off to your seat: That is not the best way to conclude a speech.*

Just as with introductions, conclusions have specific functions to fulfill within a speech. And just as with introductions, there are a number of types of conclusions. In this section of this chapter, we will look at these functions, discuss the relationship between introductions and conclusions, and offer some strategies for preparing and delivering an effective conclusion.

The basic structure of a speech is not linear but circular. All the parts fit together and flow together in this circle, and the conclusion takes you right back to the introduction—with an enhanced understanding of the topic.

Prepare the Audience for the End of the Speech

A speech does not just stop—or, to be more precise, a speech should not just stop. A speech, effectively structured and delivered, should move smoothly from point to point and then to the conclusion. One of the most important functions of the conclusion is to prepare the audience for the end of the speech. Throughout the speech, you have been providing the audience with verbal and nonverbal cues to where you are going in the speech. As you move to the conclusion, you need to continue to provide these cues. You can use language cues ("now that we have seen that we can solve this problem effectively, we can review the entire situation"), movement cues (physically moving back to the center of the room where you began the speech), and paralinguistic cues (slow the rate of the speech, use more pauses) to help prepare your audience for the end of the speech.

When you prepare the audience for the end of the speech, you let them know that they need to be ready for any final comments or appeals from you, and that they should be prepared to acknowledge you as a speaker.

Present any Final Appeals

Depending on the type of speech you are presenting, you will be asking the audience for something. You may be asking them to act in a certain way, or to change their attitude toward a certain person or topic. You may be asking them to simply understand what you have had to say in your presentation. Regardless, one of the tasks of the conclusion is to leave the audience motivated positively toward you and the topic you have been presenting.

Psychologists and sociologists (as well as communication scholars) know that there is both a **primacy** and **recency** effect in presenting information (Garlick, 1993). Essentially, people tend to better remember information presented first or last—they remember what they hear at the beginning of the speech or at the end. In presenting your appeals to the audience, you can take advantage of the recency effect to increase the likelihood of your audience acting on your appeals.

When Demosthenes was asked what were the three most important aspects of oratory, he answered, Action, Action, Action.

~ Plutarch

Summarize and Close

A conclusion is structural in function. Just as the introduction must include a statement of the purpose of the speech, as well as a preview of the main ideas of the speech, the conclusion must include a restatement of the thesis and a review of the main ideas of the speech. The review and restatement are mirror images of the preview statement in the introduction. Structurally, the restatement and review bring the speech back to the top of the circle and remind the audience where we started. Functionally, they help cue the audience that the end of the speech is coming up.

End with a Clincher

With conclusions, however, there are some additional forms you may wish to use, and there are some variations and adaptations of the introductions that you will want to use as you prepare your conclusions.

Earlier in this section when we discussed introductions, it was argued that stories are quite possibly the most effective form of introduction: Stories appear to be almost "hard-wired" into our individual and cultural make-up; and stories have a built-in structure. Stories, then, also make excellent conclusions, and can be used as conclusions in at least two ways. First, you can

complete the story that you started in the introduction. Remember: You stopped right before the climax or denouement, and now, you can finish the story. Alternatively, you can retell the story, and this time the story will reflect what the audience has learned from your speech. Either method provides coherence and closure to the story and the speech.

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7.4: Composing the Conclusion

Just as with introductions, there are two important points to remember from the start. First, regardless of the form of conclusion, all summary remarks must meet certain required functions. Second, most conclusions will be a combination of two or more forms. There is a third point to remember about conclusions as well: Conclusions need to provide a match to the introduction, so that there is symmetry and completeness to the speech structure. Because of this, very often, the conclusion will be of the same form as the introduction. At the very least, the conclusion must refer to the introduction so there is a sense of completeness. Naturally enough, the forms of conclusions you can use and develop are similar to the forms of introductions you can use and develop.

Eloquent speech is not from lip to ear, but rather from heart to heart.

~ William Jennings Bryan

Prepare the Conclusion

The conclusion is the last part of the speech to prepare. What is common writing practice for the introduction is also true of the. As previously discussed, introductions and conclusions are similar in nature, they provide mirror images of one another, and they are often of the same type. So you complete the introduction and conclusion at the same time. You do so to make sure that both elements work together. As you prepare the conclusion, make sure as well that there are no false conclusions. You need to prepare the audience for the end of the speech—but you can only prepare them one time, and there can be only one end to the speech. By the same token, you need to make sure that the conclusion is not so abrupt or sudden that no one in the audience is aware you have completed your speech. Keep in mind as well that conclusions should comprise no more than 10% of the total speaking time.

Just as with the introduction, write out the conclusion word for word. This is your last chance to impress your audience and to make sure that they understand what you have said. Do not leave the conclusion to chance: write it out.

Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.

~ Confucius

Do Not Include Any New Information

While it is important to present your appeal and any call to action in the conclusion, it is also important to NOT present new information in your conclusion. Remember: one of the functions of the conclusion is to prepare the audience for the end of the speech. If all of the sudden you present a new argument, new information, or a new point, you will confuse your audience.

If you present new information in the conclusion, you will also lose the ability to integrate this information with the rest of the speech. Remember that all elements of the speech need to flow together. New ideas at the very end of the speech will not enhance the flow of the speech. Additionally, because you are just now bringing in this information at the end of the speech, you will have no or very little time to develop these ideas, or to provide supporting information and documentation for these ideas.

Follow the Structure

The approach of using the built-in structure of the specific introduction/conclusion technique is as equally effective with quotations, questions and startling statistics as it is with stories.

- You can use the same quotation at the end as at the beginning, but because of what we have learned in the speech, the quotation has a new and more developed meaning. You can also use a new quotation that draws a comparison and contrast to the beginning quotation, and also highlights what we have learned in the speech.
- You can use the same question at the conclusion as you did at the beginning, and regardless of whether you ask for a response or pose it as a rhetorical question (and allow the audience to consider the answer), the answer will be different because of your speech. The audience will be able to see what you have accomplished in the speech. You can also pose a new question, one that again points out what the audience has learned from your speech.
- Startling statistics, as quotations and questions, now take on new meaning because of all that you have told the audience in your speech. Reminding the audience of startling statistics should provide them with a key reminder of the main point of your speech.

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7.5: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

This chapter first shows how to structure and develop introductions and conclusions. Second, it argues that introductions function to gain audience attention and goodwill, and that introductions help structure the speech with a thesis statement and preview. Third, the chapter explains that conclusions help audiences remember the key ideas of a speech. Finally, the chapter reveals that there are a variety of different techniques for introductions and conclusions, and that many of the techniques for introductions apply to conclusions as well.

Introductions set the stage for the speech that is to come; conclusions make sure that the audience goes away changed in a positive manner. Short in time, they require careful thought and precise language to be effective. Done well, introductions prepare an audience to learn, and conclusions help to insure that an audience has understood the purpose of the speech.

When you can do the common things of life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.

~ George Washington Carver

Review Questions

1. What are the four basic functions of introductions, and why are these functions important?
2. List and give one original example of an effective attention-getting device.
3. What are three reasons why stories are effective as introductions?
4. What is a preview statement, and why is it important as part of an introduction?
5. What are the basic functions of conclusions, and why are these functions important?
6. What does it mean to “follow the structure” in a conclusion?
7. Why are introductions and conclusions prepared last?

Glossary

Internal Credibility

This is a form of credibility based on attributes that are largely controlled by a speaker, such as appearance, confidence, charisma, trustworthiness, and speaking ability.

Internal Preview

Sometimes called a road map, a preview is a brief oral outline in which the speaker clearly and concisely states the main points of the speech.

External Credibility

This is a form of credibility based on attributes that a speaker can “borrow,” such as using credible sources and referring to credible and popular people and events.

Primacy Effect

According to this principle, audiences are likely to remember what they hear or read first.

Recency Effect

According to this principle, audiences are likely to remember what they hear or read last.

Rhetorical Question

When a speaker asks a question that is not meant to be answered out loud, or a question for which the audience already knows the answer. This is often used as a way to get an audience to think about the topic.

Thesis

One sentence or statement that succinctly and accurately lets the audience know what the speech will be about and what the speaker plans to accomplish in the speech.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Delivering Your Speech

8.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify, define and give an example of each of the four main types of
- delivery
- Determine the best speaking style for different types of speaking occasions
- Identify and utilize voice aspects of speaking
- Recognize and utilize the key “ingredients” of a well-performed speech
- Adapt to the physical aspects of a speaking venue
- Plan the speech in preparation for delivery/performance of a speech.

Imagine this. A speech topic is perfectly chosen; the content is nicely organized and flawlessly researched; a great deal of work was invested in preparing the outline of the speech, but the speech is poorly delivered. Will the speech be effective? Will the audience stay alert and follow it? Will the audience properly interpret the speaker’s intended message? These last questions contribute to the universal fear of public speaking. It is not the preparation of a speech that strikes terror in the hearts of so many, but the performance of a speech!

Don’t lower your expectations to meet your performance. Raise your level of performance to meet your expectations. Expect the best of yourself, and then do what is necessary to make it a reality.

~ Ralph Marston

Since an audience does not usually read the text of a speech, but simply listens to it, all the preparation of the content by the speaker must be encoded into a complex combination of communication channels (words, sounds, visual elements, etc.) ready to be performed. The purpose of this chapter is to offer guidance to transfer the speech from the page to the stage.

Practice is the key to excellent performance. Trite as it might sound (or obvious), the basic foundation for a good speech delivery involves the two “P’s”: Preparation and Practice. There is not an actor, athlete, or musician worth his/her salary who does not prepare and practice. Even when a performance is given with spontaneity, the “P’s” are crucial.

This chapter will describe the basic methods of delivery, and offer guidance in the aspects of presentation (such as voice, inflection, eye contact, and body and facial language). Some basic strategies for in setting up the room and podium for speaking will also be covered.

It is delivery that makes the orator’s success.

~ Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

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8.1: Methods of Delivery

There are four basic **methods** (sometimes called styles) of presenting a speech: manuscript, memorized, extemporaneous, and impromptu. Each has a variety of uses in various forums of communication.

Manuscript Style

The word **manuscript** is the clue to the style. The speech is written and the speaker reads it word for word to the audience. Originally, it was done from the hand-written paper manuscript. While the **manuscript style** is common, the paper is now gone. Today, teleprompters are commonly used by Newscasters, Presidents, or political figures. Why is the manuscript important and in use? Precision. In the news-reporting industry every fraction of a second counts because broadcast time is costly. Also, the facts and names must be exact and accurate so there is no room for error. Errors in reporting decrease the credibility of the news organization and the newscaster.

Memorized Style

The **memorized style** of speaking is when the manuscript is committed to memory and recited to the audience verbatim (word for word). In the days when **elocution** was taught, this was a typical approach. A speech was a recitation.

Where is a memorized delivery style still common? Due to copyright laws and licensing contract agreements (other than scripts that are in the public domain), actors on stage are obligated to memorize the script of the play and perform it **verbatim**, exactly as written. It is typical for speakers on high school and university speech and debate teams to memorize their competitive speeches. Some monologists also use a memorized delivery style. In all cases, they create the impression that the speech is spontaneous.

You might consider using the memorized delivery style if your speech is relatively short, or you know you will have to deliver your speech repeatedly such as a tour operator would.

Impromptu Style

Theoretically, an “impromptu” speech is made up on the spot. It is unprepared and unrehearsed. Often ceremonial toasts, grace before meals, an acknowledgement, an introduction, offering thanks and so on, fall into this category. While there are some occasions when a speech in those categories is actually prepared (prepare your acceptance for the Academy Award BEFORE you are called!), there are many occasions when there is little or no opportunity to prepare.

Impromptu speeches are generally short and are often given with little or no notice. Notes are rare and the speaker generally looks directly at the audience. It would be presumptuous and arrogant to declare rules for Impromptu Speaking. It is fair to explain that “impromptu” describes a range from absolutely no preparation, to a modest amount of preparation (mostly thought) and rarely incorporates research or the formalities of outlines and citations that more formal speeches would include.

Be still when you have nothing to say; when genuine passion moves you, say what you’ve got to say, and say it hot.

~ D. H. Lawrence

Extemporaneous Style

Sandwiched between the memorized and impromptu delivery styles you find the **extemporaneous** speech style. For this style, the speech is not completely written out. It is usually delivered with keynotes for reference. Most public speaking courses and books describe extemporaneous speeches as carefully prepared and rehearsed, but delivered using notes of key words and phrases to support the speaker. Phrasing is pre-rehearsed, words are pre-chosen, and the organization is fluid and well constructed.

There should be no fumbling for words, no rambling, and length of time should be carefully monitored. The style does offer the speaker flexibility to include references to the immediate surroundings, previous speeches, news of the day, and so on.

How you develop the notes and what they look like are up to the individual, but a natural extemporaneous delivery is difficult if you are relying on a manuscript. Under no circumstances should the speaker be spending more than 20% of the speaking time looking at the notes. It would be ideal to practice so you only glance at your notes approximately 5% of the time of the speech.

The extemporaneous style is the method most often recommended (and often required) in today’s public speaking courses, and is generally the best method in other settings as well. While it is not the only method of delivering a speech, it is the most useful for

presentations in other courses, in the corporate world and in pursuing future careers.

The trouble with talking too fast is you may say something you haven't thought of yet."

~ Ann Lander

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8.2: Vocal Aspects of Delivery

Though we speak frequently during the course of a day, a formal speech required extra attention to detail. What can one do in advance to prepare for a speech? The challenge is partly determined by the speaker's experience, background and sometimes cultural influence and existing habits of speaking. Articulation, Pronunciation, Dialect, Tone, Pitch, and Projection each depends on long-term practice for success. These aspects are like signatures, and should be developed and used by each speaker according to his or her own persona. Voice, or vocal sound, is made when controlled air being exhaled from the lungs, passes over the vocal cords causing a controlled vibration.

Articulation

Articulation is how well and correctly we form our vowels and consonants using our lips, jaw, tongue, and palate to form the sounds that are identified as speech. We are often judged by how well we speak in general. We are perceived as more prepared, credible, and effective when we articulate well. **Diction** and **enunciation** are other terms that refer to the same idea. For instance, saying "going to" instead of "gonna" or "did not" instead of "dint" are examples of good versus poor articulation. Consonants and vowels are spoken with standard accepted precision, and serious students and speakers will strive to practice the clarity of their sounds. Proper diction is as integral to the English language as proper spelling, but it takes practice.

Pronunciation

Proper articulation applied to a given word is that word's **pronunciation**. The pronunciation includes how vowels and consonants are supposed to sound, as well as which syllable is emphasized. With online dictionaries now readily available, one needs only to "look up" a word and select "play" to hear an audible recording of the official and precise way a word should be pronounced. Now there is no excuse for mispronouncing a word in a speech. A mispronounced word will obliterate a speaker's credibility, and the audience's attention will be focused on the fault rather than the message.

Try This!

Pronunciation

1. Flip through a book, article or scholarly work until you come to a word that is unfamiliar and you can only guess its pronunciation.
2. Go to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary website, and look up the word.
3. When the definition appears, click the icon of the loudspeaker. The word is audibly pronounced for you.

The online dictionary is useful in both articulation as well as pronunciation.

Accent, Dialect, and Regionalisms

Subtleties in the way we pronounce words and phrase our speech within a given language are evident in **accents**, **regionalisms**, and **dialects**. An accent refers to the degree of prominence of the way syllables are spoken in words, as when someone from Australia says "undah" whereas we say "under." A regionalism is a type of expression, as when someone says, "The dog wants walked," instead of "the dog wants to go for a walk." Dialect is a variety of language where one is distinguished from others by grammar and vocabulary. In Pennsylvania you might hear people say that they are going to "red up the room," which means, "to clean the room."

Those who depend on speaking for a career (broadcasters, politicians, and entertainers) will often strive for unaccented General or Standard English. Listen to most major network newscasters for examples of **regionalism-free** speech. Any speaker should be aware of how accent, dialect, and regionalisms can be perceived by a given audience. If you speak in a way that the audience might find difficult to understand, make an extra effort to pay attention to the phrasing and pace of your speech. Ask a sympathetic and objective listener to help you when you practice.

We often refuse to accept an idea merely because the tone of voice in which it has been expressed is unsympathetic to us.

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

Vocal Quality

The quality of the voice, its **timbre** (distinctive sound) and texture, affects audibility and can affect articulation. Our voices are unique to each of us. Some examples of vocal quality include warm, clear, soft, scratchy, mellow and breathy. Each speaker should practice at maximizing the vocal effect of his or her voice, which can be developed with vocal exercises. There are numerous books, recordings and trainers available to develop one's vocal quality when needed. The quality of one's voice is related to its range of pitch.

Pitch and Inflection

The **pitch** is the "highness" or "lowness" of the voice. Each of us has a range of **tone**. Vocal sounds are actually vibrations sent out from the vocal cords resonating through chambers in the body. The vibrations can literally be measured in terms of audio frequency in the same way music is measured. When the **pitch** is altered to convey a meaning (like raising the pitch at the end of a sentence that is a question), it is the inflection. **Inflections** are variations, turns, and slides in pitch to achieve the meaning. With good animated inflection, a speaker is more interesting, and the inflection conveys energy and "aliveness" that compels the audience to listen.

The human voice is the most beautiful instrument of all, but it is the most difficult to play.

~ Richard Strauss

If you THINK varied pitch, you can SPEAK varied pitch. Think of pitch inflections as seasoning spices that can make the speech more interesting. Sing "Happy Birthday." You do not have to concentrate or analyze how to create the melody in your voice. Your memory and instinct take over. Notice how the pitch also provides an audible version of punctuation, letting the audience know if your sentence has ended, if it is a question, and so on. The melody lets the audience know that there is more to come (a comma) and when the phrase is ended (a period). Remember that in a speech, the audience does not have the written punctuation to follow, so you have to provide the punctuation with your inflection.

Try This!

Vocal Variation

Find a listening partner. Using only the sounds of "la" ha," and "oh," covey the meaning of the following:

1. It's the biggest thing I've ever seen!
2. I've fallen and can't get up!
3. I've got a crush on him/her.
4. That soup is disgusting and spoiled.
5. I got an "A" in my Speech Final!

Those who do not use inflection, or use a range of pitch, are speaking in monotone. And, as the word implies, it can be monotonous, boring, and dull. A balance between melodramatic and monotonous would be preferred. The inflection should have a meaningful and interesting variety. Be careful not to turn a pattern of inflection into a repetitive sound. Think through each phrase and its musicalization separately.

A word of caution: Inflection and varied pitch must be "organic," that is to say, natural for the speaker. You cannot fake it, or it sounds artificial and disingenuous. It is a skill that needs to develop over a period of time.

Rate of Speaking

In order to retain clarity of the speech with articulation and inflection, the speaker must be aware that there is a range of appropriate **tempo** for speaking. If the tempo is too slow, the speech might resemble a monotonous peal. If it is too fast, the articulation could suffer if consonants or vowels are dropped or rushed to keep up the speed.

Table **8.2.1**: Finding the Right Pace for Your Speech

If you speak too quickly…	If you speak too slowly…
the audience might get the impression you are just trying to get it over with or that you don't want to be there.	the audience can forget the first part of your sentence by the time you get to the last! (It happens!)
the audience has a difficult time catching up and comprehending what you are saying. They need time to digest the information. So plan on periodic pauses.	your audience may lose interest in what you're trying to say.

As a speaker, you cannot race with the audience, nor drag their attention down. Like Goldilocks, look for the pace that is "just right." A comfortable and clear pace is the best. An ideal speaking rate will allow you to comfortably increase your pace to create a sense of excitement, or slow down to emphasize the seriousness of a topic.

It is simple nonsense to speak of the fixed tempo of any particular vocal phrase. Each voice has its peculiarities.

~ Anton Seidl

Pauses Versus Vocalized Pauses

A text that is read has punctuation that the reader can see…miniature landmarks to define the text. When spoken, similar punctuation is needed for comprehension, and the speaker's responsibility is to offer the text with pauses. Space between phrases, properly planted, gives the audience the opportunity to understand the structure of the speaker's sentences. It also gives time for the audience to "digest" information.

Generally, spoken sentences need to be simpler and shorter than what can be comprehended by reading. Pauses can help increase comprehension. However, pauses that are filled with "uh's, "um's," "like," etc.,are called **vocalized pauses**, or **fillers**, and should be avoided. Vocalized pauses commonly occur when we are gathering our thoughts and we instinctively try to fill the silence. When overused, they can be distracting and give the impression of a lack of preparation.

Vocal Projection

The volume produced is **projection**. Supporting the voice volume with good breathing and energy can be practiced, and helping a speaker develop the correct volume is a main task of a vocal trainer, teacher or coach. Good vocal support with good posture, breathing, and energy should be practiced regularly, long before a speech is delivered. There are numerous exercises devoted to developing projection capabilities.

While there is no need to shout, a speaker should project to be easily heard from the furthest part of the audience. Even if the speech is amplified with a microphone/sound system, one must speak with projection and energy. As with your rate of speech, you should speak at a volume that comfortably allows you to increase the volume of your voice without seeming to shout or decrease the volume of your voice and still be heard by all audience members.

Do not expect to walk up to the podium and have a full voice. Actors spend about a half- hour doing vocal warm-ups, and singers warm up much more. You might not have an opportunity to warm up immediately before your speech, but when you can, warm up with humming, yawning (loudly) or singing scales: all while breathing deeply and efficiently. It will loosen your voice, prevent irritation, and fire up your vocal energy.

One final note: If public speaking is or will be an important part of your career, it would be sensible to have an evaluation of your voice, articulation and projection done by an objective professional so you can take any remedial action that might be recommended. There are courses of study, private lessons, and professional voice coaches to work with your voice projection, tone, and pitch.

Try This!

Projection

> Go to the room in which you are to speak. Have a friend sit as far away from the lectern as possible. Rehearse your speech; talking loudly enough so your friend can hear you comfortably. That is the projection you will need. When you mentally focus on the distant listener, you will tend to project better.

Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning.

~ Maya Angelou

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8.3: Nonverbal Aspects of Delivery

Personal Appearance

Here is the golden rule: Dress appropriately for the situation. You should be comfortable and confident knowing that you look good. It is good practice to dress a bit more formal than less. Err on the side of formal. Most class speeches would be best in business casual (which can vary from place to place and in time). The culture or standards of the audience should be considered. There are exceptions depending on the speech. A student once arrived in pajamas to deliver his 9 a.m. speech. At first, I thought he got up too late to dress for class. However, his speech was on Sleep Deprivation, and his costume was deliberate. What he wore contributed to his speech.

If you have long hair, be sure it is out of the way so it won't cover your face. Flipping hair out of your face is very distracting, so it is wise to secure it with clips, gel, or some other method. Be sure you can be seen, especially your eyes and your mouth, even as you glance down to the podium. Hats should be avoided as they block your face and affect eye contact with the audience.

Think of it as an interview…just like in an interview, you will want to make a good first impression. The corporate culture of the business will determine the dress. Always dress at the level of the person conducting the interview. For example, a construction foreperson (or project manager) will conduct an interview to hire you as a carpenter. Do not dress like a carpenter; dress like the project manager.

Movement and Gestures

Overall movement and specific gestures are integral to a speech. Body stance, gestures and facial expressions can be generally categorized as **body language**. Movement should be relaxed and natural, and not excessive. How you move takes practice. Actors usually have the advantage of directors helping to make decisions about movement, but a good objective listener or a rehearsal in front of a large mirror can yield productive observations. Moving around the performance space can be a very powerful component of a speech; however, it should be rehearsed as part of the presentation Too much movement can be distracting. This is particularly true if the movement appears to be a result of nervousness. Avoid fidgeting, stroking your hair, and any other nervousness-related movement.

Among the traditional common fears of novice speakers is not knowing what to do with one's hands. Sometimes the speaker relies on clutching to the podium or keeping hands in pockets. Neither is a good pose.

Try This!

Gestures

Using only your hands, convey the following:

1. "It's OK."
2. "I give up."
3. "He's crazy."
4. "We will be victorious."

Facial Expressions

Since facial expression is a valid form of communication, it is integral to delivering a speech. The face supports the words, and the speaker's commitment to the material is validated. The press scrutinizes a politician for every twitch of insincerity. Detectives have created a science of facial communication for interviewing suspects. Like inflections, gestures and movement: facial expressions should be organic and spontaneous, not contrived. If there is a hint of artificiality in your expression, you will sacrifice your credibility.

Try This!

Facial Expressions

While looking in a mirror, try to express these thoughts without words:

1. "I am thrilled that I am getting an A."

1. “I am thrilled that I am getting a raise.”
2. “I am worried about tomorrow.”
3. “Lemons are too sour for me.”
4. “I am suspicious about what he did.”

After you have determined a facial expression for each, say the phrase. And see how well the verbal expression goes with the nonverbal expression.

Eye Contact

Next to clearly speaking an organized text, eye contact is another very important element of speaking. An audience must feel interested in the speaker, and know the speaker cares about them.

Whether addressing an audience of 1000 or speaking across a table, eye contact solidifies the relationship between the speaker and audience. Good eye contact takes practice. The best practice is to be able to scan the audience making each member believe the speaker is speaking to him or her.

However, there are some eye contact failures.

- **Head Bobber**: This is a person who bobs his or her head looking down on the notes and up to the audience in an almost rhythmic pattern.
- **Balcony Gazer**: A person who looks over the heads of his or her audience to avoid looking at any individual.
- **The Obsessor**: A person who looks at one or two audience members or who only looks in one direction.

The best way to develop good eye contact is to have an objective listener watch and comment on the eye contact. The eyes are called the windows to the soul, and the importance of eye contact in communication cannot be overemphasized. Ideally, a speaker should include 80% to 90% of the delivery time with eye contact.

With good eye contact, the speaker can also observe and gauge the attention and response of the audience. This is actually part of the feedback process of communication. The ideal is that the audience is not overly aware of the speaker using notes.

How do you develop good eye contact? First, practice the speech with a generous amount of eye contact. Second, know the speech well enough to only periodically (and quickly) glance at your notes. Third, prepare your notes so they can be easily read and followed without hesitation.

There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.

~ Colin Powell

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8.4: Mastering the Location

The Room

Do not wait until the moment you step up to speak to see what it will be like. Check out the room (venue) and the podium before you need to speak. Check the width of the room and where the audience will be seated. Rehearse giving the imaginary audience eye contact. Will you be brighter than the audience? Will they be able to see your face? Can you easily project your voice to the back row? Will you have a microphone?

The Podium or Lectern

Check the podium. Approach it with the confidence you should exhibit when speaking. Touch it. Lean on it. Is it the right height? (It should be about the height of your elbow.) Is it sturdy? Are your feet visible? Is there enough light to see your notes placed on top. Is the podium easily visible to the entire audience? How far left or right do you need to look to see the whole audience?

- If you are using note cards, try placing them on the podium to be sure they will work, and you can maneuver them easily.
- Plan where you will stand. It does not have to be behind the lectern. Practice standing with good posture; know where you will keep your hands and be sure your gestures are not hidden by the podium.
- You might be a speaker who does not stay behind the podium, but you should still check it out. Every morsel of familiarity will contribute to your confidence in speaking.

The Equipment

If you are using any multimedia such as PowerPoint, slides, video, or music, try it long before the speech. Of course, you would have practiced the speech with the media on your own, but if at all possible, run it in the venue in which you will speak.

- Check the controls, slide clicker, and the relationship between the screen and the podium. Be sure the audience can see you as well as the screen. The screen should be positioned so you can glance at it without turning away from the audience. You should not be reading from the screen.
- Check your own files to be sure the equipment in the room can play it correctly. Do not assume that every file can be played. Always be prepared by having multiple versions of your audio/video. If you have only one version, and it does not play, you will be very frustrated.

Even seasoned presenters break into a cold sweat over equipment failures or unpleasant surprises so avoid the stress by checking the equipment.

Using a Microphone

In some cases, most likely outside of a classroom situation, there will be a microphone for amplification. If at all possible, test it before the performance. Be sure the amplification is suitable for your projection. Be sure how near or far you should be for proper audio pick-up. It is important to note that amplification cannot make up for poor articulation or weak inflections, but it can compensate for a room that is large or acoustically insufficient for speech.

If you are prone to move away from the podium, or plan any movement, be aware that the microphone must be considered. If it is a stationary microphone, be careful to maintain a consistent distance, or the volume of your speaking will pop from louder to softer. Changes in volume or position can result in distortion or feedback (an escalating humming sound). Be careful that consonants do not “ring” with amplification.

In some venues, the time delay with the reverberation can cause an overlap of vocal sounds. You may have to slow down or use more pauses to prevent syllables from overlapping.

I drank some boiling water because I wanted to whistle.

~ Mitch Hedberg

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8.5: Preparation, Practice, and Delivery

Preparing Notes

Once you have created a comprehensive outline and have thought through your speech, you should be able to create your note cards or whatever you might be using (notes or an iPad for instance). Every speaker is a bit different, and different speech topics and organizational patterns may require different notation techniques.

- Your note cards must have enough information on them to be able to deliver the speech without missing details and organized in the precise order that you have planned. A common technique is to print the outline in a font that is large enough to be read from a distance.
- You should be able to glance at the cards, get your bearings, and look back at the audience. If you are reading the cards word-for-word, there are too many words on them, unless it is an extended exact quote, or group of statistics that must be delivered precisely.
- Be sure your notes or cards are numbered (e.g., boldly in the upper right hand corner), so you can keep them organized. Color-coding is often done to easily distinguish the cards at a glance. Losing your place can be very stressful to you and distracting to the audience.
- Avoid writing or printing on two sides; flipping a page or card is distracting to the audience. The audience should not be aware of the notes. It is best to simply slide the cards aside to advance to the next card.
- Rehearse your speech using the notes that you will bring to the podium. Be sure you can glance at the notes, get your information, and look up to have eye contact with the audience.

All the real work is done in the rehearsal period.

~ Donald Pleasence

Rehearsing the Speech

Remember how to get to Carnegie Hall. Rehearse your speech—aloud and ideally with a colleague or fellow student as an audience. Rehearse in front of a mirror if needed.

There are some students who record a rehearsal speech so they can get a real sense of what the audience will hear. If you are using presentation aids, rehearse with them for timing and familiarity so you only have to glance at the screen or easel. Time the speech to be sure it within the assigned time. Phrase the speech as you will phrase it in the actual delivery (and listen for the verbal fillers, awkward pauses, and other non- fluencies). Plan what to do with your hands.

You should also know exactly how your speech will begin and end. Regardless of how dependent on notes the speaker may be, here is one constant word of advice: know exactly how you are going to begin your speech. Not just an idea, but verbatim, with every inflection, every gesture, every eye contact with the audience. The first few sentences should be so ingrained, that you could perform it during an earthquake without batting an eye.

A memorized introduction accomplishes several goals. First, it gives you the opportunity to breathe, and realize it's not so bad to be up there after all! Second, it lets the audience know you are prepared. Third, it signals to the audience that what you are about to say is important. Finally, it gives you the opportunity for direct eye contact (because you are not reading) and commands the audience's attention. Eye contact is a signal to the audience that you care about them!

The conclusion of your speech is equally important. In show business parlance, the end of a song or a scene is called a "button." It is a "TAH-DAH" moment that lets the audience know you are finished, and that it is their turn to applaud. The ending impression your speech leaves with the audience is greatly affected by how effective the ending is. The content and structure notwithstanding, you should also know exactly how you will end (verbatim), so there is no hesitation, no stumbling, no tentative "I guess that's all" feeling. A confident and decisive beginning will draw the audience to you; a confident logical ending will be very effective in preserving a lasting impression on the audience.

Stress is an important dragon to slay— or at least tame— in your life.

~ Marilu Henner

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8.6: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

The true test for this chapter is in the actual presentation of the speech. Like voice and diction, understanding what makes a speech effective without practice is insufficient. Merely knowing the best form for a golf swing is useless unless put into practice; and practice reinforces the knowledge. Comprehending the rules for driving on the road is moot (and/or dangerous) if the rules are not obeyed in practice. The same is true for this chapter. Practicing your speech will make you a more effective speaker!

A speech is poetry: cadence, rhythm, imagery, sweep! A speech reminds us that words, like children, have the power to make dance the dullest beanbag of a heart.

~Peggy Noonan

Review Questions

1. Develop a list of ten potential speech topics. For each topic, think of a setting in which a speech on that topic might be delivered. Next, determine what type(s) of delivery (manuscript, memorized, impromptu, extemporaneous) would be most appropriate for the topic and setting.
2. What three aspects of vocal delivery do you believe are most important to a speaker's credibility? Explain.
3. How might a speaker's accent affect the audience's perception of him or her? Illustrate your answer with an example.
4. What guidelines did you find most useful in the section about what to wear for your speech?
5. How do you perceive speakers who do not make eye contact with their audience? What suggestions would you give these speakers to improve their eye contact?
6. What type of equipment is available in the space(s) where you plan to give your speeches? What kinds of presentations can be used with this type of equipment?
7. List three methods you would personally use to reduce your anxiety before your speeches.
8. What piece of advice from the chapter did you find most useful?

Glossary

Accent

The prominence of a syllable in terms of loudness, pitch, and/or length.

Articulation

The act of producing clear, precise and distinct speech.

Body Language

Body stance, gestures and facial expressions.

Dialect

A variety of language, cant or jargon that is set apart from other varieties of the same language by grammar, vocabulary or patterns of speech sounds.

Diction

The accent, inflection, intonation and sound quality of a speaker's voice. Also known as enunciation.

Elocution

The formal study and practice of oral delivery, especially as it relates to the performance of voice and gestures.

Extemporaneous Delivery

Learning your speech well enough so that you can deliver it from a key word outline.

Impromptu Speeches

A speech delivered without previous preparation.

Inflections

Variations, turns and slides in pitch to achieve meaning.

Manuscript Delivery

Reading the text of a speech word for word.

Memorized Delivery

Learning a speech by heart and then delivering it without notes.

Performance

The execution of a speech in front of an audience.

Pitch

The highness or lowness of one's voice or of sound.

Pronunciation

Saying words correctly, with the accurate articulation, stress and intonation, according to conventional or cultural standards.

Regionalism

A speech form, expression or custom that is characteristic to a particular geographic area.

Tempo

The rate, pace, or rhythm of speech.

Timbre

The characteristic quality of the sound of one's voice.

Tone

The particular sound quality (e.g. nasal or breathy) or emotional expression of the voice.

Verbatim

To say with exactly the same words.

Vocalized Pauses

Verbal fillers in speech such as "um," "uh," "like," "and," or "you know."

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Visual Aids

9.0: Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify when and how visual aids will enhance a presentation
- Identify the different types of visual aids
- Identify effective and ineffective use of visual aids
- Apply basic design principles to slide design
- Identify best practices to incorporating visual aids in a presentation

It seems nearly impossible to see a presentation that doesn't revolve around a lengthy PowerPoint, so much so that you might think it was a requirement for giving a speech. The phrase "death by PowerPoint" was coined in response to the ubiquitous, wordy, and intellectually deadening presentations that focus on the slides rather than the content or the presenter. With the speaker reading directly from the slides, or worse, showing slides with text so small that it can't be read, viewers are often left wondering what the need for the presentation is at all. A simple handout would convey the message and save everyone's time. PowerPoint, however, is just one of the visual aids available to you as a speaker. Your ability to incorporate the right visual aid at the right time and in the right format can have a powerful effect on your audience. Because your message is the central focus of your speech, you only want to add visual aids that enhance your message, clarify the meaning of your words, target the emotions of your audience, and/or show what words fail to clearly describe.

A visual image is a simple thing, a picture that enters the eyes.

~ Roy H. Williams

Learning how to create effective visuals that resonate with your audience is important for a quality presentation. Understanding basic principles of how visual information is processed alone and in combination with audio information can make or break your visuals' effectiveness and impact. Incorporating visuals into your speech that complement your words rather than stand in place of them or distract from them, will set you apart from other presenters, increase your credibility, and make a bigger and more memorable impact on your audience.

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9.1: Effective Visual Aids

Before you just open up PowerPoint and begin creating slides, you should stop for a moment and consider what type of visual aid will best serve your purpose and if you even need an aid at all. Select a visual aid that adds to your presentation in a meaningful way, not merely something pretty to look at or a substitute for thorough preparation.

Visuals are not there for you to hide behind when you are in front of your audience. Because of the tendency for novice speakers to use visuals as a crutch in their speeches, it has even been suggested that beginner speakers be forbidden from using visual aids

Visual aids serve a unique role in a presentation, and you should consider the specific purpose and desired outcome of your speech when determining if, when, to what extent, and in what format you use visual aids. Visuals can spark interest, build emotional connections, clarify your words, explain abstract ideas, help draw conclusions, or increase understanding. For instance, a speaker may show a stack of books to represent the amount of data storage in a speech about the evolution of computers; or demonstrate the proper use of ear plugs by distributing ear plugs, showing how to insert them, and then blasting an air horn in a speech about preventing hearing loss in order to make the value of ear protection more memorable and concrete. Done well—simple, visible, relevant, memorable, and audience-focused— visual aids can have a profound impact on your audience and your overall message.

Visual aids can be an important part of conveying your message effectively since people learn far more by hearing and seeing than through hearing or seeing alone (Reynolds, 2008). The brain processes verbal and visual information separately. By helping the audience build visual and verbal memories, they are more likely to be able to remember the information at a later time (Williams, 2004). If you can find a visual aid to complement what you are saying, you will help your audience understand the information you are presenting and remember your message. For example, a speaker might show the proper and improper ways to bow when being introduced in Japan while at the same time talking about the movements and also displaying a slide with the appropriate angles and postures for bowing. By using multiple modes in concert with each other, the message is strengthened by the pairing of words, images, and movement.

Not just any visual will do, however. Each visual should be relevant to your message, convey an important point, be clearly understandable, and be visible by your entire audience. Visuals should be used to make concepts easier to understand and to reinforce your message. They should illustrate important points that are otherwise hard to understand (Kosslyn, 2007).

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9.2: Types of Visual Aids

For many people, the term “visual aids” for presentations or speeches is synonymous with PowerPoint, but this is just one type of visual aid. You should consider all the available options to determine what will be most effective and appropriate for your presentation.

If you wear clothes that don’t suit you, you’re a fashion victim. You have to wear clothes that make you look better.

~ Vivienne Westwood

Personal Appearance

Some people chose to dress up as part of their presentation, and this can help set the tone of the speech or reinforce a specific point. A speaker may choose to wear a handmade sweater in a talk about knitting in order to inspire others to begin the hobby. Another speaker may opt for a firefighter’s uniform in a speech about joining the local volunteer fire department in an effort to appeal to the respect most people have for people in uniform.

If you aren’t dressing in relation to your topic, you should dress appropriately for your audience and venue. A presentation to a professional audience or at a professional conference would lend itself to appropriate business attire. If you are giving a presentation to your local Girl Scout troop, more casual clothing may be the best choice. Any time you are doing a demonstration, make sure you are dressed appropriately to give the demonstration. It is difficult for a speaker to show how to correctly put on a rock climbing harness if she is wearing a skirt the day of the presentation.

Your dress, mannerisms, the way you greet the audience when they are arriving, how you are introduced, and the first words out of your mouth all impact your credibility and ability to connect with your audience. Make sure you are calm and welcoming to your audience when they arrive and greet them in a professional manner.

Objects and Props

Objects and props, such as a bicycle helmet for a speech on bike safety or an actual sample of the product you are trying to sell, can greatly enhance your presentation. Seeing the actual item will often make it easier for your audience to understand your meaning and will help you connect with your audience on an emotional level. Props can be used as part of demonstrations (discussed below) or as a stand-alone item that you refer to in your speech.

There are several important considerations for using props in your presentation. If you have a large audience, showing the prop at the front of the venue may mean that audience members can’t see the item. The alternative to this is to pass the item around, though Young and Travis (2008) advise caution in passing objects around during your speech, as most people will be seeing the object after you have moved on with your talk.

Having your prop out of sync with your presentation, either as it is passed around disrupting your audience’s attention or by having your prop visible when you aren’t talking about it, is distracting to your audience and message. To make the most effective use of props in your presentation, carefully consider how the object will be visible to your entire audience when you are speaking about it, and make sure it is out of sight when you are not.

Demonstration

A demonstration can serve two different purposes in a speech. First, it can be used to “wow” the audience. Showing off the features of your new product, illustrating the catastrophic failure of a poorly tied climbing knot, or launching a cork across the room during a chemistry experiment are all ways of capturing the audience’s attention. Demonstration should not be gimmicky, but should add value to your presentation. When done well, it can be a memorable moment from your speech, so make sure it reinforces the central message of your talk.

Demonstration can also be used to show how something is done. People have different learning styles, and a process demonstration can help visual learners better understand the concept being taught. Consider for a moment the difference between reading the instructions on how to perform CPR, watching someone perform CPR, and trying CPR on the training dummy. As evidenced by the huge number of online videos illustrating how to do something, there is great value in watching while you learn a new task.

Posters and Flip Charts

If you are presenting to a small audience, around a dozen people, you may choose to use a poster rather than PowerPoint. The focus of your poster should be to support your core message and can be left behind to remind those in attendance of your presentation after you have left. Posters should look professional (e.g., not handwritten) and be visible to everyone in the room.

Other text-based visual aids include white boards and flip charts. Both can be used to write or draw on during the presentation and should be used with several caveats. Writing during your presentation actually takes away from your speaking time, so make sure to factor this into your speaking time.

Speaking and writing at the same time can be tricky because the audience will have a difficult time processing what they are hearing when they are also trying to read what you write. Additionally, if you are writing, you need to be careful not to turn your back on your audience, which makes it harder for them to hear you and for you to connect with your audience.

The soul never thinks without a picture.

~ Aristotle

Audio and Video

A large amount of digitized audio and video is now available to be included and embedded in your presentation. Select short clips; Young and Travis (2008) recommend only 10–20 seconds, but this will depend in part on the length of the presentation, the purpose of the presentation, and clip content and relevance. You should not have a presentation primarily composed of audio/video clips. Select only clips that reinforce the message or serve as an appropriate segue into your next topic.

When including audio or video in your speech, there are several technical considerations. It is important that the clip be properly cued to start at exactly where you want it to begin playing. It distracts from both your audience's attention and your credibility when you are fumbling with technology during a speech. It is also important that your file format can be played on the computer you are using. Since not all computers will play all file formats, be sure to test playability and audio volume before your presentation. Again, going back to providing a professional appearance from your first interaction with your audience, you should iron out the technical details before they enter the room. As with a demonstration, if your clip isn't playing properly, move on rather than attempt to correct the issue. Fumbling with technology is a waste of your audience's valuable time.

Handouts

There are many schools of thought on the use of handouts during a presentation. The most common current practice is that the presenters provide a copy of their PowerPoint slides to the participants before or after the presentation. Despite this prevailing trend, you should avoid using your slides as handouts because they serve different purposes. Using your presentation slides as the handout both shortchanges your slides and fails as a handout.

Handouts are best used to supplement the content of your talk. If you are providing statistical data, your slide may only show the relevant statistic focusing on the conclusion you want your audience to draw. Your handout, on the other hand, can contain the full table of data. If you need to show a complex diagram or chart, a handout will be more legible than trying to cram all that information on a slide. Since you need to simplify the data to make it understandable on a slide, the handout can contain the evidence for your message in a way that is legible, detailed, complex, and shows respect for the audience's time and intelligence (Reynolds, 2008).

You don't need to include everything in your talk, and you don't need to pack all your information into your slides. Write a handout document with as much detail as you want and keep the slides simple. Presenters often feel the need to display all the data and information they have so they will appear knowledgeable, informed, and thoroughly prepared. You can help ease this feeling by creating a handout with all of the detailed data you wish, which leaves your slides open to focus on your key message (Mayer, 2001).

There are many true statements about complex topics that are too long to fit on a PowerPoint slide. ~ Edward

~Tufte

When to distribute handouts is also heavily debated. So common is the practice of providing handouts at the beginning of a presentation that it may seem wrong to break the convention. It is important to understand, however, that if people have paper in

front of them while you are speaking, their attention will be split between the handout, your other visual aids, and your words. To counter this, you might consider distributing handouts as they are needed during the presentation and allowing time for people to review them before continuing on (Reynolds, 2008). This may not be a viable option for shorter presentations, and the interruption in the flow of the presentation may be hard to recover from. Unless having the documents in front of your audience is absolutely critical to the success of the presentation, **handouts should be distributed at the end of the presentation**.

Slideware

Slideware is a generic term for the software used to create and display slide shows such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple iWorks Keynote, Google Drive Presentation, Zoho Show, and others. Composed of individual slides, collectively known as the **slide deck**, slideware is a de facto standard for presentation visual aids despite criticisms and complaints about the format. In truth, the problem is not with the software but in the use of the program. The focus of much of the remainder of this chapter will be suggestions and best practices for creating effective slide decks that will be high impact and avoid many of the complaints of slideware detractors. Before this discussion, there is one distinct slideware presentation styles that should be mentioned.

A picture is a poem without words.

~ Horace

Prezi

While not quite slideware, **Prezi** is digital presentation software that breaks away from the standard slide deck presentation. It requires users to plot out their themes before adding primarily image-focused content (Williams, 2004). Instead of flipping through the slide deck, the presenter zooms in and out of the presentation to visually demonstrate connections not available in other slideware. The design of the software lends itself toward more rapidly changing visuals. This helps to keep the viewer engaged but also lends itself to over-populating the blank canvas with images (Kadavy, 2011).

Prezi's fast moving images and, at times, unusual movement can make users dizzy or disoriented. Careful work is needed during planning and practice so that the point of the talk isn't the wow factor of the Prezi software, but that your visuals enhance your presentation. The best way to learn more about this emerging tool is to visit the Prezi website to view examples. If opting to use Prezi in a corporate environment, you should strongly consider one of the paid options for the sole purpose of removing the Prezi logo from the presentation.

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9.3: Slideware Design Principles

Slide and slide show design have a major impact on your ability to get your message across to your audience. Numerous books address various design fundamentals and slide design, but there isn't always consensus on what is "best." What research has shown, though, is that people have trouble grasping information when it comes at them simultaneously. "They will either listen to you or read your slides; they cannot do both" (Reynolds, 2008). This leaves you, the presenter, with a lot of power to direct or scatter your audience's attention. This section will serve as an overview of basic design considerations that even novices can use to improve their slides.

First and foremost, design with your audience in mind. Your slide show is not your outline. The slide show is also not your handout. As discussed earlier, you can make a significantly more meaningful, content-rich handout that complements your presentation if you do not try to save time by making a slide show that serves as both. Keep your slides short, create a separate handout if needed, and write as many notes for yourself as you need.

All decisions, from the images you use to their placement, should be done with a focus on your message, your medium, and your audience. Each slide should reinforce or enhance your message, so make conscious decisions about each element and concept you include and edit mercilessly.

Providing the right amount of information, neither too much nor too little, is one of the key aspects in effective communication (Kosslyn, 2007). The foundation of this idea is that if the viewers have too little information, they must struggle to put the pieces of the presentation together. Most people, however, include too much information (e.g., slides full of text, meaningless images, overly complicated charts), which taxes the audience's ability to process the message. "There is simply a limit to a person's ability to process new information efficiently and effectively" Reynolds, 2008). As a presenter, reducing the amount of information directed at your audience (words, images, sounds, etc.) will help them to better remember your message (Mayer, 2001). In this case, less is actually more.

The first strategy to keeping it simple is to include only one concept or idea per slide. If you need more than one slide, use it, but don't cram more than one idea on a slide. While many have tried to limit the number of slides you need based on the length of your talk, there is no formula that works for every presentation. Use only the number of slides necessary to communicate your message, and make sure the number of slides corresponds to the amount of time allotted for your speech. Practice with more and fewer slides and more and less content on each slide to find a balance between too much information and too little.

Slide Layout

It is easy to simply open up your slideware and start typing in the bullet points that outline your talk. If you do this, you will likely fall into the traps for which PowerPoint is infamous.

Presentation design experts Reynolds (2008) and Duarte (2010) both recommend starting with paper and pen. This will help you break away from the text-based, bullet-filled slide shows we all dread. Instead, consider how you can turn your words and concepts into images. Don't let the software lead you into making a mediocre slide show.

Regarding slide design, focus on simplicity. Don't overcrowd your slide with text and images. Cluttered slides are hard to understand. Leaving empty space, also known as **white space**, gives breathing room to your design. The white space actually draws attention to your focus point and makes your slide appear more elegant and professional. Using repetition of color, font, images, and layout throughout your presentation will help tie all of your slides together. This is especially important if a group is putting visuals together collaboratively.

A common layout design is called the **rule of thirds**. If you divide the screen using two imaginary lines horizontally and two vertically, you end up with nine sections. The most visually interesting and pleasing portions of the screen will be at the point where the lines intersect. Feel free to experiment with the right and left aligned content for contrast and interest.

Backgrounds and Effects

PowerPoint and other slideware has a variety of templates containing backgrounds that are easy to implement for a consistent slide show. Most of them, however, contain distracting graphics that are counter to the simplicity you are aiming for in order to produce

a clear message. It is best to use solid colors, if you even need a background at all. For some slide shows, you can make the slides with full-screen images, thus eliminating the need for a background color.

Graphic design is the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy, abnormality, hobbies and humors.

~ George Santayana

Should you choose to use a background color, make sure you are consistent throughout your presentation. Different colors portray different meanings, but much of this is cultural and contextual, so there are few hard and fast rules about the meaning of colors. One universal recommendation is to avoid the color red because it has been shown to reduce your ability to think clearly. Bright colors, such as yellow, pink, and orange, should also be avoided as background colors, as they are too distracting.

When designing your presentation, it is tempting to show off your tech skills with glitzy transitions, wipes, fades, moving text, sounds, and a variety of other actions. These are distracting to your audience and should be avoided. They draw attention away from you and your message, instead focusing the audience's attention on the screen. Since people naturally look at what is moving and expect it to mean something, meaningless effects, no matter how subtle, distract your audience, and affect their ability to grasp the content. Make sure that all your changes are meaningful and reinforce your message.

Colors

Much of what we perceive in terms of a color is based on what color is next to it. Be sure to use colors that contrast so they can be easily distinguished from each other (think yellow and dark blue for high contrast, not dark blue and purple).High contrast improves visibility, particularly at a distance. Tints (pure color mixed with white, think pink) stand out against a darker background. Shades (pure color mixed with black, think maroon) recede into a light background. If you want something to stand out, these color combination rules can act as a guide.

Avoid using red and green closely together. Red-green color blindness is the predominate form of color blindness, meaning that the person cannot distinguish between those two colors (Vorick, 2011). There are other forms of color blindness, and you can easily check to see if your visuals will be understandable to everyone using an online tool such as the Coblis Color Blindness Simulator to preview images as a color-blindperson would see it. Certain red-blue pairings can be difficult to look at for the non- color blind. These colors appear to vibrate when adjacent to each other and are distracting and sometimes unpleasant to view (Kosslyn, 2007).

I'm a visual thinker, not a language-based thinker. My brain is like Google Images.

~ Temple Grandin

Fonts

There are thousands of fonts available today. One might even say there has been a renaissance in font design with the onset of the digital age. Despite many beautiful options, it is best to stick to standard fonts that are considered screen-friendly. These include the **serif fonts** Times New Roman, Georgia, and Palatino, and the **sans serif** fonts Ariel, Helvetica, Tahoma, and Veranda (Kadavy, 2011). These fonts work well with the limitations of computer screens and are legible from a distance if sized appropriately. Other non-standard fonts, while attractive and eye-catching, may not display properly on all computers. If the font isn't installed on the computer you are presenting from, the default font will be used which alters the text and design of the slide.

Readability is a top concern with font use, particularly for those at the back of your audience, furthest from the screen. After you have selected a font, make sure that the font size is large enough for everyone to read clearly. If you have the opportunity to use the presentation room before the event, view your slides from the back of the room. They should be clearly visible. This is not always possible and should not be done immediately preceding your talk, as you won't have time to effectively edit your entire presentation.

Create your own visual style… let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others.

~ Orson Welles

Text

Nothing is more hotly debated in slide design than the amount of text that should be on a slide. Godin (2007) says "no more than six words on a slide. EVER." Other common approaches include the 5×5 rule—5 lines of text, 5 words per line—and similar 6×6

and 7×7 rules (Weaver, 1999). Even with these recommendations, it is still painfully common to see slides with so much text on them that they can't be read by the audience.

Once you understand that the words on the screen are competing for your audience's attention, it will be easier to edit your slide text down to a minimum. The next time you are watching a presentation and the slide changes, notice how you aren't really grasping what the speaker is saying, and you also aren't really understanding what you are reading. Studies have proved this split-attention affects our ability to retain information (Duare, 2008); so when presenting, you need to give your audience silent reading time when you display a new slide. That is: talk, advance to your next slide, wait for them to read the slide, and resume talking. If you consider how much time your audience is reading rather than listening, hopefully you will decide to reduce the text on your slide and return the focus back to you, the speaker, and your message.

There are several ways to reduce the number of words on your page, but don't do it haphazardly. Tufte (2003) warns against abbreviating your message just to make it fit. He says this dumbs down your message, which does a disservice to your purpose and insults your audience's intelligence. Instead, Duarte (2008) and Reynolds (2003) recommend turning as many concepts as possible into images. Studies have shown that people retain more information when they see images that relate to the words they are hearing (Mayer, 2001). And when people are presented information for a very short time, they remember images better than words (Reynolds, 2008).

The ubiquitous use of bulleted lists is also hotly debated. PowerPoint is practically designed around the bulleted-list format, even though it is regularly blamed for dull, tedious presentations with either overly dense or overly superficial content (Tufte, 2003). Reserve bulleted lists for or explaining the order of processes. In all other cases, look for ways to use images, a short phrase, or even no visual at all. Quotes, on the other hand, are not as offensive to design when they are short, legible, and infrequently used. If you do use a quote in your slide show, immediately stop and read it out loud or allow time for it to be read silently. If the quote is important enough for you to include it in the talk, the quote deserves the audience's time to read and think about it. Alternately, use a photo of the speaker or of the subject with a phrase from the quote you will be reading them, making the slide enhance the point of the quote.

Images

Images can be powerful and efficient ways to tap into your audience's emotions. Use photographs to introduce an abstract idea, to evoke emotion, to present evidence, or to direct the audience attention, just make sure it is compatible with your message (Kosslyn, 2007). Photos aren't the only images available. You might consider using simplified images like **silhouettes**, **line art**, diagrams, enlargements, or **exploded views**, but these should be high quality and relevant. Simple images also translate better than words to a multicultural audience. In all cases, choose only images that enhance your spoken words and are professional-quality. Select high-quality images and don't be afraid to use your entire slide to display the image. Boldness with images often adds impact.

When using images, do not enlarge them to the point that the image becomes blurry, also known as **pixelation**. Pixelation, is caused when the resolution of your image is too low for your output device (e.g. printer, monitor, projector). When selecting images, look for clear ones that can be placed in your presentation without enlarging them. A good rule of thumb is to use images over 1,000 pixels wide for filling an entire slide. If your images begin to pixelate, either reduce the size of the image or select a different image.

Never use an image that has a **watermark** on it. A watermark is text or a logo that is placed in a digital image to prevent people from re-using it. It is common for companies that sell images to have a preview available that has a watermark on it. This allows you, the potential customer, to see the image, but prevents you from using the image until you have paid for it. Using a watermarked image in your presentation is unprofessional. Select another image without a watermark, take a similar photo yourself, or pay to get the watermark-free version.

You can create images yourself, use free images, or pay for images from companies like iStockphoto for your presentations. Purchasing images can get expensive quickly, and searching for free images is time consuming. Be sure to only use images that you have permission or rights to use and give proper credit for their use. If you are looking for free images, try searching the Creative Commons database for images from places like Flickr, Google, and others. The creators of images with a Creative Commons License allow others to use their work, but with specific restrictions. What is and isn't allowed is described in the license for each image.

One final consideration with using images: having the same image on every page, be it part of the slide background or your company logo, can be distracting and should be removed or minimized. As mentioned earlier, the more you can simplify your slide, the easier it will be for your message to be understood.

Graphs and Charts

If you have numerical data that you want to present, consider using a graph or chart. You are trying to make a specific point with the data on the slide, so make sure that the point—the conclusion you want your audience to draw—is clear. This may mean that you reduce the amount of data you present, even though it is tempting to include all of your data on your slide.

It is best to minimize the amount of information and focus instead on the simple and clear conclusion (Duarte, 2008). Particularly when it comes to numerical data, identify the meaning in the numbers and exclude the rest. "Audiences are screaming 'make it clear,' not 'cram more in.'

Different charts have different purposes, and it is important to select the one that puts your data in the appropriate context to be clearly understood (Tufte, 2003). When designing charts, one should use easily distinguishable colors with clear labels. Be consistent with your colors and data groupings. For clarity, avoid using 3-D graphs and charts, and remove as much of the background noise (lines, shading, etc.) as possible. All components of your graph, once the clutter is removed, should be distinct from any background color. Finally, don't get too complex in any one graph, make sure your message is as clear as possible, and make sure to visually highlight the conclusion you want the audience to draw.

Implementation

If you have chosen to use visual aids in your presentation, it is important to give credit where credit is due. Make sure to mention the source of your props if you borrowed them from a person or organization. You should cite the source of all data and images used in your presentation. Citing your sources provides credibility to your content and shows you are a professional.

Once you have decided on which visual aids to use and have prepared them for your presentation, you should practice with them repeatedly. Through practice you will be able to seamlessly incorporate them into your presentation, which will reduce distractions, increase your credibility, and keep the audience's attention focused on your message. Practice will also help determine the time required for your presentation so you can edit before you speak if necessary. No audience benefits from the speaker looking at the time, admitting how off schedule they are, or rushing through their remaining slides.

No matter which visual aid(s) you have chosen, they should be displayed only when you are ready to talk about them. Otherwise, the audience will spend time reading any text or guessing the meaning of the visual instead of focusing on the presenter's words. Once used, visuals should also be removed from sight so as not to continue to distract the audience (Palmer, 2011).

A picture is the expression of an impression. If the beautiful were not in us, how would we ever recognize it?

~ Ernst Haas

Visual Aid Tips

- Select only visual aids that enhance or clarify your message.
- Speak to your audience not to your visual aid or the screen.
- Reveal your visuals only when they are relevant to your current point, and take them away when they are no longer being talked about.
- Practice with your visual aids and make sure all demonstrations work smoothly.
- Design visuals so they can be understood within three seconds.
- Keep your visuals as simple as possible while still conveying your message.
- When presenting text to your audience, give them time to read before you begin speaking again.
- Be prepared to move on with your presentation should any of the visual aids falter or fail. No matter how great your visuals are, you need to be prepared to speak without them.

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9.4: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

This chapter addresses both the role and value of using visual aids, including slideware, objects, audio and video clips, and demonstrations. They should be used only when they help to clarify or enhance your spoken words or will help your audience remember your message.

Be sure that any visual aid you use adds to what you are saying. Slides should be brief, easy to understand, and complement your message. Objects and slides should not be revealed before you begin talking about them, lest your audience become distracted from your point. Remember that people cannot read your slides or handouts at the same time as they are listening to you.

When designing slides make sure they are clear and visible to the entire audience. Contrasting colors with consideration for common color blindness should be used. Screen- friendly fonts of sufficient size to be read from the back of the room are extremely important. Avoid clutter on your slides and leverage the power of white space, aiming always for simplicity and impact.

Practice your presentation with your visual aids, remembering to allow time for your audience to read any new text you present. Be prepared to continue in a professional manner should your visuals falter or fail. The ease with which you implement your visuals and move past any problems demonstrates your professionalism and bolsters your credibility.

Effective selection, design, and implementation of visual aids will increase your audience's attention and help to vanquish "death by PowerPoint." It will make you and your message clearer and more memorable, which will help you to achieve your primary goal: an audience that understands and connects with your message.

Review Questions

1. Other than slides, list three types of visual aids that can be used in a presentation and give an example of each.
2. What are the ways that visual aids can benefit a presentation? Harm a presentation?
3. Describe the benefits of white space in design.
4. Explain the different purposes and content of handouts as compared to slide shows.
5. List and explain two considerations when using color in your slides.
6. Discuss the pros and cons of having a large amount of text on a slide.

Glossary

Color Palette

The selection of colors that are used throughout a single project.

Complementary Colors

Colors on opposite sides of the color wheel, such as red and green.

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A designation by the copyright holder of an image or other work that it can be reused. The license identifies what specifically is allowed under what conditions and what credit must be given.

Exploded View

A picture or diagram where an object appears disassembled so the viewer can see the component parts in proper relationship to each other. They are used to show how things fit together and how parts interact to make a whole.

Greyscale

An image that has all the color information removed and replaced with appropriate shades of grey. These images are sometimes referred to as black- and-white.

Line Art

Simplified drawings made only of solid lines without color or shading. They are useful for showing the basic shape and construction of complicated objects.

Pixelation

The blurry appearance of images which are enlarged on a computer beyond their resolution. This often occurs when a small image is stretched to cover an entire slide.

Prezi

A newer type presentation software that allows for non- linear presentations and is more graphically oriented rather than text oriented.

Rule of Thirds

A layout design grid that divides a page into nine equal squares. Placing or aligning content along the grid lines creates a more powerful image.

Sans Serif Font

A type face whose characters do not have the small lines or flourishes at the end points of letters. Sans serif fonts include Arial, Helevetica, and Tahoma.

Serif Font

A type face whose characters have small lines or flourishes at the end points of letters. Serif fonts include Times New Roman, Georgia, and Palatino.

Silhouette

A simplified image of a person or object created from the outline of the image and filled in with a solid color, usually black.

Slide Deck

A term that refers to all the slides in a slideware presentation. It is a more generic term for PowerPoint slides.

Slideware

The software used to display digital slide shows. Examples of slideware include Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple iWork, Keynote, Google Drive Presentation, OpenOffice Impress.

Watermark

A noticeable image or graphic in an image that is placed there primarily to prevent reuse of that image by identifying the owner of the copyright. Often found on online images, it is designed to let you preview the image before you purchase it, at which time, the watermark is removed.

White Space

Empty space in your design that helps direct the viewers' attention to the parts of the slide that really matter. Use of white space can help reduce clutter on your slide.

Z Pattern

The natural tendency of people from English-speaking countries, among others, to view images in the same way that they read text, that is, left to right, top to bottom. This results in the eye tracking along a Z-shaped path through the image.

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Glossary

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