

Speech

How to Write a Speech: Construction

THE FORMAT

The basic speech format is simple. It consists of *three parts*:

1. an opening or introduction
2. the body where the bulk of the information is given
3. and an ending (or summary).

Think of it as a sandwich. The opening and ending are the slices of bread holding the filling (body) together.

You can build yourself a simple sandwich with one filling or you can go gourmet and add up to three or even five. The choice is yours.

But whatever you choose to serve, as a good cook, *you need to consider who is going to eat it!* And that's *your audience*.



WHAT YOU NEED

To begin you need your speech overview or outline

Before you start, you need to know:

- **WHO** you are writing your speech for (the audience)
- **WHAT** your speech is going to be about (its topic)
 - the main points ranked in order of importance with supporting research
- **HOW** long it needs to be eg. 3 minutes, 5 minutes...

WRITING YOUR SPEECH

Step One

Begin with the most important idea/point on your outline.

Consider **HOW** you can explain (show, tell) that to your audience in *the most effective way for them* to easily understand it. A good speech is *never* written from the speaker's point of view.

To help you write from an audience point of view, identify either a *real* person or the *type of person* who is *most likely* to be listening to you.

Make sure you select someone who represents the '*majority*'. That is, they are neither struggling to comprehend you at the bottom of your scale or light-years ahead at the top.

Now imagine they are sitting next to you eagerly waiting to hear what you're going to say. Give them a name, for example, Joe, to help make them real.

Ask yourself:

- **How do I need to tailor my information to meet Joe's needs?**
For example, do you tell personal stories illustrating your main points?
- **What type or level of language is right for Joe as well as my topic?**

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Step Two

Write down what you'd say as if you were *talking directly to them*.

If it helps, say everything *out loud* before you write and/or use a recorder.

After you've finished, take notes.

You do not have to write absolutely everything you're going to say down* but you *do* need to write the *sequence of ideas* to ensure they are *logical and easily followed*.

Remember too, to explain or illustrate your point with examples from your research.

Step Three

Rework *Step Two* (your first main point) until you've made yourself clear.

Do not assume because you know what you're talking about the person (Joe) you've chosen to represent your audience will too. *Joe is not a mind-reader*.

- **Check the 'tone' of your language.**
Is it right for the occasion, subject matter and your audience?
- **Check the length of your sentences.**
If they're too long or complicated you risk losing your listeners.
- **Have you chosen words everybody will understand?**
There are 5 cent words and \$5.00 words. Why use a \$5.00 one when a 5 cent one tells it better?
Example: He '*spat*' = 5 cents. He '*expectorated*' = \$5.00
Check for jargon too. These are industry, activity or group exclusive words. If you're an outsider you won't know them and that's alienating.
- **Read what you've written out loud.**
If it flows naturally continue the process with your next main idea. If it doesn't, rework.
- **Remember you are writing 'oral language'.**
You are writing as if you were explaining, telling or showing something to someone. It doesn't have to be *perfect* sentences. We don't talk like that.
We use whole sentences and part ones and we mix them up with asides or appeals e.g. '*Did you get that? Of course you did. Right...Let's move it along. I was saying ...*'
- **Repeat How to Write a Speech Steps One, Two & Three** for the remainder of your main ideas.
Because you've done the first block carefully, the rest should come fairly easily.

Step Four: Linking or Transitions

Between each of your main ideas you need to provide a pathway. This *links* them for your listeners. The clearer the path, the easier it is to make the transition from one idea to the next. If your speech contains more than three main ideas and each is building on the last, then consider using a '*catch-up*' or *summary* as part of your transitions.

A **link** can be as simple as:

'We've explored one scenario for the ending of Block Buster 111, but let's consider another. This time...' What follows is the introduction of Main Idea Two.

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A **summarizing link or transition** example:

'We've ended Blockbuster 111 four ways so far. 1. Everybody died, 2. One villain died. His partner reformed and after a fight-out with the hero, they both strode off into the sunset, 3. The hero dies in a major battle but is reborn sometime in the future. 4. Nobody died

Go back through your main ideas checking the links. *Remember Joe as you go.* Try each transition or link out loud and listen to yourself. Write them down when they are clear and concise.

Step Five: The Ending

The ideal ending is highly memorable. You want it to live on in the minds of your listeners. Often it combines a *call to action* with a summary of major points.

Example:

The desired outcome of a speech persuading people to vote for you in an upcoming election is that they do so. You can help that outcome along by calling them to register their support by signing a prepared pledge statement as they leave.

Example:

The desired outcome is increased sales figures. The call to action is made urgent with the introduction of time specific incentives.

'You have three weeks from the time you leave this hall to make that dream family holiday in New Zealand yours. Can you do it? Will you do it? The kids will love it. Your wife will love it. Do it now!'

NB. A clue for working out what the most appropriate call to action might be, is to go back to the original purpose for giving the speech.

- Was it to motivate or inspire?
- Was it to persuade to a particular point of view?
- Was it to share specialist information?
- Was it to celebrate a person, a place, time or event?

Ask yourself *what you want people to do as a result of having listened to your speech.*

Write your ending and test it out loud.

Step Six: The Introduction

Once you've got the filling (main ideas) the linking and the ending in place, it's time to focus on the introduction. The *introduction comes last as it's the most important part* of your speech. This is the bit that either has people sitting up alert or slumped and waiting for you to end.

What makes a great opening?

You want one that makes listening to you the *only* thing the 'Joes' in the audience want to do. You want them to forget they're hungry or that their chair is hard or that the bills need paying.

The answer is to capture their interest straight away. You do this with a *'hook'*.

Hooks come in as many forms as there are speeches and audiences. Your task is work out what the specific hook is to catch your audience.

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Go back to the purpose. Why are you giving this speech? Once you have your answer, consider your call to action. What do you want the audience to do as a result of listening to you? Next think about the imaginary or real person you wrote for when you were focusing on your main ideas.

Ask yourself, if I were him/her what would appeal?

- Is it humor?
- Would shock tactics work?
- Is it formality or informality?
- Is it an outline of what you're going to cover, including the call to action?
- Or is it a mix of all these elements?

Here's an example from a fictional political speech. The speaker is lobbying for votes. His audience are predominately workers whose future's are not secure.

'How's your imagination this morning? Good?' (Pause for response from audience) Great, I'm glad. Because we're going to put it to work starting right now. I want you to see your future. What does it look like? Are you happy? Is everything as you want it to be? No? Let's change that. We could do it. And we could do it today. At the end of this speech you're going to be given the opportunity to change your world, for a better one ... No, I'm not a magician or a simpleton with big ideas and precious little commonsense. I'm an ordinary man, just like you.'

And then our speaker is off into his main points supported by examples. The end, which he has already foreshadowed in his opening, is the call to vote for him.

Experiment with several openings until you've found the one that serves your audience, subject matter and purpose best.

Writing your speech is *very nearly* done. There's just one more step to go!

Step Seven: Checking

Go through your speech several times carefully.

On the **first** read through check you've got your main points in their correct order with supporting material plus an effective introduction and ending.

On the **second** read through check the linking passages or transitions making sure they are clear and easily followed.

On the **third** reading check your sentence structure, language use and tone.

Now go though **once more**.

This time read it aloud *slowly* and *time yourself*. If it's too long make the necessary cuts. Start by looking at your examples rather than the main ideas themselves. If you've used several to illustrate one, cut the *least important* out. Also look to see if you've repeated yourself unnecessarily or gone off track. If it's not relevant, *cut it*. Repeat the process, condensing until your speech fits *just under* the time allowance.

REHEARSING YOUR SPEECH

Please don't be tempted to skip this step. The 'not-so-secret' secret of successful speeches combines good writing with practice, practice and then practicing some more.

Speech

Marks are awarded as follows:

1. Language level: age-appropriate, new and varied words to express thoughts and feelings – **5 marks**.
2. Topic: relevant, interesting, original; insightful interpretation – **5 marks**.
3. Fluency and pronunciation – Fluent and expressive, clear – **5 marks**.
4. Audience contact – good eye contact, expressive, functional gestures, open body language – **5 marks**.
5. Preparation: familiarity with material, speech and cue cards, audio/visual aids – **5 marks**.

	5	4	3	2	1
Language level: age-appropriateness; difficulty	Excellent command of language. Uses new and varied words to express thoughts and feelings	Impressive command of language. Able to convey thoughts and feelings accurately	Capable of expressing self clearly. Appropriate register and vocabulary	Able to convey ideas. Vocabulary basic. Few lapses in register	Has difficulty in expressing self clearly. Inappropriate register; limited vocabulary
Topic: suitability and relevance	Topic relevant, interesting and original. Insightful interpretation	Suitable, relevant and interesting topic. Well researched and presented	Topic relevant but lacks new information or interpretation	Topic meets requirements; inadequate research	Topic not suitable; poorly researched. Speaker lacks insight
Fluency and pronunciation	Fluent and expressive; pronunciation clear and unambiguous	Fluent but lacks expression. Pronunciation clear and unambiguous	A few inappropriate pauses; attempts to modulate voice	Sometimes repeats self; pronunciation ambiguous; sometimes difficult to understand	Hesitant; often repeats self; difficult to follow train of thought
Audience contact	Good eye contact with all sectors of audience; expressive, functional, gestures; open body language	Good eye contact with sections of audience; gestures but sometimes forced. Open body language	Eye contact sporadic with sections of audience; gestures are forced. Self-conscious	Eye contact sporadic with few friends; few gestures. Markedly self-conscious	Eye contact lacking; few if any gestures. Body language closed
Preparation	Familiar with material; written speech and cue cards available; (Audio/visual aid adds to presentation, if applicable)	Has memorized material; written speech and cue cards available; (audio/visual aid adds to presentation, if applicable)	Material memorized in parrot-fashion; written speech and cue cards available (functional audio/visual aid; if applicable)	Not familiar with material but able to speak; either written speech or cue cards lacking; (inadequate audio/visual aid; if applicable)	Not familiar with material; unable to present; no written speech or cue card; (inadequate or no audio/visual aid; if applicable)

Persuasive Speech

The goal of writing a persuasive speech is to change or move the audience toward accepting your position on the topic.

As any speech, a persuasive speech has 3 parts – an introduction, body and conclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tells your audience what you are going to tell them and establish the foundation for your speech. A good Introduction 'draws the map' for the journey. Just like your Informative Speech, in a Persuasive Speech an Introduction consists of:

a. Attention-Getter

b. Bond: Link-to Audience:

My topic is something I feel strongly about. I hope to gain the support of my audience when it comes to changing others' lives.

c. "Credentials" of Speaker (Credibility):

I've been researching *my topic* in these ways...

d. Destination / Objective Sentence:

My Goals today are to persuade the audience of *my topic*, how they could get involved, and when to take action.

e. Speech Preview: Explain your Map to your Destination

2. TRANSITION: Let's begin today by talking about why *my topic* is important

3. BODY

a. Main Point #1 – *My topic*

b. Transition: Knowing *Main point 1* brings us to the next point of getting involved...

c. Main Point #2 - Persuade you to get involved

Give Examples, Supporting Facts, Data (Cite source or sources)
Restate the Point

d. Transition: Create a linking statement to Point 3

e. Main Point #3 - Taking Action

4. Transition to conclusion

5. CONCLUSION

a. Restate argument

Today I persuaded you of *my topic*, how to get involved and when to take action. I hope that I helped you to create an awareness of *my topic* so we can ...

b. Call-to-Action: I encourage you to become involved and take action if you ever come across signs of *my topic*.

Persuasive Speech

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Example of a Persuasive Speech about Running

Today, I would like to talk to you about something that is near and dear to my heart, although it hasn't always been: running. Two years ago, you would have never found me in a gym or on a treadmill. And you certainly wouldn't have found me competing in a race with actual athletes. As fellow working moms, I'm sure a lot of you can identify with many of the challenges I faced. From overcoming years of physical inactivity to trying to fit jogging into my busy schedule, I just never thought I could do it. Well, I was wrong. I did do it. And you can too. Let me tell you how.

The first key to running for fitness is to start small. When I began running, some coworkers and I used a smartphone app that allowed us to run as little as 1/8 of a mile (halfway around a standard track) at a time. We ran three times a week and, after 7 weeks, were running in our first 5k race which is just over 3 miles.

Another essential element to achieving your goals is finding a way to work regular jogging into your schedule. Get up half an hour early while your family is still sleeping. Go to the track immediately after work before picking the kids up from daycare. Find the perfect time when you can squeeze it in without compromising the other things that place demands on your schedule.

On a similar note, make sure you have accountability. I could never have stuck to my running plan and accomplished everything that I have without those co-workers I mentioned. They encouraged me on the days that I struggled and scolded me when I tried to slack off. Without someone to hold you accountable, it's way too easy to give up on your goals.

The final tip I have is to wait patiently for the moment that you begin to love running—yet another event that I never thought would happen in my life. It took some time, but eventually running became such a big part of my life that I felt incomplete when I didn't do it. And it's not just the benefits of running that I enjoy, although there are many. I've lost weight. My blood pressure is down. My energy level is up. I look better. I feel better. I sleep better. But on top of all that, I actually love getting out and running. It's a great excuse to get outside (or into the gym if that's your preference), listen to music, or just enjoy the silence.

Today, I welcome all of you to take the same challenge that I did two years ago. Have a

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