Messages that Matter: Public Speaking in the Information Age - Third Edition

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2023

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CONTENTS

Part II. Chapter 2

Part III. Chapter 3

Part IV. Part II - Chapter 4

Part V. Chapter 5

Part VI. Chapter 6

Part VII. Chapter 7

Part VIII. Chapter 8

Part IX. Chapter 9

Part X. Chapter 10

Part XI. Part III - Chapter 11

Part XII. Chapter 12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Josh Misner would like to thank the following individuals, whose insightful and thorough peer review proved invaluable and immensely helpful in the creation of the 2nd edition of this textbook, which this edition used as its primary source:

Scott Behson, Ph.D.
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Geoff Carr would like to thank the following for their contributions, feedback, and assistance in compiling this edition:

Theresa Huff, M.Ed.
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Advanced Communication Theory

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Acknowledging Fear

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Talk About What You Love

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Practice, Practice, Practice

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Anxiety Peaks

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Controlling Physical Activity

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Nervous Symptoms Are Unseen

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Topic Selection and Refinement

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Topic Considerations

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Part II: Speaking to Inform

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Analyzing the Audience

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Collecting Audience Data

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Designing Questions

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Maintaining Surprise

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Chapter 4 Summary

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Gathering Information

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Using Research in a Speech

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Thinking Critically About Information

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Using Outside Information Ethically

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Chapter 5 Summary

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Additional Resources

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Creating the Introduction, Step 2: Relate to the Audience

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Creating the Introduction, Step 3: Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)

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Creating the Introduction, Step 4: The Core of the Speech

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Transitions

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Signal the End

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Important Guidelines for Conclusions

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Getting Started

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Chapter 8 Summary

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Completing In-Class Peer Evaluations

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Visualization Step

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Call to Action

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Chapter 12 Summary

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Appendix H

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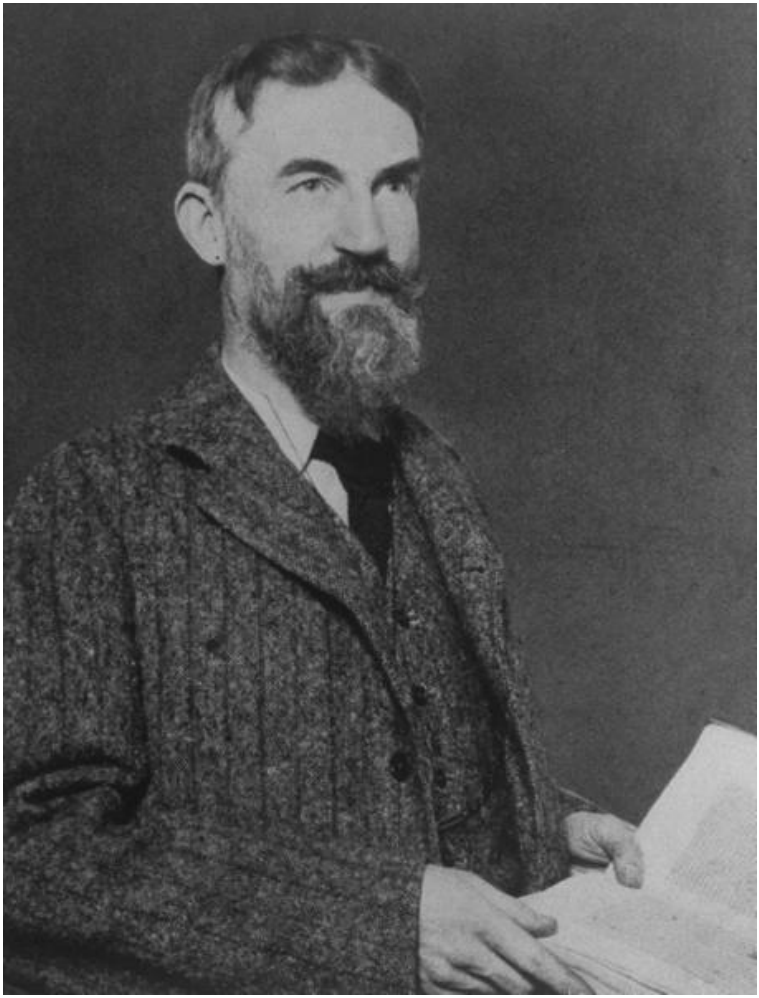
PART I

PART I - CHAPTER 1

Chapters 1-3 outline the basics of communication.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?



"*The problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.*" **—George Bernard Shaw**, Irish author and playwright

When reading George Bernard Shaw's words above, most people can easily identify with this sentiment. Undoubtedly,

many individuals have experienced the pains and frustration inherent with instances of miscommunication, which is likely the reason people so easily recognize the humor inherent in his statement.

In fact, it may prove easier to identify and define elements of miscommunication than to identify and define the process of communication. Communicators can face many challenges, like using the wrong word for the wrong audience, failing to use the appropriate tone for the intended message, or leaving out pertinent information. Sadly, individuals may find it easier to *mis*communicate than to simply get their message across to their intended audience correctly and efficiently the first time.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

So, what exactly is communication?

In explaining a potentially complex term, scholars often begin by examining the root or origin of the term, which, in this case, comes from the Latin word **communicare**, meaning "to share, divide out; communicate, impart, inform; join, unite, participate in" (Harper, 2015). Roots like this reveal more about the term's original intention, giving clues as to the subtle nuances of the term, even beyond what most dictionaries or encyclopedias offer with their detailed definitions and explanations. In this case, the original intent of the term was not used to describe a novice learning about

public speaking, rather that the act of communication refers to something much bigger and broader.

To communicate means to share information via a process of joining others together. Communication, in this sense, defines the means by which people make sense of their life experiences and provides a tool by which they can relate those experiences with others.

WHY STUDY COMMUNICATION?

The study of communication has vast benefits in both personal and professional contexts. For example, the industry-leading job search site Indeed.com listed "Communication Skills" first in its 2023 article "Top 11 skills employers look for in a job candidate." In addition, a study performed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, released on January 20, 2015, surveyed 400 employers to determine what skills they valued most in recent college graduates, and their summary concluded:

> *The learning outcomes [employers] rate as most important includes written and oral communication skills, teamwork skills, ethical decision-making, critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings.*

Regardless of industry or occupation, employers throughout the world still primarily value the ability to communicate effectively, which transcends the boundaries of public

speaking. The ability to communicate includes interpersonal, small group, and mass communication, as well as the ability to communicate interculturally (communication between people of vastly differing backgrounds, nationalities, ethnicities, etc.), nonverbally (skilled in reading body language, understanding environmental effects on communication, etc.), and the ability to wield persuasion and/or argumentation (discussed at length later in this book).

Think about it: ten applicants apply for the same job, and all ten have similarly qualified backgrounds, training, and education, but one of them also provides evidence of proficiency in communication through a certificate program or award. Who among those candidates is more likely to be hired? According to surveys such as the one performed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the one with the background in communication has a better chance of landing the job. Consider this point from the perspective of a potential employer engaged in the process of hiring. Which employee would the company rather hire as an organizational leader: one who can effectively communicate with all other employees, or one who needs constant coaching, fails to listen, and cannot get along well with others?

People also study communication because they recognize that revolutions in communication technology have changed the world. To date, four major revolutions in the way humans communicate have transformed the ways individuals and societies behave, and each were predicated on the invention or

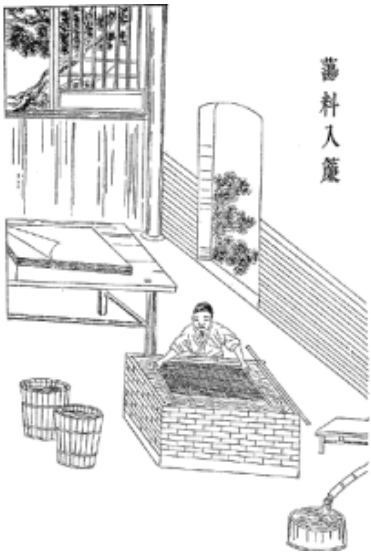
transformation of a new form of communication technology. The four revolutions to communication consist of the invention of writing, the printing press, the Industrial Revolution, and the Information Age.

WRITING

The famed cave paintings of Lascaux, France, which are an estimated 17,300 years old, represent some of the earliest evidence of writing.

People don't often think of writing as a form of technology, but it serves as the second-oldest form of communication technology, pre-dating all innovations in the field except for formal language. Most people often take writing for granted because they tend to learn how to do it at an early age, but despite such familiarity, writing remains an ancient but useful

form of technology. Depending on the region of the world studied, scholars estimate the act of writing originated between 3200 B.C.E. (Middle East), 1200 B.C.E. (Asia), and 600 B.C.E. (North America). Unlike iconic, or pictorial, depictions of historical events, humans began to develop arbitrary systems of writing, which means the symbols or letters used did not look like the form they were used to represent.



An image of a Ming dynasty woodcut that outlines one of the five processes required in the ancient art of papermaking in ancient China.

It took a long time for writing to resemble its modern form. The Chinese first invented paper around 100 B.C.E., but paper didn't make its way to Europe and the rest of Western civilization until around the 10th century. This means that, for about 4,200 years, much of the Western world was taking notes and writing things down on media other than the paper. What did they write on, if not paper? For four millennia, writing took place on media such as slate, leather, bark, and clay. Due to the limitations of replication, storage, and portability these media offered, writing during this time period did not provide the potential

for mass communication due to the limited audience who could engage with such rudimentary messages.

Throughout history, individuals and societies have often looked at innovative technologies with mistrust and fear, and this holds true for the second-oldest. Even the now cherished art of writing had its detractors when first developed.

The famous painting The Death of Socrates, *painted by Jacques-Louis David. Though the idea may seem silly to modern audiences, Socrates expressed fears against the newfound technology of writing as it began to proliferate.*

Socrates (d. 399 B.C.E.), often credited as the founder of

Western philosophy, said this about writing in his famous dialogue, *The Phaedrus*:

> *...this discovery of yours [writing] will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality.*

In other words, Socrates' complained that the latest "fad" of writing could potentially create a society of idiots who relied so heavily on technology that they could no longer function for themselves. Does it sound surprising that one of the great philosophical minds held such a negative opinion against writing? Arguments against new communication technologies resurface every time society welcomes a new tool that enhances the process.

The advantages of writing, however, far outweighed any negative tradeoffs, and people continue to engage in the process to this day. Suddenly, individuals could 1) store information more permanently without having to rely on someone with a remarkable memory, 2) transmit messages over

greater distances, and 3) record and analyze communications[1]. Every rapid change in communication begets winners and losers, grants benefits and drawbacks, and catalyzes change. Such change becomes permanent if the benefits outweigh any disadvantages society experiences to adopt the new technology. This pattern will continue in the next three revolutions.

1. A detriment to politicians, for they could no longer count on getting away with changing their stories so rapidly!

THE PRINTING PRESS

This illustration depicts Johannes Gutenberg with his printing press. One of the first bibles published off that press would cost $35 million nowadays.

It would take more than 4,000 years to witness the next revolution in communication. During those millennia, humanity managed to make improvements to writing, to language, and to the media societies used to record their thoughts, but none of these changes amounted to a revolution until Johannes Gutenberg perfected his printing press in the 15th century. Gutenberg became interested in mass-producing writing, because at the time, the only way the non-royal "commoners" could get their hands on a Bible was to purchase them from monasteries at an astronomical price. Monks skilled in the art of calligraphy often took months, if not years, to produce a single edition of the Bible. As a result, few people had access to religious texts, so they had to rely on priests to read to them while attending religious services. Such

imbalanced access to the governing religious text of the day presented the possibility for those in power to take advantage of the limited flow of information, and as a result, embellish or manipulate that information to suit their needs.

Gutenberg received credit for the invention of moveable type in Europe, which allowed him to print off about 180 copies of the Bible. Since paper was still not the most commonly used medium of the time, he made 45 copies using vellum, a parchment made from calfskin. It took roughly 170 calfskins to produce just one Gutenberg Bible, which means they needed to slaughter about 7,600 calves to produce the vellum needed!

Gutenberg's invention suddenly made the most prominent religious text of Europe available to considerably wider audiences, and shortly thereafter, Martin Luther published his *95 Theses* to kick off the Protestant Reformation, which split the Christian church into fragments. This began religious infighting that drastically changed Western civilization over the next three centuries.

Today, artists skilled in calligraphy do not hold a monopoly in the book-publishing world, and though they lost their status, the world gained huge benefits as the tools that would lead to mass communication grew in number and capability.

INDUSTRIAL/ ELECTROCHEMICAL REVOLUTION

While the printing press enjoyed its heyday with respect to transformation, another revolution began brewing on the side. By the late 1700s (a mere 200 years after the last revolution; notice how the time period between each revolution shrinks dramatically?), the Industrial Revolution began changing the way humans communicate on a global scale in a much more dramatic fashion. Refer to Table 1.1 to review the major communication inventions from this time period:

Table 1.1

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://nic.pressbooks.pub/messagesthatmatter/?p=874

Moving through the history of these first three revolutions, the amount of time between each major communication breakthrough reduces exponentially, from 4,600 years between the first two, to less than 400 years between the next two, and finally, a mere decade or so between the third revolution and the most current one. Of course, the time reduces so drastically because, with each new form of communication, the sharing and spreading of information increases. With increased information comes increased innovation.

THE INFORMATION AGE

Though the Defense Department technically created the internet for a defense and academic project in the mid-1970s, access to the internet became available to the general public in 1991 and kicked off the most recent revolution in communication: The Information Age. The internet 1) provided the opportunity for the convergence of multiple forms of technology, 2) facilitated the widespread availability of information, and 3) allowed users on the network to create and share content easily. The internet provides access to such a wealth of information that some people jest that seeking information using it can feel like trying to take a drink from a fire hose, and the simile fits.

The term zettabyte (a 1 followed by 21 zeroes) was introduced to help define the scope of information created by the wealth of new technological tools (Blair, 2010). A zettabyte represented the amount of information projected for all of humanity to create during the year 2010. In comparison, an IBM supercomputer estimated that the amount of information created by the culmination of humanity previously amounted to five exabytes (Rieland, 2012), which is a paltry 1/1000th of a zettabyte. While a statistical debate currently rages as to the accuracy of these numbers, a core truth remains evident.

Thanks in part to the vast array and ever-growing repertoire of tools available for creating and sharing information, the human race has entered the Information Age, which future societies may view as a turning point for this species. This radical transformation, however, inspires the natural human tendency toward anxiety. Communication technology continues to advance further with each passing year, presenting ever-approaching potential for rapid or radical change to occur, even for those born into the Information Age who know no other reality. When this natural fear of radical change combines with feeling overwhelmed by the ever-present onslaught of

information—some useful, but mostly not—one begins to see that the Information Age comes with many hazards. This does not suggest the proverbial sky is falling, so speak, as a click glance at the history of communication technology reveals such a claim does not lack historical precedent.

Wurman (1989) famously proposed that, "A weekday edition of *The New York Times* contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in seventeenth-century England" (p. 32). Furthermore, he suggested that, for one to be a successful member of modern society, one must "assimilate a body of knowledge that is expanding by the minute" (p. 32). Taking into account that Wurman wrote this two full years before the release of the internet to the general public, this proposition becomes more salient now more than ever.

Information has become easier to create and share with others through an increasingly networked society. As a result, the dissemination characteristics of information have altered the behaviors of certain types of organizations, particularly the well-networked and well-funded legacy media industries such as journalism, book publishing, filmmaking, and music producing. In the past, to get a book published, an author had to write the tome, polish it to perfection, and spend months, if not years, querying agents and publishers in hopes that someone would find it worthy of publication. Similarly, with music producing, artists would often play free shows with the hopes of getting "discovered" by talent agents who may

occasionally descend from their ivory towers to offer recording contracts.

The Information Age, however, has turned these industries inside out and upside down. Anyone with a desire, a computer, and an internet connection can publish a book, article, song, or film. As a result, the information marketplace has become flooded to the point of supersaturation with information across various media. Companies such as Netflix and Spotify rose to fill the role of information curators—organizations whose sole purpose consisted of sifting through the tide of new production, extracting the best, and presenting it for all to consume. The deluge of emerging information often sacrifices quality for timeliness in an attempt to provide the first (rather than most accurate) viewpoint on current events, as seen in the changing nature of journalism and the 24-hour news cycle. As the world's technological infrastructure becomes more efficient at the creation and distribution of new information, this trend will likely continue.

This trend has inspired the transformation of the information marketplace from one that purports to sell media tailored to consumers' needs into one that simply competes for attention. The information marketplace has not made getting a drink from the fire hose easier; it has simply presented more fire hoses from which to choose. As a result, the information marketplace now runs as an attention economy (Davenport &

Beck, 2001). Herbert Simon (1971), writing years before the Information Age, stated the following:

> *...in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it.*

The COVID-19 Pandemic made this battle for attention palpable in many students' lives, as campus shutdowns forced them to adapt to online learning. Many found it difficult to maintain focus in virtual classrooms. As Gillick and Magoulias (2020) noted, "It is far too easy to open up another browser tab, turn on some music, or check your Instagram when you are using your computer/phone/tablet to do schoolwork." Multi-teching – the act of switching between multiple electronic information sources at one time – became a common practice, adversely impacting students' ability to remain focused on their schoolwork.

As attention spans become taxed and more fragile with each passing day, organizations operating within an attention economy will need to compete more ruthlessly for the attention of potential consumers. Consumers now face the unique complication of dealing with anxiety caused by their

attention spans getting pulled in several directions simultaneously.

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

Students and scholars of communication now ask the question: What will the future hold for communication studies, and what will the next big revolution bring? That question has yet to be answered, though many theories exist. Perhaps the next leap forward will occur in the communication of emotion, as the limbic brain (or part of the brain responsible for the way humans feel) has no capacity for language. Will future technology allow people to sense and

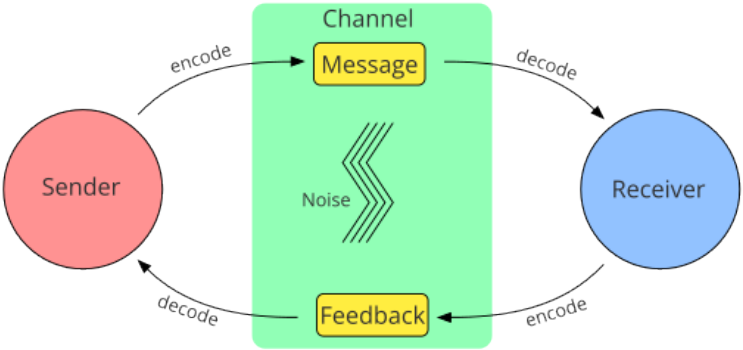
translate emotions from person to person, allowing humanity to empathize with one another more efficiently? Perhaps the next big advance will resemble telepathy, allowing individuals to transmit thought without the need for language. Today, however, verbal communication, whether vocally through the act of speaking or in writing, remains the primary means of sharing information.

Regardless of what the future may hold, everyone now lives in an exciting time of flux and dynamic change. People now have vast oceans of information at their fingertips, and though this provides them with a myriad of possibilities, the potential for disaster coexists. To navigate the seas of information overload, individuals must take a step back and observe such changes from a more mindful, objective perspective, rather than allowing themselves to get caught up like rats in a psychology experiment (see B. F. Skinner), mindlessly clicking away on links generated by an algorithm that knows their deepest secrets. As with the alphabet, the printing press, and the Industrial Revolution, humanity will eventually grow accustomed to this change in due process, but only if it charts a careful, rational course. Winners and losers will emerge from the dust as it settles, and those with the impetus for the study of the complexities of human communication will most likely remain unscathed.

Activity

Visit www.google.com/images, type "communication model" into the search field, and then hit enter. Scroll through a few pages' worth of images and take note of the staggering number of diverse visual depictions of communication. ***Why do you think are there so many ways of explaining the same "basic" concept?***

BASIC COMMUNICATION THEORY



This new understanding of the history and basic idea of communication provides a great jumping-off point from which to examine the actual process of communication more clearly. However, this may prove challenging since it seems like the number of communication theories that exist equals the number of scholars studying the process, and unfortunately every communication expert likely has her or his individual opinion on exactly how the process works.

Communication, diluted to its most basic form, includes four major components: a **message** that gets transmitted from a **sender** to a **receiver**, via some form of **medium**.

The complex process of communication starts with the

message. The sender must first form the message, which involves the translation of the brain's electrical signals into some form of language, which could come in the form of verbal, nonverbal, or a combination of both communication types. This translation process often involves trying to transform emotional impulses into language, which can be an extraordinarily difficult process to achieve successfully. Emotions reside in the limbic brain, the oldest portion of the central nervous system. This portion of the brain has zero capacity for language, which explains why it can seem so difficult for individuals to verbalize their emotions at times. This could explain why humans have been trying to define concepts such as "love" for millennia, and still, nobody has gotten it 100% right. Language processing takes place in the neocortex, which is the more evolved, developed portion of the brain that generates rational thought and separates the human species from the rest of the animal kingdom. Transferring an emotional impulse from the non-language limbic brain over to the language-processing neocortex, and then effectively and accurately translating that impulse into a coherent message, presents a gargantuan challenge in many cases.

Once the sender has formulated the message, it has to travel to the receiver, and in that journey, a plethora of all-new challenges arise in the form of **interference**, which comes in two forms: internal and external.

- **Internal interference** (also called **semantic**

interference) arises from within in the form of mental distractions. For example, if a man gets into an argument with his spouse before leaving to go to work, he might start thinking of great comebacks to say to her later on, or he might also distract himself thinking of an appropriate apology. In addition, the sender might even generate this type of interference within listeners by using offensive, inappropriate, or confusing language that detracts from the message.

- **External interference** comes from an outside source and arrives via any of the five senses. Visual distractions include a shirt with distracting text or a person who exhibits an unusual physical stance while speaking. Auditory distractions may come in the form of the hum of an air conditioner, the horns honking outside the room, or any other distracting sound. The feeling of an itchy tag on a brand-new shirt or foot pain caused by breaking in new shoes represent examples of tactile distractions. People can even get distracted by taste, such as when they drink orange juice too soon after brushing their teeth. Finally, smell can equally distract if someone in the room decides to bring lunch to class and not offer to share with everyone else.

The **channel** (or medium) through which these messages travel presents a wide variety of challenges as well. In the case of this textbook, the channel consists of writing. In a live speech,

the channel is the human voice, and while watching a pre-recorded speech on YouTube, the channel is the internet. Each channel brings a unique set of challenges. For example:

- **Voice**: Speakers must project their voices loud enough to be heard evenly throughout the room. Speakers must speak a common language for the audience to understand and speak slowly enough for the audience to keep up. Presenters must speak with a variety of inflection suitable enough to maintain the audience's attention.
- **Internet**: Connection speed must be suitable enough to avoid lag or lengthy downloads. Data must be compatible with all operating systems and browsers. People tend to be more comfortable expressing themselves online, often resulting in more candid discussions that may often become heated.
- **Writing**: Message must be composed in a language the reader can understand. Font face, type, and size must be legible and not strain the eyes. Colors must have enough contrast to be easily legible. Language used must match the level of the reader.

Next, the message arrives at the receiver, who must then decode in much the same way the sender encoded the original message. As before, the receiver must possess the capability to understand the language that the sender used to encode the

message (both verbally and nonverbally), but additionally, the receiver will run the message through various "filters." These filters might include preconceived notions, such as when a speaker wearing a UW Huskies shirt addresses a group of students at Washington State University. That speaker could deliver a message that all the students support, but the visual distraction sparked by the shirt of their rival institution could trigger preconceived notions against the speaker, which may prove too difficult to overcome.

Note to Self

Can you think of a time when a "filter" impacted how you interpreted a message? What was the "filter" and what impact did it have?

Cultural norms also provide filters in communication. In many countries in the Middle East, a speaker who fails to stand close enough to smell another person's breath may become viewed as untrustworthy, while in the U.S. such a breach of personal space would create a high level of anxiety. That anxiety creates an internal distraction that acts as an almost impenetrable filter.

Lastly, a filter most people use daily comes by way of a differential between verbal and nonverbal communication. **Nonverbal communication** is powerful and difficult, if not impossible, to ignore. People begin learning nonverbal communication before they are even born, via the pounding rhythm of their mothers' heartbeats, the warm touch of the womb, and external sounds transmitted through the amniotic fluid. Conservative estimates predict that people send and receive over 80% of their messages nonverbally, which means that, if their verbal messages contradict their nonverbal behaviors, their audience will accept the nonverbal message as the more accurate one. If the husband from the aforementioned internal interference example arrives at home later in the day and asks his wife, "Hi honey, how was your day?" and she replies in an angry tone with her arms crossed, "Fine," does that mean things are fine? No, not a chance, because when the speaker's nonverbal communication contradicts the verbal communication, the nonverbal communication almost always indicates the speaker's true intent.

Once the message has penetrated through these filters, the receiver (hopefully) comprehends the message, and if communication proves successful, the receiver understands it as the sender originally intended. At that point, the receiver may opt to give the sender **feedback**. Feedback may come In the form of nonverbal communication, such as head nods, smiles, facial expressions conveying interest, or even

"paralanguage" (sounds individuals make that have meaning but are not necessarily words) like "Hmm" or "Uh-huh." The receiver may also use verbal communication, such as asking follow-up questions or providing clarifying information to add on to the speaker's message.

Activity

Find a partner and sit down facing each other. For two minutes one of you will speak. The speaker may talk about absolutely anything, but for this experiment to work, he or she must speak continuously. The other person must sit silently and give the speaker no verbal or nonverbal feedback whatsoever. The listener must look the speaker in the eyes, but may not smile, nod, speak, or provide any other type of nonverbal feedback.

After two minutes have passed, switch roles. Do not speak during the switch, simply exchange roles. Again, interact this way for two minutes, with the speaker speaking continuously and the receiver providing no feedback (with the exception of steady

eye contact). After completing this experiment, consider the following questions:

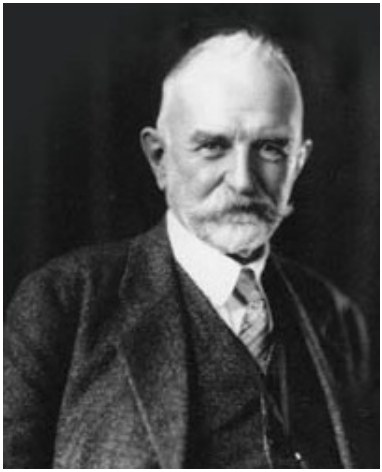
- *What did you feel during the experience when speaking?*
- *Where were you thinking?*
- *Was this difficult or easy? Why?*
- *Which was more difficult: serving as the listener or speaker? Why?*
- *What role does nonverbal feedback play in communication?*

The last aspect of the communication model to examine is **context**, or the situation in which communication takes place. A conversation held via Skype between longtime friends, for example, follows a completely different set of "rules" than a presentation before a board meeting designed to sell a product. Or, the same speech delivered in front of a live audience might read very differently when produced as a transcript for reading. To see this effect firsthand, research the famous "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King, Jr., and instead of watching or listening to it, read it. While still remarkably beautiful, passionate, and well versed, the written version of one of the most well-known speeches in history does not seem to have the same impact as hearing Dr. King speak the words in his commanding voice. Communication theorist and

researcher Marshall McLuhan referred to phenomenon by claiming, "The medium is the message," meaning that contextual cues will heavily influence how a message is perceived by its audience. Context always plays a role in communication, from the composition stage all the way to delivery of a message.

The basics of the communication cycle may indicate this cycle operates in a perfectly linear process, moving from message sent to message received, but unfortunately communication rarely (if ever) happens like this. Communication remains complex because human dynamics are remarkably unpredictable, hence the wide variety of theories used to explain the process.

ADVANCED COMMUNICATION THEORY



George Herbert Mead, who developed the theory of symbolic interactionism.

This chapter will continue its exploration of the intricacies of communication by reviewing one of the more complex theories devoted to to the subject. George Herbert Mead, a philosopher and sociologist from the early 20th century, developed a communication theory known as Symbolic Interactionism. This theory states that meanings for objects and experiences become derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation. Furthermore, individuals act toward those objects and experiences based on the meanings they create.

So what does that mean? Imagine a college student (call him

Dave) who has never seen a table before in his entire life. What would happen when Dave walks into his communication classroom, and sees it filled with several large objects with broad, flat surfaces suspended a few feet above the floor by stick-looking things at each corner. To make sense out of these completely new objects, the first thing Dave will do is name the objects. He will likely choose a name to bookmark these objects based upon something similar that he has experienced before, and comes up with "four-legged monoshelf."

Now that he has named it, Dave will seek out validation for his hypothesis by trying to share his newfound meaning with others. He approaches a classmate, who has just entered the room, and suggests his newly minted moniker to his classmate, while simultaneously asking if that person has ever seen such an object before. As he talks about the object, the other person might look at him strangely and say, "It's a table," which starts up a conversation about what it is and its purpose. Through their mutual dialogue, they both derive meaning for the object, which has solidified Dave's *sensemaking* of the new experience. Every time he sees a "four-legged monoshelf" (or table) from that point forward, he will act toward that object partially or wholly based upon the interaction that helped him to understand it.

Symbolic Interactionism does not represent the only theory

of communication. Researchers can employ any number of different theories to help define and explain the complicated process of communication. Agenda-setting theory, framing theory, social exchange theory, and many others exist to help humanity study of all forms of communication that pervade the modern world.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

While Mead's theory deals more with the general concept of human interaction, other theories branch off into more specific areas within communication studies, so it becomes helpful to review various types of communication.

Intrapersonal Communication

Earlier, this chapter explored the basics of the communication model (message, sender, receiver, channel or medium), but what if the sender and receiver are the same person? In this instance, **intrapersonal communication** occurs. Now, before thinking about whether or not it sounds "crazy" to talk to oneself, relax—everyone does it. Intrapersonal communication is referred to as thought, or communication where the communicator simultaneously operates as the sender and receiver. Intrapersonal communication internalizes a communicator's use of

language, but individuals might find that they use it in any or all of the following situations:

- Reading out loud to themselves
- Internal monologues
- Formulating thoughts before composing, whether by hand or typing (doodling and drawing also fall into this category)
- Making gestures while thinking (some people do this while practicing speeches in their heads)
- Sensemaking, as in the previous "four-legged monoshelf" example, before the classmate walked in
- Interpreting others' nonverbal communication symbols
- Communication between parts of the bodies (e.g., "My legs are telling me that I should not go to the gym today.")

Healthy intrapersonal communication provides the foundation for all other forms of communication, for intrapersonal interactions help formulate the messages that get sent to external audiences. Dysfunctional (or nonexistent) intrapersonal communication behaviors often result in sending messages without thinking about them first, only to end up regretting having done so later.

Intrapersonal communication precedes external communication in forms such as the thought process involved in composing messages before delivering them, as well as any

deliberate decisions individuals might make regarding how they send the message, such as choosing the accompanying nonverbal tone, inflection, or facial expressions. These choices affecting how to compose and deliver messages form the foundation for human interaction. Whether verbal or nonverbal in nature, external communication does not appear out of nowhere. Such messages originate from an internal cognitive process, which may be deliberately thought-out or unintentionally reactive, but regardless, intrapersonal communication requires careful monitoring and control to ensure effective interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal Communication

Once other people get added to the conversation, intrapersonal communication transforms into **interpersonal communication**. McCornack (2010) defined interpersonal communication as "a dynamic form of communication between two (or more) people in which the messages exchanged significantly influence their thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and relationships." While this definition provides a basic overview of interpersonal communication, it distinguishes it from intrapersonal communication by externalizing the receiver of the message as

well as the channel or medium for transmission, all while creating an interaction in which the participants mutually create meaning through sharing. This form of communication leads to the construction of meaning, as demonstrated earlier in Mead's theory of Symbolic Interactionism.

Small Group Communication

If more than two people communicate simultaneously, **small group communication** occurs. Small groups have become more commonplace within working environments since business leaders find them integral to organizational success. Small group sizes generally range from three to 20 persons, and in most cases, get formed to accomplish a specific purpose, whether to address a short-term problem (ad hoc committees) or for longer-term use. Sometimes, a group might meet informally, such as a group of friends that typically spend time together, or the group might have a more formal charge, such as a workgroup within a professional organization. Regardless, a small group consists of members seeking to use communication to achieve a commonly held goal.

Public Communication

As the audience for a speaker's message grows, the form of communication changes from a small group discussion where each member has the opportunity to contribute, to more of a public-speaking scenario where the group becomes an audience focused on the speaker's message. The feedback loop becomes partially and temporarily cut off, causing information to flow in one direction, from speaker to receiver, with the speaker receiving only nonverbal feedback as the audience listens. That makes this form of communication unique to the others discussed in this chapter.

Mass Communication

Public communication transitions to **mass communication** as the audience continues to grow and the feedback loop has become almost completely eliminated from legacy media outlets, though modern online and social media platforms have provided a platform for

content creators and consumers to provide original content and commentary. Mass communication relies on technological mediation, meaning that, with exception to speeches delivered to large crowds in arenas, mass communication occurs through the tools of mass media: radio, television, film, computers, and other digital platforms. In most instances, the receiver has no direct access to the sender, allowing the sender complete control over the message .

TYPES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

The art of public speaking remains a communication skill that remains in high demand. The concept public speaking applies generally to situations in which a message gets communicated to a wider (most often live) audience. More specifically, public speaking can be classified based on the method the speaker used to construct the message. Speakers can present their ideas in the form of an impromptu, manuscript, memorized, or extemporaneous speech.

Impromptu speaking is unplanned, unrehearsed, and

unscripted. Sometimes, an impromptu speech might arise when the speaker has no time to prepare and has to speak in a completely improvised manner, but in other situations, impromptu speaking may involve characteristically short preparation times like a few minutes. Speakers most often give impromptu speeches without notes, and will succeed if they remain spontaneous, engaging, and confident. They must have a knack for thinking quickly on a moment's notice. Impromptu speakers face the challenge of staying on topic while keeping the "flow" of their conversational style going to maintain the audience's attention. Regardless of the varying needs of one's career or industry, impromptu speaking opportunities arise frequently, such as when one is called upon to explain a project, product, or process to members of management or constituent groups. Speakers that can respond with relevant information in an organized and timely manner have a greater chance of establishing credibility to their audience.

Manuscript speakers sometimes use a teleprompter to keep them on message.

Manuscript speaking remains one of the most formal speaking styles since the speaker reads from an entirely pre-written script. Manuscript speeches frequent large, formal settings, such as commencement ceremonies

or political affairs, and may utilize teleprompters to allow the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience. Herein lies the drawback of this type of speech. Instead of interacting with the audience, keeping the speech fresh and engaging, manuscript speeches can feel canned or inauthentic to the audience.

Memorized speeches share similarities to the pre-written manuscript speech, but unlike the manuscript speech, the speaker memorizes the speech as though it contained lines from a Shakespearean play and recites them, verbatim, to the audience instead of reading it. Memorization has its pitfalls, however, as the speaker may forget a "line" and need to rely on improvisation techniques to fill in the gaps in memory.

Extemporaneous speaking differs from impromptu in that it allows for much more preparation and structure without relying on memorization. Extemporaneous speakers utilize an outline to serve as the foundation for a persuasive or informational speech, which provides a roadmap (but not a complete script) for the speaker to follow. In addition, extemporaneous speeches often contain a structure similar to the classic five-paragraph essay, with an introduction, main points, and a conclusion that reinforces a thesis or central idea. Speaking extemporaneously ultimately means speaking fluidly, yet with extensive preparation achieved through research. For the vast majority of topics, structuring a speech using an extemporaneous format provides the best of all worlds: a presentation with well-prepared information and defined

structure, but with enough flexibility to remain conversational and fluid.

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

In any public speaking scenario, the speaker must remember and revere the priorities that offer the secret to public speaking success. The message ranks at the top of this priority list, followed by the audience next, and finally the speaker.

Priority #1: **The Message**. In any given speech, presenters will have an impetus, or driving force, that causes them to face their fears, stand in front of an audience (whether it consists of

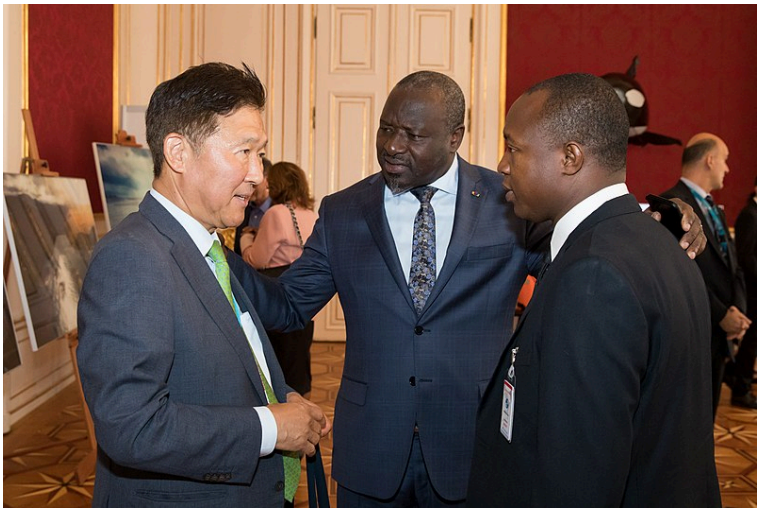
10 people or 10,000 people), and speak. The message should reside at the core of that driving force. All too often, speakers forget to prioritize their original central idea or core message, and as a result, allow their message to become distorted by either delusions of being an entertainer (i.e., seeking laughter as a priority instead of delivering information) or fear of how the audience will receive the message, resulting in a watered-down message. Speakers should not forget the reason they stood up to speak in the first place. Before speaking, speakers need to remind themselves that they have one job to do: deliver a message. However, they also cannot forget about the other two components rounding out the triad of priorities.

***Priority #2*: The Audience**. Arguably, the importance of the audience theoretically should equal the message, for without the audience, the speaker might as well be speaking to themselves in the mirror. While the core of the message ultimately comes first, how speakers will present that message depends upon their audience. Speakers must deliver the message to the audience in such a way that makes it easy for them to understand the message as originally intended. How audience members receive the core of the message remains highly dependent upon how they filter the message through their lens of understanding, so the speaker must get to know what to expect from the audience. What

drives them? What are their feelings, attitudes, opinions, values, and beliefs? How much or little do they know about the topic? Effective speakers consider these questions and more before composing the speech.

***Priority #3*: The Speaker**. The person or people delivering such messages ranks last in the list of priorities. Why place the speaker last in this order of importance? Frequently, most novice speakers spend more time and effort thinking about their self-image and how audiences will perceive them than they do on considering the strength of their message and/or how the audience will receive that message. As a result, novice speakers begin noticing nervous symptoms (e.g., shaking hands, sweating profusely, dry mouth, etc.) and start to dwell on them, fearful that the audience can see these symptoms manifest, magnifying the natural fear of public speaking exponentially. By placing the speaker last in the order of priority, focus rightfully returns to the message and how well the audience memorably understands it as the speaker originally intended. Instead of wasting mental energy on thinking about superficial qualities like appearance, redirect focus where it is needed so that effective communication can occur.

CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY



In its simplest iteration, communication involves only four basic components: the sender, receiver, message, and medium. This oversimplified definition may lull people into the delusion that communication is a simple process. Unfortunately, communication remains messy and difficult for some and can result in misunderstanding, hurt feelings, confusion, and damaged relationships. This book provides principles, theories, and suggestions to implement practice and preparation strategies so that anyone reading this book can work toward becoming a more effective public speaker.

Humans use communication to make sense out of the world. As people share their naming processes for things, experiences, and phenomena, they effectively define the world around them, and this reveals the essence of communication. Communication affects each and every part of every person's daily life at nearly every moment. Learning to communicate effectively remains a sought-after skill. Learning how to speak in public effectively and confidently will likely lead to many benefits in life.

PART II
CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2: THE DREAD OF THE PODIUM

"According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means that, to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy." —**Jerry Seinfeld**

Seinfeld was certainly right about one thing: public speaking consistently tops just about any compiled list of fears. In fact, a 2015 study conducted by Chapman University found public speaking topped the list of personal phobias, narrowly beating out heights, bugs and snakes, and drowning.

What causes the crippling fear associated with public

speaking, also known as **glossophobia**, and why do so many people feel it? What makes getting up in front of an audience and speaking strike terror in the hearts of so many? This response to public speaking baffles the rational mind, confused as to why such a situation—the sharing of information with people who likely have interest to hear the message—would cause so much anxiety in even the most confident of individuals. Coming up with a logical reason to explain the source of this fear can seem confusing, if not impossible. Science, biology in particular, can explain this phenomenon.

Relatively speaking (i.e., in comparison to the entire history of the human species), people have not lived in civilized society for very long. The vast majority of individuals do not encounter wild animals as a part of their daily lives, nor do they come face to face with hostile scavengers seeking to do them harm. However, each and every person has biological mechanisms built into her or his brain to cope with such situations.

When a person perceives a potential threat, her or his body's limbic system kicks into high gear, producing the "fight or flight" response. This supposed threat triggers the limbic system and convinces it that the prolonged eye contact from multiple sources (i.e., the people watching the speech) causes it to interpret this situation as a room full of hostile people

committed to causing harm. The system sends a signal to the adrenal glands, which sit atop the kidneys, and they begin pumping adrenaline and other hormones into the bloodstream.

As adrenaline hits the bloodstream, it acts like pure liquid energy, and rightly so. Ever read a story about a panicked mother who single-handedly lifted a car off of her child? The problem occurs when logical neocortex (the thinking portion of the brain responsible for language and rational thought) attempts to calmly deliver an effective speech. Herein lies the problem.

The adrenaline immediately increases the heart rate, thereby also increasing blood pressure. Next, the air passages to the lungs expand, the pupils enlarge, blood gets redistributed to the muscles, and blood glucose gets re-routed to the brain. As the body's senses go on high alert, the increase in blood pressure also increases the amount of heat produced by the body, and as a result, people begin sweating to compensate. A large differential exists between the amount of available energy from the adrenaline rush and the demand for energy placed on the body while trying to remain calm and collected. This results in seemingly uncontrollable trembling. The hands shake, knees wobble, and even the voice begins to tremble, all because the bodies' muscles want to expend all the extra energy coursing through it.

Meanwhile, despite all efforts to try and remain still, muscles tremble involuntarily in protest. As the body's hydration

becomes redirected to these muscles, the throat begins to dry up, followed by the mouth. The salivary glands temporarily shut down, causing a "cottonmouth" effect. The stomach tightens up because the parasympathetic system that covers the "rest and digest" function for the body pauses while the speaker attempts to deal with all the anxiety. This explains why the stomach feels like it's tied up in knots. The increase of blood sugar in the brain feels similar to how a computer reacts when opening up too many programs at once, and it shuts down due to overload.

Note to Self

Good news. If any of these symptoms sound familiar to you, based on previous public speaking experience, then you are

completely 100% normal. You just experienced the naturally instinctive biological response to such a scenario. The even better news is that you can effectively manage such effects. Just because you currently feel pre-wired to want to flee the room once your nerves kick in does not mean you have to allow yourself to become beholden to such a response.

ACKNOWLEDGING FEAR

What scares people the most about public speaking? The bullet points below outline common fears people share about public speaking:

- ***Fear of eye contact***. Most people have a natural desire to avoid being the center of attention within a crowd, and if and when that moment strikes, it can feel very unnerving.
- ***Fear of failure***. Similarly, making a fool of oneself

presents an almost equally daunting phobia.

- ***Traumatic public speaking experience***. Many students can vividly recount stories where they botched a presentation in front of their peers, effectively creating a mental block, often leading to higher-than-average anxiety when faced with the prospect of public speaking.
- ***Clinical anxiety***. Some rare individuals have cases of extreme anxiety in any social situation due to social, biological, or a variety of different reasons. For these individuals, public speaking may seem to present an insurmountable challenge.

Most people possess not merely one of these fears, but combinations of them (or, in the worst-case scenario, all of them). Regardless, the most important place for individuals to start in learning to cope with these fears (and later, use them to their advantage) is to recognize their onset and acknowledge their existence. Novice speakers can sabotage their chances for success by ignoring these fears or pretending they will not affect their performance—because they most certainly will. Ignoring these fears can lead to a false sense of confidence, allowing them to creep up and strike at the worst possible moment.

All too often, novice speakers make the mistake of thinking

they need to conquer or overcome their fear, but that type of thinking can set a speaker up for failure. Fear is a necessary component of public speaking. Fear is part of what makes a human human. It can keep people alert and provide them with necessary energy. Above all, it makes the speaker care about how well he or she perform. In public speaking an old saying goes: "Speakers who say they are as cool as a cucumber usually give speeches about as interesting as a cucumber." Overconfidence has probably flattened more potentially interesting and engaging speeches than nervousness ever has.

Note to Self

Instead of avoiding nervousness, practice strategies for coping with stressors, redirecting these energies to more useful outlets, and learning to use them to your advantage.

The following sections detail various strategies and techniques for coping with anxiety, as well as providing useful tactics to redirect this nervous energy into a more positive outcome.

TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU LOVE

One of the root causes for public speaking anxiety has to do with uncertainty, and one of the greatest potential sources for uncertainty has to do with content.

Note to Self

Imagine having to deliver a presentation on a topic

> you know virtually nothing about; such a scenario probably ranks up there with having to give a speech in your underwear.

Speakers can reduce such nervousness by selecting topics they either love, know something about, or show interest in learning more about. This automatically reduces the severity for nervousness because it reframes the presentation. The freedom of choosing a topic means the speaker no longer has to view the speech as a chore or a burden, but an opportunity to share information he or she deems important with others. The act of learning can often imbue such excitement, providing an opportunity to discover fresh, unique, and innovative information to present to others.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Public speaking is a learned skill. As with any learned skill, one cannot simply read a book or manual on it and expect to master it, or for that matter, even hope to do remotely well her or his first time out. Learned skills require dedication, commitment, time, energy, and effort to master, and public speaking does not differ in this regard.

Other learned skills include proficiency at various sports (shooting free throws, putting, ice skating, throwing a ball, etc.), learning and mastering a language, playing a musical instrument, and so on.

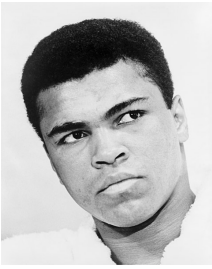
One of the reasons "practice makes perfect" with respect to public speaking has to do with the concept of uncertainty. In approaching any given situation, individuals find themselves likely to experience higher anxiety when they do not know clearly what to expect. Furthermore, if they can imagine a potentially disastrous outcome resulting from the situation, their anxiety further compounds exponentially. Public speaking, unfortunately, is rife with uncertainty. Common fears include forgetting what to say; saying something wrong

or embarrassing; facing public humiliation; failing to communicate effectively; and becoming an object of ridicule. Speakers can alleviate many of these pre-speech fears simply by eliminating sources of uncertainty. In other words, speakers who practice until they have the confidence to know what to say in a number of different ways eliminate the uncertainty of forgetfulness and the anxiety of humiliation by saying the wrong thing or not knowing what to do. By getting to know the audience (see Chapter 4), a person can eliminate the uncertainty of knowing whether or not they will connect with the message. Chapter 8 outlines efficient strategies for practicing a speech and delivery tips for strengthening confidence.

POSITIVE VISUALIZATION

Henry Ford once said, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right." What does a top-level basketball player do to prepare to take a free-throw shot? The player often goes through a routine, usually by dribbling a certain number of times, then assumes the shooting stance, and pauses. At this point, athletes like this, as well as successful professionals and public speakers, employ a technique called **positive**

visualization or **positive imagery**, in which they pause a moment to imagine the best possible outcome before taking action. That basketball player, in the brief moment before taking the shot, imagines the ball arcing perfectly through the air, and swishing through the hoop, touching nothing but net. Consider these real-life examples:



Muhammad Ali always stressed the importance of imagining himself victorious long before his actual fight.

Michael Jordan would always take the last shot in his mind before he took that shot in reality.

As a young actor, **Jim Carrey** said he pictured himself being the greatest actor in the world.

So why does this technique seem to work? Can some mystical psychic explain this phenomenon? Once again, biology holds the key to understanding the benefit of this practice technique. The human imagination is a powerful tool. CT scans taken of the human brain during exercises involving the imagination

demonstrate that the very same areas of the brain that activate during a real-life activity also activate when a person *imagines* performing the same activity (Schlegel, Kohler, Fogelson, Alexander, Konuthula, & Ulric Tse, 2013). This means people can actually train their brains to perform effectively by employing positive visualization and imagining successful outcomes. When combined with practicing a speech as close as possible to the desired end result, this technique works powerfully to reduce anxiety, eliminate uncertainties, and increase self-confidence.

MINDFUL AWARENESS AND AUTHENTICITY

When most people think of acting mindful, they imagine showing consideration toward others and/or using awareness to dwelling in the present moment, but being mindful requires more than mere awareness. **Mindfulness** involves three main components:

1. Demonstrating acute awareness of one's surroundings and senses within the present moment;
2. Possessing a nonjudgmental acceptance of the way things exist at that moment;

3. Being intentional, or as Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn states, "paying attention on purpose."

What does this have to do with public speaking though? Everything! Most individuals, when placed into a public speaking scenario, have a sort of out-of-body experience.

Note to Self

It may almost seem as though your conscious, rational, thinking self exits your body and starts to float somewhere above you and off to the side, all the while pointing out a barrage of self-criticisms: You're blowing it! Stop shaking so much! Talk louder! Why didn't you practice more?

This strange sensation often compounds and increases the natural biological anxiety response by shifting the focus away from where it should be, on the audience and how they receive the message, and instead, onto the escalating number of nervous symptoms. As a result of this sensation, the communication style shifts into the antonym of mindfulness, mindlessness, or the act of going through the motions (i.e., on "autopilot"). Audiences can easily tell when a speaker has

proverbially "checked out" and no longer seems "in tune" with the audience. Perceptions such as these are indicative of a speaker who no longer fully functions in the present moment, and in such situations, the audience could likely stand up and walk out and the speaker might not notice.

By incorporating techniques to facilitate more mindful behaviors, public speakers have the capability to reconnect that conscious self with their physical self. Speakers who intentionally remain more focused on the present moment, begin to develop the valuable communication skill of consciously thinking about the words before speaking, allowing them to shape and choose their communication more carefully—more mindfully. Achieving such a state requires practice and skill, however, it also involves more than possessing an intentional awareness.

The final facet of mindfulness involves nonjudgmental acceptance or acknowledgment. Nonjudgmental acceptance entails recognizing when speakers feel the peak of their biological anxiety response, usually within the first 60 seconds or so after the speech begins, and accepting those uncomfortable symptoms as a natural part of public speaking. Most individuals find these symptoms rather unpleasant, so learning to accept them requires a conscious effort to alter any perceptions of them.

Think about how a roller coaster fills riders with excitement and, simultaneously, dread. The body and brain undergo an identical process prior to such a thrilling experience, and yet,

the perceptions of the two situations feel all together differently. In one, the anxiety response might make people giddy, causing the hairs on their arms stand on end, and forcing an almost unstoppable smile. On the other hand, the pre-speech jitters may feel like the worst punishment humankind has ever devised. The brain, however, cannot tell the difference, biologically speaking, so it is up to the neocortex to redirect this energy and use it positively.

Note to Self

How might you reframe the way you look at public speaking nerves? What if, instead of dreading the experience of speaking in front of an audience, you viewed it with anticipation by looking forward to an opportunity to share with others information that either mattered to you a great deal or you find quite fascinating? Combined with positive visualization, you can see how beneficial reframing can transform public speaking anxiety into anticipation.

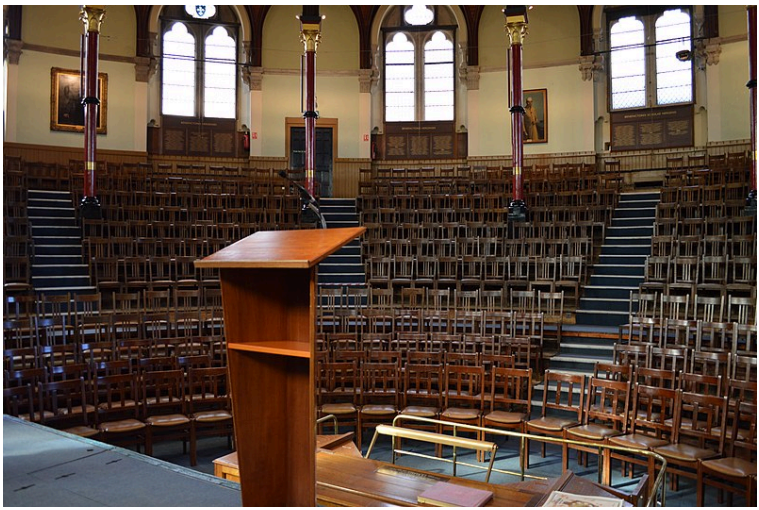
By adopting a more mindful approach to public speaking, the potential for an out-of-body experience dissipates, allowing more fruitful interactions with the audience. Note the

reactions from the audience and feel the "energy" of the room, and adapt in the moment to the changing nature of the presentation. Such practices exude authenticity to audience members, as opposed to speakers who "phone it in" and speak from a memorized script, regardless of the audience.

PLAN OUT THE DETAILS

All too often, novice speakers find themselves derailed by seemingly insignificant mistakes they failed to think of beforehand:

- Technology details
  - **EXAMPLES**: extension cord availability, software versions, video files, DVD vs. Blu-Ray capability, etc.
- Timing
  - **EXAMPLES**: when to advance a presentation slide, arriving early to load a presentation
- Feeling of one's outfit during the speech
  - **EXAMPLES**: an itchy shirt tag or painful heels
- How the room looks from the speaker's vantage point.
  - **VISUAL EXAMPLE**:



Keep the speaking environment in mind when preparing a speech.

When anxiety levels run high, even the smallest overlooked detail can easily fluster a novice speaker, detracting attention from the message and/or the audience and instead, causing the speaker to focus on themselves. The best speakers can spend hours considering all of the details, imagining vividly how every moment of a successful presentation will go. Such speakers incorporate all of these details into their practice sessions, which helps them eliminate all traces of uncertainty and the anxiety it often breeds.

ANXIETY PEAKS

In public speaking, students often describe two peak moments of anxiety: one at the beginning of the speech and another at the end. Anxiety generally begins from the moment someone recognizes the impending "doom" of having to deliver the speech, which may be different for each person. Some might start experiencing this the night before a presentation, especially if this person already has high levels of social anxiety. Others might not feel this anxiety hit until the moment they turn to face their audience. On average, most people begin to feel this major peak of anxiety about 60 seconds before the

speech begins. This peak tops out around 60 seconds into the delivery of the speech, where it quickly subsides. This two-minute window mirrors other situations involving the body experiencing a sudden burst of adrenaline. As a result, speakers need to know their introductions almost better than any point made throughout the rest of the speech. That way, they can still communicate effectively with their audience while they cope with and redirect nervous energy as it heightens. Taking this into account, devote extra time practicing the introduction above all other parts of the speech, yet avoid memorization. Learn the introduction so well that delivering it smoothly and conversationally takes no effort.

The second peak of anxiety often feels considerably more positive in tone, and it occurs about 60 seconds before the speech ends. This peak happens as soon as speakers recognize their time in the spotlight will end soon. This usually results in novice speakers rushing through the last part of their speech, which can result in them forgetting to mention elements of their conclusion. To counteract this anxiety wave, practice the conclusions just as extensively as the introduction.

Note to Self

Take your time and ensure that you are prepared to

close your speech just as powerfully as you opened it in the introduction and supported it while delivering the main speaking points.

CONTROLLING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

While adrenaline causes many involuntary responses such as profuse sweating, uncontrollable shaking, or forgetfulness, some physical responses can induce a calming effect on people looking to counteract negative biological reactions with positive ones.

- ***Deep breathing***. Without hyperventilating, pause momentarily, just before beginning the speech, and take

at least a couple of deep, cleansing breaths. Allow the diaphragm to fill the lungs completely, and then exhale slowly, releasing as much air as possible. Do this slowly and deliberately, as the calming power of slow, deep breathing cannot be reinforced often enough.

- ***Use the body's muscles***. Adrenaline may supply the body with tons of extra energy, but it has a down side: it gets burned off just as quickly as it sets in. Simply move around the room and use gestures while speaking.

Note to Self

You will not need to do jumping jacks or pushups to burn off this excess energy; it only takes minimal effort and movement. The last thing you want to do is stand still and grip the podium for dear life. The more rigid your stance, the longer the adrenaline burst will last!

NERVOUS SYMPTOMS ARE UNSEEN

Nervous symptoms seem catastrophic to the person experiencing them, even if the audience may never register their existence. What about trembling hands and knees? Squeaky voice? Dry mouth? Rapid heartbeat? Speakers have a tendency to feel like freaks of nature and that everyone watching thinks the same. Of course, this only occurs because all these symptoms happen to the speaker. However, in reality, the vast majority of nervous symptoms tend to go completely unseen by the audience. Unless a particular audience member shares a close proximity with the speaker, then odds are, the audience spends most of their time directing their focus on listening to the message. After all, few people (if any) participating as audience members attend speeches with the purpose of seeing if they can detect a speaker's nervous symptoms.

Often, novice speakers will also apologize for their nerves, feeling as though the audience finds the manifestation of such symptoms distracting. However, apologizing only draws attention to symptoms that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. Additionally, apologizing for nervous behaviors might compound the anxiety and make it worse.

Managing Physical Symptoms

Dry Mouth

- Avoid dairy products, soda, and alcoholic beverages. Don't smoke before speaking. All these items increase mucus production and might leave a lump in the throat.
- Gently bite the tip of the tongue to trigger salivation.
- Drink room-temperature or warm water. Add a lemon, if available.

For Sweaty Hands

- Apply talcum powder or corn starch on hands/body.

- Carry a handkerchief.

Red Splotches on the Face

- Wear pink or red colors.
- Wear high necklines.
- Use humor to release endorphins.

Trembling Voice

- Project voice to the back row of the audience.

Shaky Hands

- Use gestures, but make them small; don't wave about wildly.

Shaky Legs/Knocking Knees

- Move around gently and easily, but do not pace.

Rapid Heartbeat

- Engage in deep breathing.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine.

CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY

Nervous feelings go with public speaking like cookies and milk or fries and ketchup. Public speaking anxiety results from natural, biological reactions. Instead of seeking to get rid of nerves and anxiety, speakers need to welcome this fear as a source of energy, reframing the opportunity to share news and information with anticipation, rather than dread. Most speakers easily accomplish this through redirecting their focus on the message and how the audience receives the message, as well as eliminating all sources of uncertainty through careful planning, preparation, and practice. Redirect anxiety into

useful energy, which will lead to a more mindful, authentic speech delivery that connects with audiences on a deeper, more engaging level.

PART III
CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3: TOPIC SELECTION AND PURPOSE

"The newest computer can merely compound, at speed, the oldest problem in the relations between human beings, and in the end, the communicator will be confronted with the old problem of what to say and how to say it." —**Edward R. Murrow**

Picture a student entering a college public speaking course for the first time (probably not terribly difficult when reading this

text), faced with the prospect of having to deliver a speech to a classroom full of other students. Immediately, the anxiety of the unknown starts to build, as discussed in Chapter 2. It builds slowly at first, but eventually the speaker becomes faced with the same problem as everyone else in the room, as well as anyone else in the history of a college speech course: the choice of topic. What points should get covered? Many, if not most, students lament this same question year after year, and as they should, because topic selection often serves as one of the single greatest predictors of success for novice speakers as they practice and refine their craft.

Anxiety peaks when speakers have to deliver a presentation on a topic in which they have zero interest or knowledge. For example, a communication professor discussing public speaking anxiety, mass media studies, or interpersonal interaction between men and women might seem as though it comes naturally, partly because of that person's interest in the topic, in addition to a high level of training and experience. Ask the same professor to discuss the ins and outs of health care administration or quantum physics, and this same person quickly falls victim to quivering nerves in anticipatory anxiety. Talking about unfamiliar or uninteresting topics rarely delights those involved.

Speakers can reduce their anxiety levels by choosing to

discuss topics that genuinely interest them, primarily because it naturally shifts focus away from nervous symptoms. For example, take a look at time spent on most social media. When people come across a scintillating story or fascinating article, their natural inclination is to share that information with their entire social network, and many do so without giving it a second thought. They do this because they naturally take pleasure sharing information that fascinates, excites, and engages with others. However, before settling on a topic, first consider the purpose of the speech.

GENERAL SPEAKING PURPOSE

Typically, speeches can be divided among three main types or basic purposes: speeches to inform, speeches to persuade, and speeches to entertain and/or commemorate special occasions. All three speech types employ different methods that intricately determine how to achieve their intended purpose, so take a close and critical look at each:

- An **informative speech** provides an audience with new, unique, and/or innovative knowledge on a distinct topic. A speech to inform can: tell an engaging story with an intrinsic lesson; explain or clarify a difficult or complicated concept (often called the definition speech); or show an audience how to do something (often called the demonstration speech or how-to speech). Examples include a professor delivering a lecture, a student presenting an oral report; skilled demonstrations outlining skills such as cooking, woodworking, or welding; and biographical tribute speeches designed to honor a dignitary. Part II of this book (Chapters 4–10) will outline methods for delivering an effective informative speech.
- A **persuasive speech** has most, if not all, of the elements of a speech to inform, but takes the information a step further and uses it to change audience attitudes, opinions, or behaviors. Examples of speeches to persuade might include advertisements, political speeches, religious services, donation/registration drives, negotiations of various types, or daily conversations. Some persuasive speeches seek to alter attitudes, some go further and seek action as a result, and others may seek to inspire others. Part III of this book (Chapters 11 and 12) will examine how persuasive speaking differs from speaking to inform and provides strategies to craft effective persuasive and motivating messages.

- Finally, **a speech designed to mark a special occasion or entertain audiences** does simply that—it amuses, commemorates, arouses interest, diverts attention, or perhaps, in some cases, even "warms up" an audience for a larger event. Examples of speaking to entertain include stand-up comedy, a toast for a colleague or friend, or even storytelling (which differs from a speech to inform since there is no explicit lesson or moral to be learned). This book does not focus on this type of speech.

Speeches designed to mark a special occasion often occur at weddings.

While three general purposes attempt to accomplish different things, crossover between each of them does exist. In other words, a speech to inform can easily entertain, as well as present compelling information that persuades the audience to adapting a particular viewpoint. A speech to persuade can present an audience with fresh, new information while still managing to engage and entertain. However, public speakers need to keep their general purpose in mind at all times in order to craft a masterful speech. All too often, novice speakers want to focus more on providing entertainment, and as a result,

their general purpose gets lost since the focus has shifted to generating laughter as opposed to providing information for the audience. Similarly, a novice speaker might start out with a speech to inform, but end up attempting to persuade the audience by the end of the speech, in which case, the general purpose has failed. Therefore, it remains absolutely critical that speakers remember the general purpose as they compose their messages so that they remain focused on the primary goal of the speech.

The Three General Purposes of a Speech

1. To *Inform*
2. To *Persuade*
3. To *Entertain/Mark a Special Occasion*

TOPIC SELECTION AND REFINEMENT

Once speakers have identified the general purpose, which usually takes place early in the planning stages, they can begin deciding on what specific topic areas they want to use to inform or persuade the audience. This often presents one of the more difficult stages of speech development, especially if the speaker does not have a limited or narrowed set of topics from which to choose. After all, when the sky is the limit, it is all too easy to feel overwhelmed and burdened by trying to figure out what to discuss.

To determine worthwhile ideas, consider brainstorming lists of various topics, but do so without judging their value.

Note to Self

For example, if you see a commercial on television that infuriates you because of the way it comes across, write down something like, "Manipulative media: How advertising controls our buying habits." If you run across a fascinating story on an elderly couple that survived the Holocaust and were reunited after 70 years apart from each other, consider writing down the following topic idea: "After the Holocaust: How Jewish survivors rebuilt their lives after WWII." Whether you keep a note-taking app handy on your smartphone, or an actual notepad handy in your bookbag, glove box, or purse, make sure to jot down ideas as they come up, so that when you become pressed to select a topic, you have a variety of ideas from which to choose.

Follow current events to find constant sources of topic ideas. Pay attention to various stories in the media. Exploring various news websites, particularly those that provide a wide sampling

from diverse media outlets, such as Google News or the Newsmap, provide a nearly limitless source of ideas.

Additionally, certain times of the year provide timely, interesting topics, such as general election season (political candidate profiles, explanations of voting processes, persuading others to register to vote, etc.), holidays (how to make Christmas treats, history of Halloween, the truth behind Christopher Columbus, etc.), or seasonal-related topics (fun family summer activities, best places for skiing and snowboarding, the science behind the colors of autumn, etc.).

Lastly, speakers can consider covering a topic that might be new and unique to them, requiring a bit of research on their part. Often, these topics provide an opportunity to sate intellectual curiosity. When researching these newer topics and beginning to learn more about them, the process of research can manifest into excitement, sparking a desire to share that newfound information with others. Scholars call this approach the **social media share test**, for if individuals come across new information that excites them to the point where they blindly click "Share" in order to spread that information with everyone they know, then it could very well present a fascinating topic from which to build a presentation.

Activity

For a fun topic-finding activity, go to Wikipedia.org's main page. Look for a link called "Random article" Click this link until an article of interest appears.

Nested Brainstorming

Another technique for generating topic ideas resembles a more refined version of brainstorming. Try the following quick and painless technique for coming up with speech topic ideas before taking it a step further and refining those ideas into something workable.

- In 60 seconds or less, compose a list of 10 general subject areas that sound interesting to share with others. Pay no attention to their value and do not imagine whether or not the audience will like hearing about those subjects. For now, simply come up with a list of 10 subject areas as seen here:

Creative Writing * Sci-fi Movies * Board Games * Mobile Technology * Cancer Research * Zombies * Automobile Repair * Mindfulness * Fatherhood

* Digital Music

- Next, take this list of 10 potential subject areas and circle 3–5 topics that seem the most interesting.

Note to Self

How you define this is completely up to you. You might select topics that you know a significant amount about, you might select topics that you are passionate about, or you might select topics with which you have a great deal of experience.

- Narrow the list to 3–5 topics:

Fatherhood * Mindfulness * Sci-fi Movies

- Now, rank these remaining topics in order of interest level. Which of these remaining topics sounds the most interesting to share with others? Do not worry (yet) about how the audience could feel about listening to these topics.

1) Mindfulness 2) Fatherhood 3) Sci-fi Movies

- Once ranked, take the top-ranked item and break it into three subtopics. If this proves difficult, skip that topic and move to the next one on the list:

Mindfulness

1. Behaviors/activities to cultivate mindfulness
2. The effects of mindfulness on health
3. How mindfulness can develop better relationships

- Once again, as with before, speakers should take these

three subtopics and rank them in order of their interest level (not what they think an audience might like). The top-ranked subtopic may now become the primary speech topic. Once decided, break it down further into yet another three additional subtopics, which will become the speech's three main points:

The effects of mindfulness on health

- **Main Point #1**: Defining mindfulness
- **Main Point #2**: Effects of mindfulness on mental health
- **Main Point #3**: Effects of mindfulness on physical health

TOPIC CONSIDERATIONS

As speakers continue the process of narrowing and refining the topic of the speech, they should keep certain considerations in mind. First, remember to abide to any time restrictions placed on the speech. If the allotted speaking time rests on the brief end of the spectrum, such as 6–8 minutes,

For Your Information

the speaker will likely want to avoid selecting topics that are too broad in scope. Such topics run the risk of exceeding the allotted speaking time, putting the audience into a state of information overload where they no longer feel compelled to listen, and/or overwhelming the speaker during the preparation phase. Conversely, avoid topics that are too narrow in scope, as they present the possibility for the opposite consequences: failing to reach the minimum amount of time assigned or presenting information that falls well beyond the audience's comprehension level, which again, can cause attention spans to falter.

Ideally, in a speech to inform, the topic will have a fresh, unique, and innovative quality to it. Avoid trying to inform an audience about information they already know, but at the same time, avoid going overly deep into a topic

The average audiobook utilizes a conversational speaking rate of around 150 words per minute (Williams, 1998). That means a five-minute speech should consist of about 750 words.

Naturally, when people get nervous, they speak a bit faster, but this number provides a good starting point for estimating

without presenting background information first. Finding the perfect topic, as well as determining the level of complexity for the information, is part of the art of learning audience-centered speaking. The next chapter will examine methods to gather information about the audience so that a speaker can carefully tailor the information presented to their needs and information levels.

how much writing is needed for the time given. Knowing this helps with narrowing and focusing topic selection, so that a speaker can avoid choosing topics that are too broad to fit within the time constraints given.

SPECIFIC PURPOSE

Once speakers have identified the general purpose and topic, they can begin narrowing and refining their message using a **funnel approach**, moving from general information toward more specific information. One method of accomplishing this task is to re-frame the question "What do I talk about?" to "What do I want my audience to know or do, once they leave the room?" Answer that question by filling in the unknowns left behind by the general purpose discussed earlier: 1) To inform the audience about_____, or 2) To persuade the audience to_____ .

Keep in mind that the specific purpose should only address one idea. If the specific purpose clumps together multiple, unrelated, or distantly related concepts with an "and" or two, then then the speaker has sufficiently failed to refine the topic. Using a specific purpose like this will likely result in a speech that comes across as choppy, disorganized, and confusing for the audience to follow. However, using the nested brainstorming method mentioned earlier could easily lead to a well-defined specific purpose like: "To inform my audience about the effects of mindfulness on health."

Choose the specific purpose carefully and think critically, because from that point forward, everything in the speech will go toward fulfilling that specific purpose. Furthermore, when composing the outline, return to this specific purpose often to ask, "Does this information further the attempt to achieve this purpose?" A great tip for accomplishing this task is to write down the specific purpose on a sticky note and then placing it somewhere visible within the workspace. The specific purpose ultimately keeps a speaker focused on a single goal, preventing them from getting off-track or off-topic, which, depending on the length of the speech, can be easy to do, especially with longer presentations.

CENTRAL IDEA

Once speakers identify the specific purpose, they must next figure out the central idea. The **central idea** gets expressed as a single sentence that articulates the one thought the presenter wants the audience to remember at the end of the speech. This might sound an awful lot like a specific purpose, and many novice speakers confuse the two concepts and use their specific purpose as their central idea. However, they are not the same, and to clarify the difference, try thinking of the central idea in a more familiar term, one which most people have likely heard before in a writing class: a thesis statement. A thesis statement concisely presents an assertion or proposition that the speaker must then support with evidence.

One method to help determining a central idea is to answer the specific purpose as though it leaves a question unanswered, such as why or what. If the specific purpose is "To inform the audience about the effects of mindfulness on health," then the question unanswered by this statement is, what? What does the speaker want the audience to know about the effects of

mindfulness on health in a single sentence? In other words, what is the central idea behind this purpose that will ultimately lead to achieving that goal?

Keep the central idea simple, yet focused. If preparing a 6- to 8-minute speech informing an audience of the causes for the Industrial Revolution, the central idea "The history of Western civilization is complex" would not work well. Such a central idea is too broad and vague, opening up the possibility to present a speech with far too much information for the speaker to cover in that short time period. Instead, the speaker should want a more specific central idea that more specifically summarizes the content of the speech, as the following example demonstrates:

"Beginning with Gutenberg's printing press, the explosion of information-sharing in Western civilization led to rapid technological development."

Exercise

Still struggling to identify the central idea? Try the "because" technique. Start by writing out the specific purpose, and then add "because" to the end of it. Whatever statement that follows "because" may help reveal the answer to the *what* or *why*

question left unanswered by the specific purpose. **EXAMPLE**: To educate my audience about saving for retirement because *by adopting simple saving strategies that can be accomplished on any budget, you will set yourself up to savor your retirement.*

Helpful Hint

Students often struggle to determine if they have effectively stated their central idea as an assertion. Figure out by asking if someone could disagree with

Think of the speech as a delicate and exquisite sauce that a master chef needs to make. In making a sauce, the cook gathers together all of the ingredients (information from various sources); mixes it together in an orderly, careful, and measured fashion (the process of composition); and then applies heat and simmers it, thereby reducing the liquid to a rich,

powerfully flavored sauce that ignites the taste buds. The central idea remains when the entire speech gets boiled down into just one carefully worded, yet rich, sentence, encompassing the whole message.

Referencing the specific purpose regarding the effects of mindfulness on health, an ideal central idea could look something like this: Developing mindfulness through regular practice produces benefits in all aspects of life, from mental health to physical well-being. Note that the sentence is complete, grammatically correct, asserts a perspective, and includes just enough information from which to derive the main points. From this single sentence, speakers can write a speech about mindfulness, the practices that nurture it, and the physical and mental benefits individuals might expect from doing so. This central idea, once written, supports the

the central idea or develop a speech on a different perspective regarding the same topic.

For example, the central idea "Even with limited space, growing your own vegetables is easy and has many mental and physical benefits" could lead someone to present a different perspective on this topic and propose an

alternate central idea such as: "Growing your own vegetables is a complex and challenging process that requires immense time and ample space."

specific purpose and becomes the hinge around which everything else in the speech will revolve. Keep in mind that the central idea may need to remain flexible during the research phase of preparing the speech in order to tailor the information specifically to the audience. The specific purpose, regardless, remains the same. Different audiences may require different methods to relay the same message, so keep the central idea fluid until more information is known about their preferences.

Bringing It All Together

Topic: Study Cycle

General Purpose: To Inform

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience

about the study cycle

Central Idea: The study cycle offers a simple set of steps that will support your effectiveness and efficiency as a student.

TITLING THE SPEECH

While Shakespeare may have famously had Juliet ponder, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose/By any other name would smell as sweet," the truth is, a creative and well-worded title potentially wins over an audience's collective attention span before the speaker even begins. The speech's title may act like the cover to a book, and like it or not, most people (despite the famous advice not to judge books by their covers) decide what books receive further attention based on their initial impression. In most cases, speakers will get introduced by someone, who will, at the very least, tell the audience the person's name and speech title, though visual aids could sometimes serve this purpose. Providing the audience with that first taste of what the speech promises to deliver—and doing so creatively—sets the stage, so to speak. Have fun with it.

One student creatively titled his 6- to 8-minute speech to inform with visual aids, "How to Make a Baby in 8 Minutes or Less." Before the speaker reached the podium, his title already invoked laughter and giggles from his audience, thanks to the

title's double entendre. However, his speech went on to inform the audience about contemporary fertility approaches for couples having difficulties getting pregnant. In an extremely well-researched presentation on medical science, the speaker found a way to use wry humor to win over his audience before he even spoke, but then followed that up with a charismatic, fresh, and innovative presentation that maintained their attention throughout the speech.

Another approach to developing a speech title involves looking at key phrases that may appear throughout the speech. If the speech contains a key phrase that gets used repeatedly, such as "I Have a Dream" in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s infamous speech, consider using a shortened version of that phrase to reinforce it before the speech begins. Speakers could also turn a phrase into a provocative question, such as using "Could You Save a Life?" as a title for a speech providing instructions on the basics of CPR.

The next chapter offers a closer look at how speakers can get to know their audience, including methods for collecting data about their knowledge level, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs, all with respect to the topic covered in the speech.

CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY

Remember that topic selection can make or break a successful speaker. Speakers should choose topics that they feel passionate about or know extensive amounts of information about. The speaker's selection of a personally motivating topic can effectively cut anxiety in half. Consider a topic's "share test"—if the information sounds worthy enough to share on

social media, it will likely present a viable choice with which to work.

Next speakers need to determine the speech's purpose: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. From there, begin brainstorming topics right away, and the sooner, the better. While narrowing and focusing topic ideas, start working to develop a specific purpose statement. What should the audience know upon completion of the speech? If persuading, what is the goal? Identify the specific purpose first, and then start working on a draft of the central idea. Remember to keep everything fairly fluid and flexible, because, as the presentation develops, valuable information about what the audience members know (or don't know) and how they feel about the topic (or don't feel about it) may change how the speaker's purpose ultimately looks and subsequently, the central idea.

PART IV
PART II - CHAPTER 4

Chapters 4-10 outline how to prepare for speeches to inform.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYZING THE AUDIENCE

"If the people in the audience are talking, you're being ignored. If the people are gazing at you, you've got

something they want to hear." —**Chuck Berry**

After selecting a topic and establishing both the general and specific purposes, speakers should turn their focus to the audience. Presenters might as well stay at home and converse with themselves in front of a mirror if they fail to take their audience into consideration when refining the message in preparation for delivery. Great communicators retain the integrity of their original message, but carefully tailor, shape, and mold that message to each audience's unique wants and needs. Speakers who fail to connect with their audiences often do so because they cared more about how they looked and whether or not their audiences liked them.

"Care deeply about your audience." Veteran speakers often give this piece of advice when asked to explain the number-one rule for effective public speaking. Unfortunately, many speeches prove ineffective because the speaker could not mindfully connect with the audience. Instead, they become self-focused and preoccupied with distractions such as, "How do I look?" or "Does everyone like me?" This self-focused approach can amplify existing anxieties and interfere with presenting successful communication. This rarely produces positive results. Caring deeply for the audience means making preparations in advance, staying mindfully present with the message and how it will connect with the audience.

Note to Self

Show your genuine and authentic self.

Effective and powerful communicators have one goal: to create an **audience-centered** speech that adds value and meaning to the information presented by remaining mindful of what the audience members know about the topic and how they feel (attitudes, opinions, and beliefs) about it. To achieve this goal, speakers must, before every speech they deliver, analyze their audiences and adapt their communication to the results of that analysis. This process of analysis and adaptation, however, must never sacrifice the integrity of the original message. This explains why topic selection and initial planning come first in the process, for personal motivations to discuss this topic should not get overlooked.

Note to Self

Deliver your message despite what you think the

audience may want to hear. You chose the topic because you found it has value to you, so take the opportunity to share this message so that other's may grow to adopt your perspective.

COLLECTING AUDIENCE DATA

The word "data" might conjure an image of an accountant's office or a research laboratory filled with beakers and vials for some, but data comes in non-numerical forms. Data concerning numbers and statistics is considered **quantitative**, but it also comes in **qualitative** forms, which include facts, stories, and observations. Collecting meaningful, purposeful data about an audience in relation to a speech topic is part science and part art. Planning and critical thinking play a large role in succeeding in this endeavor.

Demographic Categories to Consider

- Gender
- Sex

Before creating a means to gather data, decide on what data matters for the speech. Knowing information about the audience's **demographics**, or the most basic and quantifiable characteristics of a population of people, could prove most useful. Data on demographics (see sidebar for examples) can greatly enhance the crafting of an effective message.

Why do any of these characteristics matter?

Gender and sex do not necessarily mean the same thing, and knowing the difference can make or break certain speech topics. *Sex* refers to the biological differences that make a person male or female, while *gender* refers to masculine or feminine qualities evident within a person of either sex. To determine how sex makes a difference to a speech topic, consider the following situation:

- Age
- Education
- Occupation
- Religious affiliation
- Socio-economic status
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Income level
- Birthplace

Jill is scheduled to speak to an audience made up of 18 women and 2 men. Her speech topic concerns early detection for breast cancer. Given that the sex breakdown of the room is 90% women and 10% men, the majority of her speech's information will likely be directed toward the women in the room, but at the same time, she absolutely must find a way to make a portion of her

information appeal to the men in the room, such as by talking about how 1 in 1,000 men will get breast cancer, or how a man can assist a female partner with early detection measures. If she doesn't find a way to include the men in this conversation, then their attention spans will likely fade early in the presentation. By speaking inclusively and inviting men into the conversation using information that directly impacts them, she has acted as an effective audience-centered speaker.

Age represents another important demographic factor, because each generation learns and grows in different environments. Opinions and knowledge levels on a particular subject may vary greatly from one generation to the next.

For example, an informative speeches outlining the dangers of social media delivered to two different audiences, one to parents of high school students and another to the high school students themselves, would likely get arranged in different ways. The parents of high school students might need to hear more background information before the speaker covers the dangers of social media, whereas the experiences of the students themselves (who grew up as "digital natives" and used social media for the better part of their lives) allow the speaker to immediately explore the topic with much more depth.

Sex and age may represent more outward characteristics that seem relatively easy in most cases to spot without a lot of effort, but what about socioeconomic background, and how does this demographic affect the speech preparation process? *Socioeconomic background* refers to one's position in society

relative to others, which many will identify as "middle class," "impoverished," or "wealthy." Others may also refer to their position among the working hierarchy, such as "blue collar" or "white collar." To illustrate this point, consider the following student's example:

> *Shortly after graduating from my community college, I transferred to a prestigious private university, at which point, I was immersed into a student body of considerably greater wealth. One of my first experiences there was in a speech class, where a student delivered a speech on how to buy a used car, and her first main point discussed her real dilemma, which was whether to go with a BMW or a Mercedes. At that point, considering that I came from a high-poverty working-class background, I immediately tuned out.*

Had the speaker, in this case, known her audience's background, rather than assuming a homogenous (like-minded, with similar backgrounds) one, she could have provided more appealing options, thus inviting the whole audience into her presentation, which would have prevented losing listeners due to alienation or exclusion.

Lastly, a speaker must also know the intricacies of culture for a particular audience. A speaker discussing law enforcement abuses will cover information one way with a predominantly Caucasian audience and another way with an audience with a higher representation of minorities due to vastly differing viewpoints for each audience, but will ideally maintain the integrity of that message with both. Additionally, regional cultural expectations (e.g., a New York audience compared to an audience in Atlanta) can vary greatly, as will multinational audiences, so it pays for a speaker to prepare based on intercultural knowledge, as well as individual audience member characteristics. Delivering a message that meets cultural expectations and respects cultural norms and customs can earn a speaker the respect and admiration of that audience, regardless of message content.

While demographics offer a great place to start, speakers often need more detailed information about their audiences to achieve success. They can use both passive and active methods to gather information.

Hypothetical Situation #1

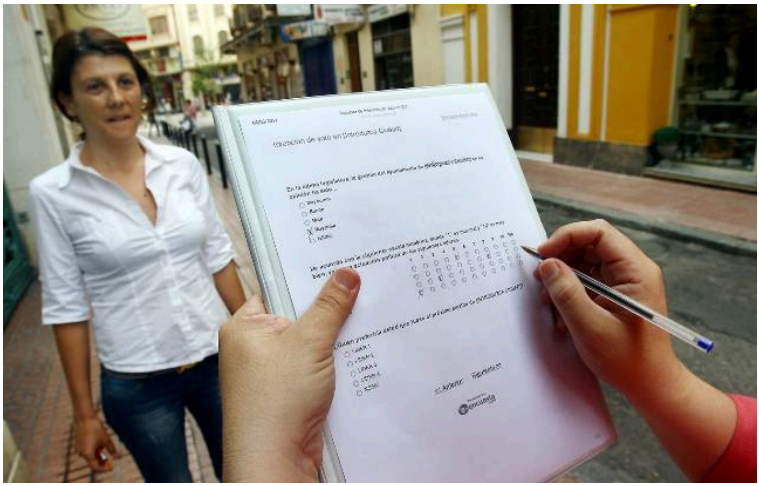
You need to deliver a rousing persuasive speech in front of the city council. How might you go about learning more about each member? You could start with a simple web search. Visit the city council's web page to read about each of the individual members, especially if they plan to vote on the issue you came to address. Learn about their individual priorities, their backgrounds in the community, and even how they have voted in the past. Use this information to tailor your message to match those needs (this book discusses persuasive strategies in Chapters 11 and 12). However, in addition to this research-based approach, you could simply show up early to the meeting and try to talk to various people. Learn about this specific audience by listening to the various conversations, or by talking to people who know this audience well.

Hypothetical Situation #2

Pretend you just got hired as a communication consultant for a relatively large organization. How would you learn about the company to effectively perform your job? You might look through the organization's website, but also, could search local papers and other news outlets for stories and press releases about the organization. This will lead to finding examples of various practices and activities the organization has conducted. This technique also works to prepare for a job interview. Interviewing the supervisor or human resources manager of an organization can also help you gather information about the organization. These key people can provide demographics, behaviors, knowledge, attitudes, and interest levels of the targeted audience.

The more speakers know and the more they can speak specifically toward topics and information that various audiences find important, the greater rapport, or connection, they can generate.

SURVEY RESEARCH



Passive information collection works well in many cases, but sometimes a presenter wants to guarantee a successful speech. At this point, consider pursuing more active means of collecting data on the audiences. Accomplish this goal by conducting survey research.

Types of Questions

Survey questions come in the form of two general categories: open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended

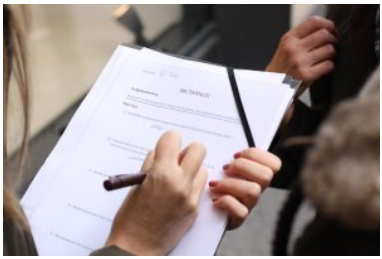
questions have no definitive answers, allowing the survey respondents to answer with anything they see fit, such as "What is your favorite movie of all time, and why?" Closed-ended questions limit the number of responses a respondent may offer, such as either-or questions (yes/no, true/false, etc.), multiple choice questions, and scaled questions ("On a scale from 1 to 10, rate your knowledge of...).

Both question classifications yield specific types of results. Open-ended questions provide detailed information about each individual taking the survey, and as such, these questions may prove challenging to categorize due to the variety of responses they inspire. While the answers offer valuable information that might appear in the speech in order to tailor content to very specific members of the audience, they fail at providing a more basic snapshot of the audience as a whole. To fill this void, closed-ended questions work well. Limiting the number of responses to a question allows the speaker to more efficiently collect and analyze data about highly specific aspects of the topic.

Methods to Administer Surveys

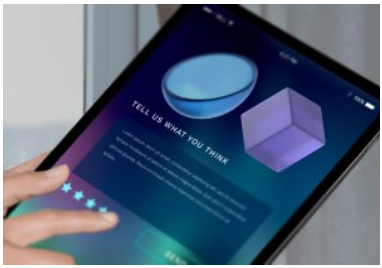
In addition to question types, consider how to deliver, or administer, the survey to the audience, because each type of survey brings with it a different set of benefits and challenges.

One of the simplest ways to conduct a survey is to deliver it face-to-face in a sort of informal interview approach. Write the questions out on a single sheet of paper, then approach people in the room, ask them the questions and record their responses. This cheap and relatively quick (depending on the number of questions asked) method comes with drawbacks. If any of the questions get remotely personal or invasive, meaning that they dig a little too deep, they may activate **social desirability bias**, or the tendency for most people to want to bend the truth ever so slightly on surveys to make themselves seem better than they actually are. For example, speakers including a survey question that asks respondents face-to-face how many illicit drugs they have tried in the last month can expect that most people will answer none, even though statistics suggest otherwise.



Another method of conducting a survey is to create a single sign-up or pass-around sheet that contains all of the questions, allowing each member of the audience to see how others before them have answered. While this provides an equally cost-effective solution as the

previous example, it also may activate the social desirability bias. In addition, it adds the potential for **groupthink**, or the tendency for people to respond how the majority of others have responded before them, even if they don't truly feel that way.



A third method employs technological means to create online surveys. A quick internet search for "free online survey tools" will turn up a wide variety of websites designed to create surveys effortlessly, before providing a link (URL) that the user can then email to everyone in the audience. Additionally, such survey tools provide free analysis options, allowing the speaker to automatically calculate a wide array of basic statistics (averages, distributions, percentages, etc.). Such surveys are quick to take, free to produce, and seem like they might offer the best option available, but they come with their own unique problems. Most notably: response rates are notoriously low. Most online survey websites tell their users up front to expect response rates of around 20–25%, so for every 20 people polled, expect that a mere 5–6 will respond. Sadly, this does not provide a very representative picture of the audience to assist the speaker.

The final option, the old-fashioned paper survey, may represent the best of all possible benefits. When speakers need to know as much as possible about their audience to effectively create an audience-centered speech, individual paper surveys present extensive benefits. First, depending on the length of the survey, one can copy and paste the same set of questions multiple times on a single page, thereby keeping printing cost to a minimum. Second, an individual paper survey provides anonymity and/or confidentiality to the survey-taker, thereby negating or minimizing the social desirability bias. Third, individual paper surveys, if handed out to a captive audience, capture the highest possible response rate by taking advantage of physical audience presence. While paper surveys require the survey-asker to tabulate and analyze the results, unlike the online survey method, it does capture a large sample, resulting in the best possible snapshot of the audience.

Figure 4.1: Types of Surveys

Open-ended	***Describe how the thought of exercising every day makes you feel:*** _____
Either-or	***Do you exercise on a regular basis?*** ... Yes ... No

Multiple choice	***How often do you exercise each week***? 1. Not at all 2. 1–2 times 3. 3–4 times 4. 5–6 times
Scaled questions	***Exercising is an important part of maintaining my health***: Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Checklists	***What types of exercise do you engage in regularly (check all that apply)***? ... Running ... Biking ... Hiking ... Weight training ... Yoga ... Team sports ... Other
Ranking	***Which of the following exercise types would you say you most enjoy? Rank in order from 1 (most liked) to 5 (least liked)***: Running Biking Hiking Weight training Yoga

Survey Length

So how long should the survey be? The speaker's topic should determine the appropriate length for the survey. Consider the number of questions needed for the following topics:

- Caffeine intake of college students
- Differences between political parties
- Depression and anxiety

The first topic might need, at most, 3–5 questions to determine the audience's average weekly caffeine consumption. The second topic, however, has much more nuance and require up to 20 or more questions to determine the audience's political views. While that may seem excessive, consider the third topic, which is so broad and complex it necessitates 100 or more questions (and likely a lot more time than one might have in a speech class) to accurately diagnose.

In addition to one's topic, context plays a large role as audience demographics might determine how many questions seem appropriate. For example, if speaking to a group of first-grade children, asking five or more questions will likely tax their attention spans. Speakers may also want to consider the amount of time they have to deliver the survey, the size of the audience to survey, and the survey's method of delivery. All

these factors and more may require speakers to choose their questions wisely.

DESIGNING QUESTIONS

As mentioned previously, speakers will need to decide early on if they need open-ended questions for individual feedback or closed-ended questions to gather more generalized information about the audience. Closed-ended question types include either-or, multiple choice, and scaled questions, but each type carries with it a different set of considerations.

Either-or questions include true/false, yes/no, or any other pair of polar opposite responses. Use these types of questions only if two available options exist from which to

choose. Consider the following poor examples of either-or questions:

- ***What political affiliation are you:*** Democrat / Republican
    - People are more likely to identify as having tendencies toward both parties or neither. A multiple-choice question that gave the audience more options would work better here.
- ***What religion are you:*** Christian / Other
    - This question implies that any religion besides Christianity is not worthy of naming. Lumping all other religions into a general category could unintentionally insult some members of the audience, particularly the ones who practice anything besides the aforementioned religion.
- ***Would you consider yourself:*** Healthy / Unhealthy
    - Consider the social desirability bias here—who would rate themselves as unhealthy?
- ***How often do you exercise:*** All the time / Never
    - The either-or dichotomy presented here does not represent the full range of possibilities.

By altering these questions into better uses of the either-or question type, they may look like the following:

- ***Do you generally describe yourself politically as:***

Left-leaning / Right-leaning

- ***Do you consider yourself strongly religious:*** Yes / No
- ***I can recite the Bill of Rights:*** Yes / No

Notice how the generalized nature of the questions lead the respondents to choose between two equally attractive options?

Multiple-choice questions can provide helpful information because they offer a wider range of answer choices, however, a poorly designed question might unfairly lead them to answer in a way they normally would not. Avoid unintentionally inserting bias into the lead-in question or statement, and also ensure that each response has an equal a chance of being selected as the others. Avoid inserting one improbable response for the sake of humor, because then people may choose that response in an attempt to play along with the joke, at which point the data collected has become compromised.

Note to Self

Do not give preferential wording to the answer(s) you want your audience to select. Honest feedback will make it easier for you to tailor your message to them. Speaking of feedback, how would you

improve the following multiple choice survey question: *I trust local government officials to do what's right.* A) Yes B) Sometimes C) Hell no!

Scaled questions provide the best possible insight into how an audience feels about the subject of a question. Ask the audience to place their knowledge or interest level on a scale from 1 to 10, and once completed, analyze the results to capture an overall picture of that audience. For example, if, on a knowledge-level question like "how comfortable would you feel building a computer," the audience surveys resulted in an average response of 7.2, this means they possess reasonable knowledge already, requiring the speaker to prepare a more advanced presentation since the audience already has demonstrated they have more than a basic understanding of the subject. Other uses of scaled questions include Likert-scale questions, which feature responses on a qualitative scale of agreement, such as those having "Strongly Disagree" on one end of the scale, "Strongly Agree" on the other end, and "Neutral/No Opinion" in the middle of the scale. These types of questions prove particularly helpful for determining audience attitudes, beliefs, and opinions.

However, as with any other type of survey question, make sure to keep any potential bias out of the question prompt, as well as the scale itself. For example:

Poorly worded scaled question prompt: *"The president's speech last night was full of lies and deceit."*

Re-worded scaled question prompt: *"The president delivered an effective and informative speech last night."*

In the first example, the survey taker knows immediately that the person who wrote the survey does not hold the president in high regard. For a fellow critic of the president, that could lead to an answer of stronger agreement than normal, and for a fan of the president, that could lead to greater disagreement than normal. By rephrasing the question neutrally as shown, the initial statement sets up a survey respondent with the best possible opportunity to agree or disagree, thereby capturing the most honest and accurate responses possible.

MAINTAINING SURPRISE

When designing surveys to test an audience's knowledge level or gauge their overall opinions and feelings about a certain topic, remember the general purpose in designing and distributing these surveys: to collect information. If, however, a survey unintentionally reveals the best parts of the speech by informing them about the topic or arousing their curiosity to the point where they pull out their phones to do a quick search, then why give the speech at all? Great surveys seek to collect information, not give away the major talking points before the presentation. Consider the following story, as told by a former COMM-101 student:

The "lethal" Dihydrogen Monoxide (DHMO).

For my speech to motivate others to act, I decided that I wanted to persuade my audience to think more critically about stories they hear in the media, but to accomplish this goal, I decided it would be best to show them how easy it is to be fooled. So, I decided to give the time-honored Dihydrogen Monoxide (DHMO) speech. Of course, DHMO is just another name for water; however, in my presentation, I didn't reveal that DHMO is

another name for water. Instead, I continued using the acronym DHMO and described what happens when someone comes into contact with DHMO in its gaseous state (a steam burn); 2) what happens with prolonged exposure to DHMO in solid form (frostbite); and 3) how there are "secret" government pipelines that carry DHMO beneath our very feet (water mains).

After making my case for the dangers of this chemical, my audience, for the most part, was simultaneously disgusted and terrified, or at least, they were until I revealed that "Di" is the prefix for 2 and "Mono" is the prefix for 1, meaning 2 hydrogen atoms and 1 oxygen atom, better known as H2O or water. At that point, my case was made and my speech was successful, but that would not have happened if I had asked a question on my audience survey like "Have you ever heard of Dihydrogen Monoxide?" Someone would have looked it up, blurted it out, and the surprise would have been ruined. Instead, I asked my audience about things like their knowledge of chemistry or of Latin/Greek roots. Once I knew who those experts were, I was able to ask them to remain silent while I spoke, to maintain surprise.

This doesn't mean the audience should not know anything about the speech's topic after they complete the survey, rather, it serves as a reminder to make sure the survey's purpose remains focused on collecting information, not on giving the audience too much information in advance.

Survey Analysis and Usage

Once the audience has responded to the surveys, what should the speaker do with all the data? Basic survey analysis like calculating simple averages proves quite effective to turn numbers into useful data. Tally up the total number of responses for each question, and then divide by the total number of surveys returned. Multiply this by 100, which results in the percentage for that answer. For Likert-scale questions, simply assign a number to each response along the scale to determine the audience average along that scale.

As speakers continue working on their speech, audience survey results provide them with an excellent way to let the audience know how they measure up to the rest of their peers, which can create an effective way to relate to members of the audience. In other words, it tends to keep them listening.

In a presentation focused on outdoor activities in the summertime, a speaker might insert a statement into the speech like, "According to my audience survey, 15 out of 18 of you like to go camping in the summer, while the remaining three would rather stay at a resort." Information such as this can prove extremely helpful in relating the topic to specific members of the audience, but also, these statements help show people how their responses to the survey compare to others in the same audience, satisfying a natural element of curiosity.

Beyond inserting survey results into the speech, the audience survey also helps speakers more specifically tailor the information they ultimately choose to use within the speech. If the speech starts to grow beyond the scope of time allotted, then the survey provides a window into what the audience truly needs to know. For example, if a speaker only has 6–8 minutes to present and enough information for a

10–15-minute presentation, then that person could consult the survey results to determine more accurately what information to cut from the speech without negatively impacting to the central idea. Conversely, if the speaker only had enough information to make 4–6 minutes' worth of talking time, then survey data could be used to determine what information to expand or elaborate on, based on what the audience needed to hear the most.

CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY

After selecting and refining the speech topic, the next most important consideration is to determine how that topic will be received by the intended audience. This reflects the principle of audience-centered speaking, or the act of carefully and mindfully tailoring one's presented information to the knowledge levels, beliefs, values, and opinions of the audience. As a means to adapt the information to an audience in this manner, speakers must first start with collecting information from that audience. This data collection can happen passively (eavesdropping, public information, conversations prior to the speech, etc.) or actively (interviews, surveys, etc.), but

ultimately, presenters must find out what the audience knows or does not know about the topic, and also, how they feel about the topic (attitudes, opinions, beliefs, values, etc.). Once they know what the audience knows and how they feel about the topic, then speakers can work further to refine what information makes it into their presentation, as well as how it gets presented so that the audience memorably understands the message as originally intended.

PART V
CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 5: GATHERING INFORMATION

"Research is to see what everyone else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought." —**Albert Szent-Györgyi**

After selecting a topic, refining it, outlining its components

(general purpose, specific purpose, possible ideas for main points), and taking into consideration the interests of the audience, it is time to add pizzazz to the speech by conducting **research**. This represents the process of systematically investigating a subject or topic area as a means to gather new facts and information, so in a sense, research helps speakers make their speeches fresh, unique, innovative, and interesting.

The arduous task of gathering information to use in a speech can feel quite challenging in the Information Age due to the overwhelming abundance available. One of the main keys to conducting effective research is to keep the specific purpose in mind when starting. Write or print out the specific purpose and keep it nearby while beginning the quest to seek new and innovative information. This simple practice will prevent wasted time and effort.

Note to Self

For each piece of information you gather and each source you identify, consistently ask yourself two important questions: "Does this evidence support the goal of the speech?" and "Would this audience find it important and appropriate?"

Lastly, start researching as early as possible. This should occur soon after the speaker refines the topic and considers the audience's needs based on their knowledge and interest levels. Of all the tasks involved in preparing an effective presentation, the two portions requiring the most time and dedicated effort are the research process and rehearsal/practice (covered in Chapter 8).

WHERE TO LOOK

When embarking on a research endeavor, most (if not all) people likely head for the student's best friend: Google. This chapter will dedicate plenty of time to discussing how to effectively, efficiently, and accurately search electronic sources, but first will outline more traditional means of gathering information.

Note to Self

Sometimes it is actually more effective and efficient to use classic research methods than what might seem faster and easier, so take some time to challenge yourself regarding these time-honored traditions of research listed below.

Know Your Sources

Popular Literature – news articles, magazine articles, and other exposé pieces written by either journalists employed by a publishing

Traditional Sources

Traditional research sources (i.e., the ones that do not require internet access) include:

- Books
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Interviews with credible experts
- Peer-reviewed academic journals
- Documentaries

Note: Researchers can *technically* find all of the above by way of the internet. Books, magazines, and newspapers now all have homes online, as do many interviews

with experts, academic journals, and documentaries via sources such as YouTube or Netflix.

In the not-so-distant past, scholars considered all of the above sources automatically credible, but with more recent developments in communication technology, some of the above sources may require more careful consideration. Take, for instance, the fact that anyone with a computer and internet access can publish a book. So-called "vanity publishers" such as Lulu.com offer users the ability to upload document files and have them professionally printed and bound. "Vanity publishers" earned this distinction because they were once reserved for authors who "couldn't cut it" in the traditional publishing market, but merely wanted to see their names on book jackets. However, more and more authors find this avenue of publishing a viable alternative, as

entity or freelance contractors hired for a specific assignment. These pieces cover current events, offer profiles of people and places, highlight in-depth reporting, showcase investigative reporting, or feature other items of interest to the general public in legacy media outlets.

Popular, in this context, does not refer to how many people buy the magazine or read the article online. Instead, it refers to the piece's intended audience, in this case the "general population."

self-publishing often offers authors a much higher percentage of royalty revenue. Take into account that contemporary publishers may not carefully verify information printed in their books. Some publishers even have unscrupulous motives for providing misinformation, such as driving book sales. Research the reputation and credentials of the article, for in public speaking, the responsibility sits with the speaker to *show* the audience why they should consider the source credible. Simply stating that an author published a book does not do enough to demonstrate validity.

Similarly, with respect to magazines and newspapers, an author of an article in the *New York Times* or *Time* may have automatic credibility, considering the acclaim these organizations have earned over the years. Some organizations and websites, however, present biased information.

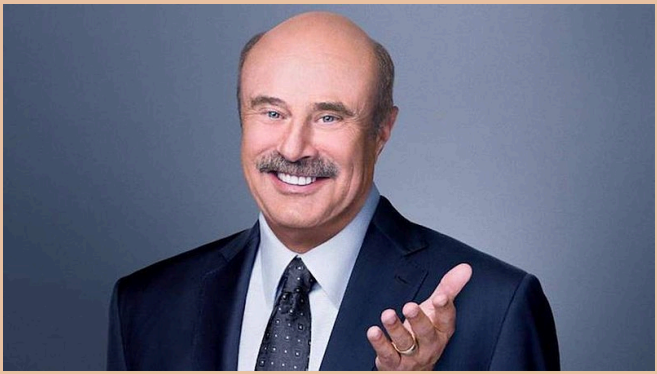
Note to Self

If you had to label *Fox News* as a predominantly conservative or liberal organization, what would you say? What about *MSNBC*? In this modern era of media consolidation, it helps knowing what other publications operate under larger parent companies. Rupert Murdoch, the current head of News Corp., the parent company of *Fox News*, also owns the *Wall Street Journal*.

Recognizing these biases and how an audience might perceive them helps the speaker know what research to use and what to avoid. If an audience survey reveals that the audience leans more to the left (slightly more liberal than conservative), then the speaker should probably avoid using sources like *Fox News*, and instead, look for the same or equivalent information via a publication that the audience will more likely perceive as credible and trustworthy.

Interviews with experts can add credibility to the speech, but also come with the caveat that the speaker must know how an audience may perceive that expert.

Note to Self



For example, if you found an interview with Dr. Phil published online, you would probably want to know whether or not your audience would feel he was a credible source to use. Objectively, Dr. Phil McGraw has the credentials of a licensed psychologist, leading one to believe that his testimony would be accurate, but again, the act of communication with an audience requires that the audience perceive the testimony as credible for it to have a positive effect. Otherwise, you lose credibility with your audience and your communication falls upon deaf ears.

Finally, consider referring to peer-reviewed academic journals, such as Communication Monographs or the Journal of the American Medical Association. These periodic publications rank among the most trusted and widely revered sources of information regarding credibility, and for good reason. The process of **peer review** makes achieving publication in one of these journals a gargantuan feat for many would-be contributors. As soon as an author submits an article (often a research study or a theoretical article), it gets dispatched to a team of expert volunteer reviewers. These renowned authorities on the article's subject know nothing about the author of the article (called a **blind review**). They proceed to read, fact-check, and provide suggestions for editing as needed. The rate of rejection varies depending on the

Know Your Sources

Trade and Professional Journals– published by and for specific industry insiders and professionals. These publications provide industry leaders and practitioners with trends, news, political analysis, commentary, and other

information that specifically relates to their specific interests. Due to their limited target audience, most publications get produced weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

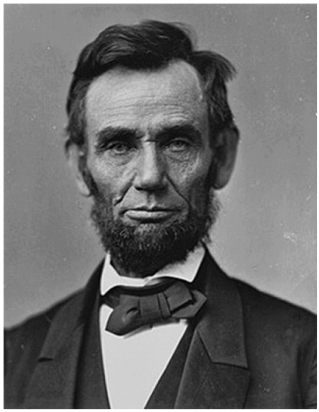
reputation of the publication, though most rank generally high. An author may receive stacks of rejection letters before successfully achieving publication. By the time such an article reaches this point, the audience can rest assured that experts have carefully scrutinized and edited the piece, making the source among the most credible possible.

Although this section has covered "traditional" sources, one can find all of the above online with knowledge of where and how to search. Google Books, Amazon, and others can provide helpful previews of books, some magazines and newspapers provide access to their articles free of charge, online sites publish interviews with experts, and students can review scholarly journals via their college library's website. However, having the skill to conduct effective searches can prove quite challenging to some and may require outside assistance. For that reason, spend time consulting with a college reference librarian after selecting a topic to formulate a general research plan. Consulting these highly trained and

well-educated specialists can help uncover the most credible and beneficial information. In addition, their expertise in knowing where and how to look for credible information, once tapped, can save quantifiable amounts of time.

INTERNET SOURCES

Most modern research begins with a quick internet search. However, please consider the wisdom imparted in this popular meme:



"Don't believe everything you read on the internet just because there's a picture with a quote next to it."
- *Abraham Lincoln*

Most, if not all, sources found online will require further review and careful consideration before accepting that source as legitimate enough to cite within the presentation.

Domains

Some people hold the misconception that a website's domain (the letters that follow the "dot" such as .com, .org, .edu, etc.) provides clues as to whether they may deem the information credible or not. In 1985, the world saw its first .com domain, Symbolics.com. At that time, the internet consisted of six top-level domains: .com, .org, .mil, .gov, .edu, and .net. During this period, for-profit corporations received the .com designation, non-profit organizations reserved .org, federal and state government entities used .gov, military branches seized .mil, higher education institutions claimed .edu, and .net generally applied to networking purposes only, such as email servers or internet service providers.

However, as the internet began to expand rapidly around 1991 and beyond, many of these protocols did not get enforced, especially for individuals or organizations wishing to register a website with a .org domain. Today, any person (without accountability or

Know Your Sources

Scholarly

Literature – Generally written by people who others consider experts in their field, the authors of this type of literature consist of researchers, scientists, and professors usually employed by universities, colleges, or other research institutions. Articles submitted for publication undergo a peer-

oversight) can register for a .com, .org, or .net domain, while .gov, .mil, and .edu face far more regulatory oversight. A vast array of top-level domains has sprung up, almost as a cottage industry. Nearly every country has their own unique domain (.ca, .jp, .uk, etc.). Other domain types include topic, interest, and industry-specific domains (.cloud, .link, .club, .bike, .hotel, .church, etc.) and ones aimed toward developing interpersonal relationships (.family, .dad , .home, .mom, etc.).

www.martinlutherking.org serves as an example of why the domain should not serve as a primary factor in determining the credibility of a website. In 1995, Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and leader of the controversial white supremacist group Stormfront Don Black purchased the rights to this website, along with mlking.org

and mlking. com. Since then, Stormfront has resisted repeated attempts by other parties to take over the domain, both through court action as well as through outright purchase, and instead, continues to present information such as stating that the renowned civil rights leader had, in fact, lived his life as a drunken philandering con-man. It also proposed that the federal government appeal the holiday marking King's birthday. Students using information from this site without carefully verifying or vetting the information by checking sources could end up facing a hostile audience due to the presentation of grossly inaccurate and factually incorrect information.

review process that uses a blind review to evaluate the article for accuracy, quality, and appropriatenes s for publication.

Who Runs the Site?

To vet such information on common websites, look for links marked as "About us" or "Hosted by _____ ." Explore those links, for they usually take the viewer to at least a brief paragraph explaining the mission of the organization and why they exist. Some authors who work for news organizations such as *Huffington Post* or *Time*, have hyperlinks embedded in

their bylines to help provide access to additional information. Often, if the author appears to push an agenda, performing a quick internet search on that author's name will return enough information to make an educated decision as to whether or not the person should become a credible source in the speech.

What Ads Populate the Site?

In addition to vetting the author(s), observe the products that get advertised on the site.

Quick caveat: In many cases an individual might see automatically generated ads based on cookies stored on her or his computer. A **cookie** represents a small piece of data sent by a website that gets stored in a user's web browser while the user browses the internet. Every time the user loads the website, the browser sends the cookie back to the server to notify them of the user's previous activity on that site.

The ads permanently loaded to the specific site reveal a lot about the values and stature of the organization presenting the information on the site. As the old saying goes, "money talks," which means that advertisers pay revenue to the owner of that site for the opportunity to place their message amid the site's information, and as a result, depending on the revenue, an advertising company could easily sway the owner of the site to alter the tone or content of said information.

How Old Is the Information?

Next, evaluate the age of the information presented on the site, particularly if dealing with date-sensitive information, such as technology-related topics. The following student account demonstrates the importance of checking the timeliness of information:

I was in a class my senior year, called Communication Consulting. In this class, we split into groups of four students each, and each group had to present a different consultation project summary. A group got up to speak before mine, and their topic was "How to handle yourself at an international business dinner." One of the students in their group was covering people from Eastern Europe and their customs, and as she started speaking, she said something that struck us all as odd: "First thing you guys need to know is that you never want to call them Russians, as they prefer to be called Soviets." Everyone in the audience started looking around at each other in disbelief, but she continued: "Also, don't talk about the Iron Curtain, the arms race, or Communism. Instead, talk about topics like Glasnost or Perestroika." Our eyes widened, because at that moment, we knew she was serious. We knew she was using some pretty sketchy information. Everyone started looking at our professor, whose face was turning redder by the minute. At the end of their presentation, the prof asked to see her sources, at which point, he pulled one of them up on the big screen, in front of the whole class. Imagine her shock when he pointed out that one of her

sources, on the Soviet Union, was a snapshot of the World Book Encyclopedia *from 1983!*

The student in this example failed to look for a date reference of any kind, and instead, accepted everything she read as contemporary fact, and in the end, she ended up feeling humiliated in front of her peers. Always check for a date. Consider moving on to another source that includes one if unable to find one.

Wikipedia

No conversation about research would seem complete without discussing Wikipedia, which happens to commonly rank #1 in search results regardless of the topic of research. The common argument against using Wikipedia as a research resource is that the site allows anyone to change information in any article at any time. This raises concerns that whatever information the site presents could be manipulated and false. While this holds some truth, it only presents a small fraction of what really goes on behind the scenes of a Wikipedia article.

Hypothetical Case Study: "Asphalt Aaron" (loosely based on real events)

Asphalt Aaron

Hi, I'm Aaron, and to say that I am passionate about asphalt paving is an understatement. It is my life, my livelihood, and all I care about. You might suggest I need a better hobby, but I wouldn't listen. One day, after work, I am surfing the web, looking up new and innovative advances in asphalt paving technology, when I decide to see what Wikipedia has to say about my passion, but lo and behold, there is no such article. Emboldened by this oversight, I take it upon myself to create one.

I then have to sign up to create the article in the first place, which presents very little difficulty, but then I have to learn the Wikipedia interface as a means to create my article and do it justice. Unfortunately, learning to create this article requires some advanced understanding of coding and programming lingo, but I am passionate about this, so I remain convinced that it is my duty to bring this article to life. Eventually, I learn my way around,

craft a well-composed article on asphalt paving, and I submit it for publication.

At this point, the article goes to a volunteer editor at Wikipedia. Think, for just a moment, about the type of person who volunteers their time to edit articles for Wikipedia—for free. These people get aptly referred to as "grammar police" and they quickly point out inconsistencies and errors, so getting an article accepted by them could prove difficult. Many articles require source material to back up assertions, high quality writing, and uniqueness of topic to achieve publication, otherwise, they get swiftly deleted by these editors, who ultimately have the final say.

However, throughout a process of editing and revision back and forth between the editor and I, my article finally goes live. The next day, however, my mortal enemy, Concrete Chris, decides to play a cruel joke on me and edit my article to suggest that concrete paving has superior

Concrete Chris

qualities compared to asphalt. He signs up, enters my article, and makes the edits, proud of his work to undo everything I have done. At that point, I receive an email notification telling me that someone has edited my pet project. Given the amount of time and effort put into my article, I likely would try to find a computer quickly to see the revisions. As soon as I see my nemesis' writing, I can click a button to notify those same volunteer editors that I dispute the edit, at which point, my article reverts back to the last saved version prior to Concrete Chris' edits while the site resolves the issue.

While anyone can edit a Wikipedia article, the process to do so remains rather rigorous and regimented. Although this does not equate to full accountability, this, combined with previous studies on the accuracy of Wikipedia that shows the site's accuracy equals (if not exceeds) print sources such as *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Giles, 2005), demonstrates the validity of utilizing it as a research tool.

However, note that Wikipedia does not have an "author," as the site provides access to an aggregate of information compiled by millions of individual authors. For this primary reason, never quote Wikipedia as a primary source. Doing so

would be like reading a book from your college library, and then, in your speech, stating, "According to the library..."

Instead of referencing Wikipedia, browse the article's sources cited within the entry. For example, take a look at the following excerpt from a Wikipedia entry on the reliability of Wikipedia:

> In December 2005, the journal *Nature* published results of an attempted blind study seeking reviewer evaluations of the accuracy of a small subset of articles from Wikipedia and *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The non-peer-reviewed study was based on *Nature*'s selection of 42 articles on scientific topics, including biographies of well-known scientists. The articles were compared for accuracy by anonymous academic reviewers, a customary practice for journal article reviews. Based on their reviews, on average the Wikipedia articles were described as containing 4 errors or omissions, while the *Britannica* articles contained 3. Only 4 serious errors were found in Wikipedia, and 4 in *Britannica*. The study concluded that "Wikipedia comes close to *Britannica* in terms of the accuracy of its science entries",[27] although Wikipedia's articles were often "poorly structured".[27]

Take note of the hyperlinked numbers in brackets. Clicking on that number takes the user to the following entry in the bibliography at the bottom of the article:

> 27. ^ a b c d e Giles, J. (2005). "Internet encyclopaedias go head to head: Jimmy Wales' Wikipedia comes close to Britannica in terms of the accuracy of its science entries". *Nature*. **438** (7070): 900–1. Bibcode:2005Natur.438..900G. doi:10.1038/438900a. PMID 16355180. The study (which was not in itself peer-reviewed) was cited in many news articles such as this: "Wikipedia survives research test". *BBC News*. BBC. December 15, 2005. Archived from the original on August 7, 2012. Retrieved July 18, 2006.

This represents the kind of information worthy of citation in a speech. For example, "According to a study conducted by the journal, *Nature*, in 2005..." However, take the time to verify the information and follow the trail to the original source, consume that information, and verify that the source truly says what the Wikipedia author contends. The last thing speakers should do is cite false or inaccurate information and end up with an audience member who knows this, for that person will immediately attempt to point out the flaw once the Q&A starts!

Blogs

In 1994, Justin Hall created the first online journal while attending Swarthmore College (Chapman, 2011). Weblogs, or "blogs," have become popular places for people or organizations to journal personal and share information.

Anyone can write a blog for any reason. They pre-date social media applications like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and others, so many of them started as passion projects developed by people who wished to communicate their thoughts to the world. When conducting a web search with any search engine, dozens, if not hundreds, of blogs appear in the search results for nearly any topic or search string. Blogs can present a single person's opinion, information from a scholarly journal of a researcher, or the output of a collection of like-minded individuals sharing their perspectives on a topic. Major news outlets like the *New York Times*, the *L.A. Times*, and others, have blog sections in their publications where knowledgeable journalists and credentialed individuals share their opinions on a subject or present deeply researched current event information. Look carefully at blogs, just as with any website, to evaluate the accuracy, trustworthiness, and credibility of the author and the

information presented before using it as a source. Key questions people should ask when evaluating blogs include:

- *What kind of blog is it?*
- *What is the blog's overall purpose?*
- *Did the blog list its credentials or contact information?*
- *Does the blog provide source citations and links to supplemental information?*
- *Is the blog current?*
- *Does the blog seem to present a noticeable bias by its usage of loaded rhetoric or selective facts?*
- *Does the information in the blog contradict information found in another source?*

Note to Self

Not all blogs are created equal. Know your source before you rely on the information to use it in the speech. This will help avoid any embarrassment of losing credibility with your audience by presenting faulty information.

Blog Spotlight

SCOTUSblog

INDEPENDENT NEWS & ANALYSIS ON THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

Started by renowned attorney, Harvard Law professor, and Supreme Court advocate Tom Goldstein in 2002, scotusblog.com has become a highly respected comprehensive source for what happens at the Supreme Court. The blog contains commentary and analysis by credentialed and well-respected experts in the legal community. Attorneys, students, and professionals view the blog as a trusted resource.

USING RESEARCH IN A SPEECH

When writing, an author who uses outside information has specific rules guiding how one cites someone else's work. Whether utilizing MLA, APA, Chicago, or any other formalized set of citation and referencing rules, the guidelines clearly lay out the process for an author. In verbal communication, such as a public speaking context, however, rules do not seem as readily apparent, if they exist at all. Regardless, speakers still have the ethical responsibility to let

listeners know where certain outside information originated, so how can they accomplish this?

As mentioned, the rules for writing citations are clear. While styles like MLA and Chicago may have differing rules to format these citations, they all perform the function of letting the reader know specifically where to go look for more information should something resonate with the reader. The in-text citations point to reference materials, usually listed at the end of a paper, chapter, or book, so that the reader can go look up the reference if they choose. In a speech, the responsibility to let listeners know where information came from works a bit differently.

As speakers deliver the message to the audience, they will need to support a claim by using an outside source. At those moments, the speaker has an ethical responsibility to let the audience know where the information came from, just as in writing, but with a subtle difference. A speaker also has the responsibility of letting the audience know why they should perceive the source as credible. Unlike a writer, the speaker does not have the luxury of providing an instantaneous way for the audience to pause the act of communication and look up the source in question.

This begs the question: How much information does a speaker need to share with the audience to demonstrate credibility? The answer, of course, depends on the audience, which provides yet another justification for the speaker to get to know the audience as much as possible prior to the

presentation. While this presents some difficulty in assuming how much information provides enough context, typically speakers find it best to err on the side of caution and present more information, but not so much as to become distracting. Take a look at the following two examples:

Oral citation 1: *"According to Dr. Shann Ferch, touch is an integral component in acts of forgiveness."*

In this first sample, the citation provides too little information. All audience members unfamiliar with this expert would know is that this person has earned a doctorate, but they would not know his area of specialty. For all they know, Dr. Ferch could work as a chiropractor, which does not suggest he would not know anything about the topic, but the audience definitely needs more information. However, if the audience knew of Dr. Ferch and his work, then this first oral citation would provide the right amount of information.

Oral citation 2: *"According to Dr. Shann Ferch, author of the 2011 book* Forgiveness and Power in the Age of Atrocity, *published by Lexington Books, as well as professor of forgiveness and leadership studies at Gonzaga University, touch is an integral component in acts of forgiveness."*

In this second sample, the citation runs too long. While it does provide ample information (in fact, it provides nearly all the information listed in a bibliography's citation), by the time the speaker finishes relaying all of Dr. Ferch's information, the audience has forgotten the topic of discussion.

Oral citation 3: *"According to Dr. Shann Ferch, a*

leadership professor and forgiveness researcher at Gonzaga University, touch is an integral component in acts of forgiveness."

This third sample provides the perfect amount of information for the average audience unfamiliar with the source. The claim gets effectively supported by providing the audience with just enough information to establish the source's credibility. Commonly known and understood sources do not need much in the way of credibility, however. For example, a mainstream and well-known publication like the *New York Times* needs no initial explanation as to the credibility of the author, so the best rule to follow remains to include only as much information as necessary to make the case for a source's credibility.

But where should the speaker insert bibliographic information? Follow one of the two general approaches to accomplish this: front loading and back loading. Take a look at the following samples:

Back loading: *"More than 90% of our communication is sent through nonverbal channels, such as facial expressions, eye contact, vocal tone, posture, and gestures. Marketers are keenly aware of this fact and often manipulate actors in commercials to provide maximum persuasive effects. I found my information on nonverbal percentages from a book on public speaking by Hamilton Gregory, and I found the information on marketing in an article in* Time Magazine*."*

Front loading: *"According to a book on public speaking by Hamilton Gregory, more than 90% of our communication is*

sent through nonverbal channels, such as facial expressions, eye contact, vocal tone, posture, and gestures. A recent article in Time Magazine *suggests that marketers are keenly aware of this fact and often manipulate actors in commercials to provide maximum persuasive effects."*

In the back-loading example, the researched information gets provided up front, and the source for that information comes later. With this type of citation, the audience may initially assume that the speaker created the factual information, but after the speaker reveals the source, the audience comes to realize that it comes from an outside source. In the front-loading example, the audience gets immediately cued to hear that the information that follows comes from an outside source, but done in 11 fewer words, allowing a more conversational tone to develop.

Constructing an oral citation seems quite simple, but how do speakers know when and where to insert them? Generally speaking, any time they relay information to the audience gathered from an outside source, they should want to give credit to the original source. Follow this rule the vast majority of the time. In addition, note these more specific instances where a citation becomes absolutely necessary:

- **Any time using numbers**: dates, statistics, total counts, etc. Never leave a number hanging without stating who provided the data.
- **Any time stating a testable, observable, verifiable**

fact. Use a source citation to provide support for that fact. For example, "According to recent reports by NASA, evidence suggests that a planet lies beyond the orbit Pluto."

- **Any time the speaker share information that the audience could deem questionable.** Use a credible source to back up the claim. Example: "Cleopatra lived closer to the invention of the iPhone than she did to the building of the Great Pyramid." According to whom?

While these guidelines provide a starting point for where, when, and how to cite outside research, keep in mind that one of the goals of a public speaker is to remain conversational and engaging. If the speech begins to sound like a book report and subsequent bibliography, the audience may very well tune the speaker out. Be sure to find ways to insert this information as support material, but remember to do so as conversationally as possible.

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INFORMATION

To think critically about the information used in a speech, learn to put in the effort and "leg work" to obtain the most accurate and up-to-date information possible. As mentioned previously with vetting sources, sometimes speakers need to just carefully review the information before presenting it as fact. To discern the difference between questionable information and credible information, watch for clues to help make determination.

- ***Is the information well supported, or is it based on hearsay?*** Hearsay essentially means the same thing as rumor. If the information sounds like it might be true

but does not have sources to back up the claims, it might be anecdotal evidence or hearsay. For example, many people believe that suicide rates skyrocket on Christmas Day, and at first glance, this makes sense, partly because people share the claim anecdotally (or through hearsay) so many times. Why wouldn't they, as the rationale seems plausible? A 30-second Google search, however, produces credible information proving this wrong, as suicide rates peak in the springtime "because the rebirth that marks springtime accentuates feelings of hopelessness in those already suffering with it" (Burton, 2012, para. 3).

- ***Is the information based solely on the testimony of non-experts or on opinions alone?*** Beware of claims made by many sources of information that a product or service changed someone's life for the better. Read the fine print, which usually states something along the lines of, "Results not typical." Additionally, generally avoid using personal blogs for most intents and purposes. Blogs rarely get peer-reviewed, and the bloggers running them rarely get held accountable for spreading misinformation. Of course, exceptions exist to almost every rule, including this one. Certain blogs may provide a wealth of information, particularly blogs written and managed by an expert in a particular topic-related field. Always take a few extra moments to double-check information found in a blog with outside sources. The

extra effort will pay off in self-confidence that the information shared in the presentations stays accurate.

- ***What do opposing perspectives say?*** Do not merely research the agreeable aspects of the information, because frequently, audience members will not share the same support for the topic. Therefore, identify the opposition's viewpoints to a topic to prepare to address these concerns adequately. For example, if giving a presentation on stricter gun regulations, research the positions of advocates for fewer restrictions and less gun control, even when delivering a purely informational speech. Doing so provides a more well-rounded presentation because expanding one's perspective can also create a much richer, more deeply layered message, relatively free from bias.

USING OUTSIDE INFORMATION ETHICALLY

Plagiarism is defined as the practice of taking someone else's work and passing it off as one's own original work. However, plagiarism can take several forms that speakers should avoid.

The first and most severe form of plagiarism is the practice of blatantly copying someone else's original work. While this practice appears relatively commonplace in writing, blatant

copying with respect to a speech actually presents more work, rather than reducing it. It becomes significantly easier to learn what to say in one's own speech by crafting it all along than trying to memorize someone else's "lines," similar to the way an actor memorizes a script. Additionally, memorization presents problems with delivering a speech conversationally, which will get discussed later in Chapter 8.

The second, and somewhat less severe, form comes in the practice of piecing together others' works from multiple sources, without any sort of effort to synthesize these works into an original presentation. This copy-and-paste approach creates the same difficulty in delivery as mentioned above.

The third, and possibly most common, form takes someone else's work and lazily paraphrases it just enough to avoid direct or blatant copying of another's work. For example, if a source changes the following statement: "Plagiarism is one of the greatest transgressions in all of academia and should warrant a public flogging," to, "Plagiarism is one of the gravest sins in education and deserves a public beating," then the speaker really has not created original work, but instead, has used a thesaurus to help steal another's ideas. While the speaker did not steal the words themselves, the original ideas certainly were stolen. Whenever the original source does not receive credit, plagiarism has occurred.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY

Speakers ultimately have an ethical and moral responsibility to both their basic message as well as to their audience to use credible and accurate information in the presentation of their messages. Supporting one's message with information in this fashion begins with critically evaluating the sources, followed by critical evaluation of the information itself. As the speaker delivers the message, alert the audience that outside sources have contributed that information, but furthermore, the audience must also know why they should perceive those sources as credible authorities on said information. By

following these practices, speakers build credibility and believability among their audiences, lending to the desired goal of making the message memorably understood as originally intended, thereby fulfilling the general and specific purposes of their speech. Additionally, these practices help eliminate the scourge of plagiarism by encouraging ethical communication practices. Learning to research critically, evaluate information carefully, and communicate it clearly results in the creation of innovative, original thought, but also provides for the dissemination of ideas among others. For more information, please see Appendix H for the "CRAAP Test," a handy guide to evaluating information for use in academics (and life).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Make sure that all material mentioned in the bibliography appears in the written outline in some format. Speakers can easily forget to mention their sources during the actual speech if they forget to reference them in the outline.

The resources provided on this page apply exclusively to the written outline and not the speech itself (as discussed in this chapter, the speaker needs to employ a more conversational

approach when citing sources during the speech's delivery). Scribber provides wonderful tips for guiding students through all phases of creating original works within academia.

A large number of educational institutions require APA or MLA formatting. Visit the following hyperlinked websites for additional assistance with creating either APA or MLA citations. When using an online citation generator, always check the final draft against the guidelines hyperlinked above.

Using proper formatting, remember to provide a bibliography/works cited for all of the speech's source material at the conclusion of the speech's outline.

PART VI
CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER 6: ORGANIZING THE IDEA

"Mostly I make lists for projects. This can be daunting. Breaking something big into its constituent parts will help you organize your thoughts, but it can also force you to confront the depth of your ignorance and the hugeness of the task. That's okay. The project may be the lion, but the list is your whip." —***Adam Savage***, Mythbuster

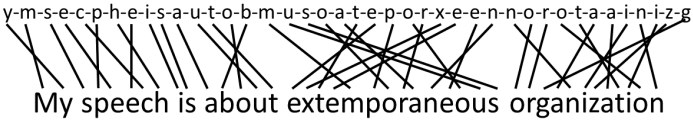
By this point a speaker has chosen a topic, analyzed the audience, and gathered research on the subject. Now he or she must organize the information. Remember, public speakers should not try to memorize their speeches or improvise what

they say, but speak extemporaneously. Compose a plan for what to say, then learn that plan, creating notes to keep on track, and then speak conversationally according to the plan.

To illustrate this point, take a look at the following example. Estimate much time it would take to memorize and repeat the following 41 letters:

y-m-s-e-c-p-h-e-i-s-a-u-t-o-b-m-u-s-o-a-t-e-p-o-r-x-e-e-n-n-o-r-o-t-a-a-i-n-i-z-g

Without a photographic memory, memorizing this seemingly random string of letters may prove nearly impossible. But what if the dashes got eliminated and letters reorganized as follows:



Notice that none of the letters changed; nothing got added or deleted. By arranging the letters into meaningful and manageable chunks, the message became more focused. The same holds true for information within a speech, whether speaking for 5 or 50 minutes. Besides the benefit associated with recalling information at will, a well-organized speech makes it easier for an audience to understand and recall the information shared, which is, of course, the end goal for an effective communicator.

Audiences can quickly tell the difference between an organized and a disorganized speaker. Disorganized speakers often bounce between unrelated points, detour into irrelevant

stories, lose their connection to the audience, and generally seem unprepared. Such disorganization, at best, turns away an audience's collective attention span, and at worst, can create a hostile, irritated, or insulted group of listeners. This does not suggest that a little disorganization will lead to failure, however. When a speaker can still engage, entertain, and inform effectively, a hint of disorganization may almost seem welcome, as it makes the speaker seem more fluid and conversational. On the whole though, audiences perceive organized speakers as more knowledgeable, articulate, and believable, ultimately gaining the their trust and respect.

To organize information efficiently, use the process of **outlining** to arrange the ideas for the speech. Outlines help speakers arrange the larger ideas into a manageable order, but then also help them fill in those larger ideas with supporting information to help expand and refine the major talking points. Outlines also help to ensure that both the introduction and conclusion effectively frame those larger ideas into a memorable format for the audience. The remainder of this chapter will present the recommended outline format needed to create effective speeches. First this chapter will cover the importance of introductions, followed by instructions on how to create the body of the speech, and end with a discussion on how to compose memorable conclusions.

Note to Self

You will find several helpful sample outlines that will serve as models for future work at the end of this chapter.

Why Not Memorize?

Most novice speakers operate under the assumption that they should memorize their

speeches, word-for-word, but that could not be further from the truth. The best speakers do not memorize, but rather *learn* their speeches in a process similar to learning directions from home to somewhere unfamiliar. Rather that obtaining a map and memorizing step-by-step, turn-by-turn directions, individuals pull up a map and *learn* the major milestones they need to note. They figure out where to turn, roughly how far to go between turns, and what to look for along the way. As such, an outline acts as a roadmap that focuses on the highlights that provide just enough detail to get from start to finish. Save the memorization for theatrical or cinematic performances.

Note To Self

In another analogy, think of a familiar story from your past, like when you learned to ride a bike. Could you tell the story without creating an outline and note cards? Of course you could, since you *know* the story. You might tell it differently from one retelling to the next, but the highlights of the story (the main points, central idea, etc.) remain the same.

Similar to a written essay or composition, speakers should utilize three main sections in an informative speech: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Each section serves an important purpose in crafting a memorable speech.

These three sections align perfectly with a saying often credited to Dale Carnegie: "Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them." Though some question whether or not he coined the phrase, no such rift exists on the message it espouses, as a broad consensus among communication professionals and educators believe these three things represent all a person needs to know to craft a memorable speech or presentation regardless of length and complexity.

Tell Them What You Are Going to Tell Them

This portion serves as the introduction of the speech—the opening component that serves to engage the audience and capture their attention. The introduction has several specific roles to fill and generally should not consist of more than 10–15% of the speech. The introduction not only includes "coming attractions" for the audience, but it also grabs their attention and gives them a reason to sit up and pay attention.

Tell Them

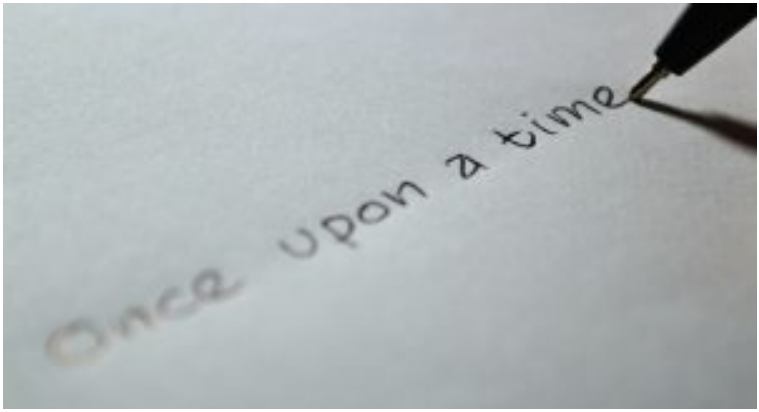
This portion represents the substance or content of the speech. Organize this section into the most important points that will most clearly and effectively deliver the message to the audience. Provide the details of the speech, which should include researched information supported by evidence. This section of the speech should consume 70–80% of the speaking time.

Tell Them W hat You Told Them

Reiterate, summarize, and add punctuation during the speech's conclusion. Like the introduction, the conclusion of the speech should only last 10–15% of the total time of delivery, but it serves as a critical role in achieving highly

effective results. Reminding the audience about the most important points detailed in the body and ending the speech with a memorable closing statement solidifies the message in the minds of the audience. Abruptly ending a speech will nearly guarantee that the audience will remember less of it and for a shorter period of time—if at all.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INTRODUCTION



Though the introduction constitutes a small portion of the time allotted for delivering the speech, it has to contribute a significant amount of information to get the speech started right. Speakers will never get their message across to the audience if they don't first get their attention. Once speakers have their attention, they don't want to lose it, so they need to "set the hook" by capturing the audience's interest. This helps, but will not be enough to insure they continue to listen. The audience needs to know that the information will benefit them in some way. They also want to know the speaker's investment in the topic and gauge their knowledge to speak on it. Finally, the introduction offers the first opportunity to deliver the core

message to the audience (the thesis or central idea) and give them a preview of the most important elements of that idea. If the speech lasts less than 10 minutes in length, the speaker needs to accomplish all of the following in less than two minutes: **1)** Grab attention; **2)** Relate to the audience; **3)** Establish credibility; and **4)** Provide the core of the speech, including a preview of the speech to come.

CREATING THE INTRODUCTION, STEP 1: GRAB ATTENTION

"It was a pleasure to burn." —Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." —Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

"Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much." —J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Well-known authors often admit that the opening line of a book is possibly the most important one in the entire book. Authors, like any other profession, need to make a living to maintain their lifestyle. This requires them to sell copies of their books, so authors must possess the capability to hook a reader within only one or two short lines to entice

further reading. Most people, when searching for a new book, look first at the covers, and then to the first line of the story, and if it sufficiently grabs their attention, they continue perusing the pages. However, if those first lines fall flat, the book gets closed, set down, and likely forgotten forever.

A similar phenomenon occurs within the first few seconds of a speech. The first words uttered or the first actions that may communicate a message to an audience become absolutely critical. Borrowing from the previous analogy of a speaker to an author, imagine picking up a book that began with, "Hi, everyone. My name is Stephen King, and today, I'd like to share a really scary story with you about homicidal clowns." Such a book promises little excitement, and most people would likely put it down without hesitation. In a similar light, a speaker who gets up before an audience and "warms up" with a casual greeting, small talk, and an awkward announcement of the topic tends to put off most audiences' attention spans. Considering that the average human transient attention span (temporary response to a stimulus) lasts around 8 seconds (Dukette & Cornish , 2009), a speaker has an extremely brief window of time in which to grab the audience's attention and, subsequently, sustain it for the duration of the speech. In fact, the shorter the time the speaker has to speak, the more important this initial **attention getter** becomes. If given a limited amount of time to speak, don't waste it on anything that does not further the purpose for speaking.

To grab an audience's attention, try using one of the several

time-honored techniques that continue to work today, despite all the various advances in technology. These include quotations, stories, rhetorical questions, shocking or unexpected information, and compelling visual aids or demonstration.

Quotations

A great quotation related to the speech topic often provides wisdom from a well-respected source that says something valuable or profound in much fewer words than most people can manage using many more. Choose quotes that demonstrate elegance, eloquence, or clever wit, yet make sure they remain relevant to the topic. Avoid using fun or humorous quotations for the sake of it, for this may make the audience feel cheated. Consider pulling quotations from websites, like BrainyQuote.com or GoodReads.com, works of literature, poetry, film, or even from personal acquaintances. Quotes can work especially great at the beginning and ending of speeches.

Stories

Providing a story or a **narrative** helps speakers frame the topic for the audience. Stories provide speakers with a way to personalize a topic by helping audience members identify with

the characters, events, or places within the story. Also, stories can entertain and engage, further reinforcing the idea of using an attention getter at the beginning of a speech. Stories can present "what if" scenarios that give the audience a hypothetical situation that illustrates the main point of the speech. Stories can also come in the form of real-life anecdotes based on personal experiences, those of others, or even events portrayed in fictional works like television, film, or literature. Select a story for both its relevance to the topic, but more importantly, its ability to resonate, or strike a familiar chord, with the audience.

Knowing the audience in advance becomes critically important when selecting the perfect story to illustrate or frame a point.

The more information the speaker can gather about the audience, the more likely he or she will a deliver a message that will resonate with them.

Asking Questions

"According to the U.N., roughly 734 million people live on less than two dollars a day. Could you?" This **rhetorical question**, or question designed to evoke a thought or emotive response from an audience, requires no answer. Starting a speech with a question like the one above immediately cuts to the point, while simultaneously provides the audience concrete information and gets them to think about the main idea of the speech. Delivering a rhetorical question effectively requires skill, though, so inexperienced public speakers should

avoid using them until they gain a bit more experience. Deliver the question slowly, deliberately, and follow it with a brief pause that allows the audience to consider what they heard. Too short a pause, and the audience does not have adequate time to think, while too long a pause runs the risk of having the audience actually start responding to the question. Finding the right balance of time takes skill, but once perfected, gives the speaker a powerful opening tool for grabbing attention. In addition to this deft use of a pause, the speaker should also follow up the question by explaining how the rest of the speech will address the nature of the question.

In a **quick poll** the speaker poses a question that requires little commitment from the audience, other than raising a hand. For example, using the topic above, the speaker might start by saying, "Can I get a quick show of hands for everyone in this room who currently has a job?" Gaining a small showing of audience involvement like this provides a highly effective way to grab attention, and the critically thinking speaker can combine this technique with the rhetorical question to further drive home an important point. For example, following the question above, the speaker could say, "Now, keep your hand up if you make less than two dollars a day at your job, just like the other 734 million people in the world who make this wage or less, according to the U.N." Such strategies have risks though, especially when they backfire, such as when audience members do not raise their hands as expected, or when a speaker ends up with more audience

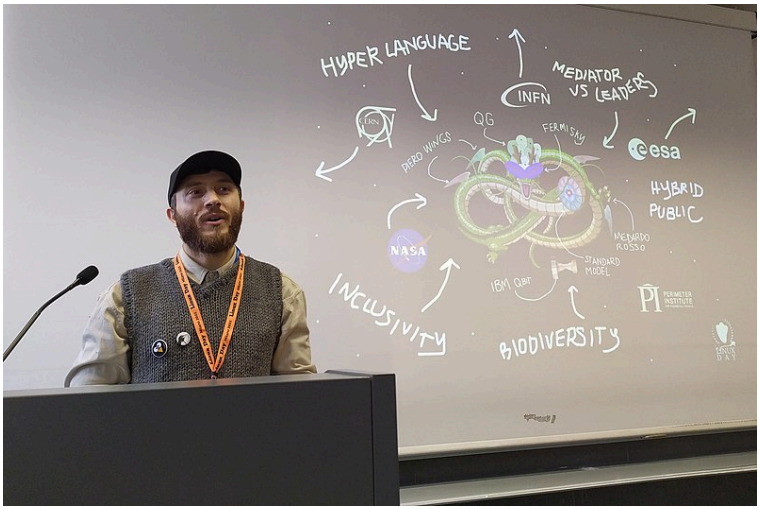
involvement than previously desired. Use discretion, and always have a backup plan.

Unexpected Information

"Just how big is a billion? To put this in perspective, let us look at a single second. Now, let's figure out how much time passes in one billion seconds. Any guesses? It takes more than 31 years. If you started counting to one billion when Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast convinced some Americans that aliens had invaded the country in 1938, you'd finish counting around the time Neil Armstrong took his first step on the moon." Using a set of statements like this to arrive at an unexpected conclusion would provide a great segue to kick off a speech explaining a concept like the federal deficit, especially if the speaker wished to put into perspective the scope of the federal budget. Statements such as these stimulate audience members' curiosity and keep them listening for more useful information. Another way of approaching this, but also combining the technique with gaining audience involvement, would occur if the speaker asked every other male in the room to raise his hand and then asked every third female in the room to raise her hand as well. Then, the speaker could explain to the audience that, according to the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation, the statistics show that the people with their hands in the air represent the odds of receiving a positive diagnosis for some form of cancer. While sobering and

somewhat macabre, such involvement causes the audience to feel invested and personally related to the topic from that point forward.

Visual Aids and Demonstrations



Chapter 10 will discuss the impact of visual aids in much more detail. Suffice to say, visual aids can provide a speaker with powerfully gripping opening techniques. Additionally, demonstrations may provide an audience with a visually compelling reason to listen as well. A student delivering an informational speech on the martial art of tai chi may walk slowly and deliberately out into the center of the room, take a deep breath, and, in silence, begin performing various forms and poses inherent to the art. Without saying a word, such

a demonstration effectively captures an audience's interest to hear more.

Refer to Current or Historical Events

> *"Last week we noted the founding of this great college in 1886, with a big celebration in the campus commons. The first students to graduate were nursing students, and they received their diplomas in 1890. Since then, there have been thousands of nurses who got their education right here."*

The above example refers to both the past and the present. A nursing student attending this college might use this as a good attention getter for a speech about some element of nursing or the medical field. Generic yet personal, it immediately engages the audience and brings them personally closer to the topic and its relevance.

CREATING THE INTRODUCTION, STEP 2: RELATE TO THE AUDIENCE

What happens once the speaker has primed audience members and prepared them to listen by effectively hooking their collective attention? The speaker must do something to promise that the audience's investment in time and attention will continue to be worthwhile for the remainder of the speech. Do this by explicitly and carefully relating the topic to the audience, not on a general basis, but in a highly controlled and specific manner. Demonstrate effective presentation skills by carefully tailoring the topic to the audience's needs. This reinforces how the audience analysis remains absolutely critical for a speaker to achieve success.

Clearly and explicitly answer the question "What's in it for us?" for the audience. Rather than merely telling the audience why the topic should matter to them, show them how it relates

to them. For example, if the speech topic concerns methods to detect breast cancer early, the speaker might state the statistics on how many women will get diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetimes, but then, he or she might also state the odds of the men in the room receiving the same diagnosis as well, in addition to talking about how spouses and partners play a critical role in early detection. This connects the topic clearly to each and every individual in the room.

CREATING THE INTRODUCTION, STEP 3: RELATE TO SELF (ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY)

Note to Self

You could be the most knowledgeable, well-educated, competent, caring, and trustworthy person on the planet, but if your audience doesn't know that, or if they perceive you do not have these qualities, then all the work you did to prepare, all the passion and experience you have, will not matter. Your audience will stop listening or won't believe what you have to say.

After grabbing the audience members' attention and showing them how the topic relates to them personally, the speaker should relate the topic back to themselves and answer the questions: "Why me? Why now?" To establish credibility as a speaker, this step is absolutely necessary, because audiences want to know up front why they should trust or believe the speaker as he or she delivers all subsequent information to them in the presentation. For example, the speaker may be an expert or an authority on the chosen topic, but he or she may also have nothing more than a vested interest in the topic and a genuine desire to share the information with others.

Scholars and philosopher have conducted a lot of research on Aristotle's concept called "ethos," which mean credibility. The late James McCroskey, a communication professor at the University of Alabama– Birmingham, and Jason Teven, a professor at California State University, Fullerton, spent years researching the concept of credibility. They identified three components of individual credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill (1999). This portion of the introduction should provide three important pieces of information to the audience:

1. **Competence**: The degree to which an audience

perceives a speaker as being knowledgeable or expert on a given topic. What are the speaker's credentials, if any, regarding that person's relationship with the information? Has the person researched the topic extensively or taken coursework in this area of study? Does the speaker's work experience relate to the topic? Without giving the audience an exhaustive résumé and work history, make this connection clear, yet brief. Explain just enough to establish credibility.

2. **Trustworthiness**: The degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as having honest and sincere qualities. Why does the speaker want to discuss this topic? What vested interest does the speaker have in conveying this information to the audience today?

Note to Self

Is there a specific inspiration that might show the audience why you care about this topic? What is your motivation?

3. **Caring/Goodwill**: The degree to which audience members perceive a speaker as genuinely caring about

them.

Note to Self

Let the audience know that you chose this topic because you care about them and have concern for their welfare. Convince them you are not trying to manipulate or mislead them. If the audience members believe you have their best interest in mind, they may overlook imperfections in your style or delivery, in addition to other concerns relating to competence and trust.

Review the example below that combines these three aspects:

> "*I'm a biology major, so talking with you about the potential for a pandemic relates pretty heavily to my future career goals* (**Competence**). *Pandemic diseases fascinate me, which is why those goals include pursuing a career in medical research* (**Trustworthiness**). *I believe that we should all have a basic understanding of what a pandemic flu could do to us as a society, so that we can better prepare ourselves for it, when the next pandemic does strike* (**Caring/Goodwill**)."

Be careful with this step, though. Try not to seem boastful or

arrogant. Instead of stating, "I have a Ph.D. in this subject, so I'm the most highly educated person in this room," say something like, "I have extensive training and education on this subject, and since it was the topic of my doctoral studies, I feel well prepared to share some of my findings with you today." Again, keep this section relatively brief, but long and detailed enough to provide the audience with a reason to trust this particular message.

CREATING THE INTRODUCTION, STEP 4: THE CORE OF THE SPEECH

The last step of the introduction before transitioning into the body of the speech involves showing the audience what they can expect to hear throughout the presentation. Break the core of the speech down into the following parts: the **central idea** (thesis) and the **preview of main points**. For novice speakers, this step may appear repetitive—and it is. Human listeners are

remarkably inept at remembering what they hear, so effective speakers know to cover their most important points at least three times throughout a speech. This becomes the first opportunity for speakers to share their central idea and main points, but it won't be the last.

Central Idea

Speakers should boil down all the ideas they want to express in the speech into just one declarative sentence. That sentence serves as the speech's central idea.

Speakers should ask themselves what one piece of information ranks as the most important for the audience to know and remember above all other information. The central idea should tie together all of the main points and their supporting points, for everything throughout the rest of the speech relates to this central idea. Think of it as the thesis statement. The following example shows a central idea that needs a bit more revision followed by one that does not:

Needs work: "*How to shoot a basketball.*"

Why it needs work: First, this is an incomplete sentence. Second, it makes no assertion or declaration. Third, it more resembles the topic or title of a speech rather than a central idea or thesis.

Better: "*Learning how to shoot a basketball may seem difficult but can be perfected through practicing fundamental techniques*."

Why this statement works better: This complete sentence makes an assertion that can be proven or disproven through research and fact. The audience can expect to hear the speaker talk about the difficulties of learning how to shoot a basketball, fundamental techniques needed, and how they might incorporate those techniques into practice.

Preview of Points

In the final step of the introduction, consider relying on Carnegie's quote to "tell them what you are going to tell them." After relaying the central idea with this particular audience, briefly tell them what points they can expect to hear during the presentation that follows. Note the keyword, "briefly" here. Rarely should a preview require the speaker to deliver more than three sentences or so.

The preview provides the audience members with a set of mental bookmarks to help organize the information in their minds. This way, as the speaker transitions between main points, the audience members effectively know what to expect. This knowledge maintains their attention spans. Additionally, this step proves to the audience that the speaker came well prepared and organized, further cementing the person's credibility as a speaker.

The following example demonstrates an effective preview, beginning with the earlier central idea and specific purpose statements:

> *"Learning how to shoot a basketball may seem difficult but can be perfected through practicing fundamental techniques, so today, I would like to inform you about how to develop the perfect jump shot. I will first cover the importance of a strong stance, then secondly, I will show you the steps of an effective shot, and finally, I will talk about methods for practicing to improve your accuracy."*

Notice that the speaker in this case adds certain words to demonstrate to the audience the order in which these points will come: "I will first cover...secondly, I will show you... finally, I will talk..." Including these verbal signposts organizes the points to make them more memorable later on.

The purpose of an introduction is threefold: 1) orient the audience to the topic; 2) set the tone for the remainder of the speech; and 3) hook the audience's attention and show them that their investment of time and energy spent listening will seem worth it in the end. An effective introduction for a speech that runs 6–10 minutes will likely take about 1½–2 minutes to deliver. Obviously, the time will vary depending upon the overall length of the presentation, as an hour-long lecture may require much more time than that to effectively

orient audience members to the information. Great introductions fulfill these purposes without giving away too much of the "good stuff," which speakers keep in their back pocket until the body of the speech, the next stop on this tour of speech composition and organization.

COMPOSING THE BODY OF THE SPEECH

The body of the speech will likely comprise about 80% of the total speaking time or more, depending on the length of time given to speak. Some speakers find it beneficial to compose the introduction and conclusion sections of the outline after completing the body because they find it easier to summarize and introduce content once it has been constructed. As speaking time lengthens, that percentage will increase, but for the most part, presenters should devote 75–80% of the speaking time to presenting information in the body of the

speech. The speaker should take great care organizing this information in the speech.

Most speakers start composing the body by devising the main points first. On average, most people can comfortably take in about 2 to 7 main points in a presentation, but many beginning speakers find it best to start with 3 points. Delivering three main points provides a variety of information without overwhelming the audience, but at the same time, keeps information manageable, given the average classroom speech time limits.

When developing main points, keep the following guidelines in mind to develop a higher quality oratory and help manage the presented information. First, remember to restrict each of the main points to a single concept or idea.

Poor: *Main Point I*: Engineers serve important roles in our society, but people don't understand what they do.

Better: *Main Point I*: Engineers serve important roles in our society.

Main Point II: People don't understand the role of engineers.

Avoid combining too much information into a single point when a point could effectively be split into two main points. Additionally, express main points using complete sentences,

similar to the central idea. A main point makes an assertion that subpoints will then add information to support.

When arranging information, consider the order in which it gets presented. Keep in mind the **primacy effect** and the **recency effect**. Listeners can best recall information presented first (primacy) and last (recency), while they will find information presented in the middle harder to remember. Therefore, place the most important information for the audience at the front and/or closer toward the end of the body for better retention.

Speakers have several options available for how to arrange their information, and should determine the best formula for the particular topic:

- **Chronological Pattern**: In this organizational pattern, arrange information in a time-based sequence. This works for presentations about historical events, but could also, for instance, teach kids how to make chocolate chip cookies. In cases like this, the information gets presented in a thorough step-by-step breakdown that follows a sequential order.
- **Spatial Pattern**: To use this format, arrange information according to physical proximity to one another, such as in explaining how an internal combustion engine operates. In such a speech, the presenter might move from explaining the bottom to the top of the engine, or from the inside to the outside. Such

a pattern also works for a speech attempting to inform new students on where to find services on campus.

- **Cause-Effect Pattern**: In this speech pattern, the speaker might want to show the relationship between certain causes and their effects. For example, a speaker could discuss the topic of drug addiction by presenting three unique stories about users and showing the audience what caused each addiction, as well as the effects it had upon their lives.
- **Problem-Solution Pattern:** A pattern frequently used in persuasive speeches. In this pattern, the speaker presents a problem and then provides a solution to that problem. In an informative speech, the speaker could break up each main point into a problem and its corresponding solution, followed by another problem and corresponding solution for the next main point.
- **Topical Pattern**: In one of the most common patterns found within informational speeches, this pattern involves breaking up the topic into smaller topics, such as seen in the previous example of learning how to shoot a basketball. This often becomes the "default" pattern when none of the others seem to offer a better fit.

Once speakers have selected and finalized the main speaking points, they need to start thinking about developing supporting points nested beneath each main point. To illustrate this portion of speech composition, consider the

following sample speech topic of examining various classes one could take in communication studies with the central idea: *Communication is a diverse field of study that touches nearly every portion of everyone's daily lives.*

Main Point I: *Public speaking provides us with a way to learn about how to communicate in front of groups.*

Main Point II: *Interpersonal communication gives students the opportunity to learn about one-on-one communication in a variety of contexts.*

Main Point III: *Intercultural communication courses allow us to explore how our culture and background affects the way we interact with one another.*

At this point, the speaker needs to take each of the main ideas (underlined) and break them down further into subpoints in an effort to expand these ideas and add supporting material. Notice that each main point relates closely to the central idea. Write each as a declarative assertion to provide the opportunity to "prove" or support that idea with research.

For the first main point in the example above, the supporting points could look like this:

Main Point I: *Public speaking provides us with a way to learn about how to communicate in front of groups.*

A. *Most of us suffer from varying degrees of public speaking anxiety, requiring us to learn how to overcome this anxiety so that we might effectively communicate our ideas with*

others.

B. *Many of the lessons we learn in public speaking impact our ability to write, as well as interact with people on a daily basis.*

Notice that each of the supporting points is outlined using a capital letter, whereas main points are indicated by Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.). Add another indentation using numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to break down supporting points further.

Also, each supporting point should fall within the topical area of the main point, rather than becoming another main point of its own. While the other two main points relate to other fields of communication studies, these two subpoints correspond directly to the study of public speaking, demonstrating how they support the main point of public speaking.

For Your Information

As a rule of outlining, use a minimum of two subpoints, or else a single subpoint may then become an additional main point. Outline sticklers simply cannot stomach a solitary subpoint.

To continue the example, take a look at the expansion of the other two main points:

Main Point II: *Interpersonal communication gives students the opportunity to learn about one-on-one communication in a variety of contexts.*

A. *Interpersonal communication may include interaction with friends, family, romantic relationships, and even coworkers.*
B. *Learning about interpersonal communication combines the fields of psychology, sociology, and communication theory into a fascinatingly complex and interwoven area of study.*

Main Point III: *Intercultural communication courses allow us to explore how our culture and background affects the way we interact with one another.*

A. *Culture goes much further than merely ethnicity or nationality, as many of us might initially think of when considering our culture.*
    1. *Gender affects listening ability.*
    2. *Age affects relevance to certain topics.*
    3. *Religious preference may affect one's internal priorities.*
B. *Learning about one's own culture provides a greater foundation from which to study others' cultural*

backgrounds.

TRANSITIONS

As the speaker continues to fill in the outline with main points and supporting material, the information should begin to "flow" together. However, before going much further, consider the elements of speech composition that help tie each of these various points together seamlessly. Those are called **transitions**. Ideally, transitions should sound conversational, so as to make the speech feel effortless as the audience listens. At the same time, transitions must guide and direct listeners toward where the information is headed. A speaker could do

this by explicitly announcing that transition to a new point: "For my second main point, I would like to cover…" However, avoid using such obvious transitions. They sound mechanical and stiff while adding a proverbial speed bump to the flow of information. They should sound effective and clear while at the same time appear seamless and conversational.

One helpful technique for transitioning between points involves creating a single sentence that links prior information with a preview of upcoming information, often called a **bridge**. To do this, create a sentence with two parts, or clauses, where the first half of the sentence provides a summary of the previous topic, and the second half of the sentence gives a brief preview of the next talking point. For example:

Main Point I: *Public speaking provides us with a way to learn about how to communicate in front of groups.*

A. *Most of us suffer from varying degrees of public speaking anxiety, requiring us to learn how to overcome this anxiety so that we might effectively communicate our ideas with others.*
B. *Many of the lessons we learn in public speaking impact our ability to write, as well as interact with people on a daily basis.*

Transition: *Speaking in front of groups can truly be nerve-wracking, but there are times when speaking to just one person can be equally daunting.*

Main Point II: *Interpersonal communication gives students the opportunity to learn about one-on-one communication in a variety of contexts.*

In this example, the first half of the sentence "Speaking in front of groups can truly be nerve-wracking…" summarizes the supporting point the speaker just made, while the second half of the sentence "…but there are times when speaking to just one person can be equally daunting" previews the next point regarding interpersonal communication studies. With practice, these types of transitions can easily become second nature to speakers, and some may even become clever enough to compose and use them on the spot!

Transitions can also come in the form of a **signpost**, and just as with an actual signpost on a road, these phrases signal listeners, in a literal or explicit sense, to the direction of the speech. For example, if a preview of points states that a speech will inform the audience about: "First, public speaking, second, interpersonal communication, and third, intercultural communication," then between each of those main points, speakers could signal where they are headed by inserting a signpost such as, "Moving on to our second topic of the day…"

Finally, the last transitional device is the **spotlight**, which shares similarity to the eye-catching headlines broadcast on

a viral social media article: "What this public speaking class taught me was more important than anything I had ever learned before." Note that this sentence builds curiosity through suspense, but at the same time, spotlights the upcoming information will concern public speaking.

SIGNAL THE END

The final transition of the speech, which concludes the last supporting point within the final main point, must cue the listeners in the audience that the speech has almost reached its conclusion. This is referred to as **signaling the end**. One of the simplest and most obvious ways to signal the end is to state, "In conclusion…" Don't do this. As with mechanical, robotic, and awkward transitions, most people probably cannot imagine using the phrase "in conclusion" in daily conversation. Instead, use the opportunity to get creative! Many speakers choose to employ a time-related reference, such as "I could go

on all day, talking about all the benefits to taking additional communication classes, but my time here is limited." Some speakers choose to employ a more creative and topic-based approach, such as a student's speech on how to build a fire, where he stated, "Now that I'm done talking about extinguishing your fires, it's time to extinguish this speech." Adding creative touches like this, especially near the conclusion of the speech, often works well among listeners, considering that they have just put in a lot of mental effort in digesting all of the presentation's unique and innovative information.

For example, think about college professors as they near the end of a class session. What do they say that cues everyone to start unzipping backpack zippers, close their books, and put away materials? Sometimes, they make subtle statements, such as, "As you all leave here today..." (which provides a cue that time has almost time expired), and other times, they may get more explicit.

CONCLUDING THE SPEECH

The conclusion's style should resemble that of the introduction, so that may beg the question, why the repetition? Remember, most people have relatively poor listening skills, in that they only have the capability of capturing and retaining portions of what they hear. This becomes more challenging as the length of a speech and depth of material presented increases in scope. Signaling the end cues the listeners to prepare for the concluding remarks, and so the conclusion essentially represents the last opportunity to reinforce the most important portions of the speech. This portion of the speech includes 1) the **central idea**, 2)

restating the main points, and 3) leaving the audience with a memorable statement or **clincher**.

Restate The Central Idea

In many cases, immediately after signaling the end of the speech, speakers can flow straight into restating the central idea, and many speakers restate it word-for-word or verbatim. However, if this "feels" too repetitive and raises concerns about the audience sharing the same feeling, paraphrase it with slightly different verbiage. Show care by not changing the meaning of the central idea. Be direct and clear so that the audience knows, without a doubt, the primary idea of the speech.

Recap Main Ideas

Following a restatement of the central idea, the conclusion should deliver a recap of the main points. This serves as the "Tell them what you told them" portion of the presentation. Again, even though it may feel repetitive to preview the three points from the introduction, detail those points in the body

of the speech, and recap the main points yet again in the conclusion, remember that this repetition works for the listeners' benefit. The recap drives home the most important points one last time, so make it count. Present this summary of the main points clearly, yet briefly, and never include new information at this point. Review the example below of an effective recap of main points, based on the prior example (main points identified for reference):

> *"We now know that 1) public speaking helps us with our confidence when talking to groups, 2) interpersonal communication helps us with our daily interactions, and 3) intercultural communication helps us learn how to interact with people from different backgrounds than ourselves."*

Clincher

Following this brief recap of the main ideas, the speaker needs to find a way to close out the speech. Ideally, the remaining few statements should reinforce the central idea, as well as provide some form of verbal punctuation, letting the audience know beyond any doubt that the speech has concluded. Provide closure for the audience by leaving them with a feeling of

completion and not confusion. A **clincher** acts similar to an attention getter but occurs at the end of the speech instead of the beginning. This last statement could very well be the last thing the audience remembers about the message, so make it count!

Speakers can employ a variety of methods to craft an effective clincher:

Use a Quotation

Find a great and powerful quote to illustrate the topic that also reinforces the central idea. For example, in the prior speech example, the speaker could end it as follows:

> *"I would like to close today with the words of composer John Powell, who said, 'Communication works for those who work at it.'"*

Use a Narrative

Speakers often begin their introductions with a story that illustrates one of their points or the central idea. When using this technique, consider utilizing a **story split**, which introduces the story in the beginning of the speech but then saves the dramatic ending for the conclusion.

For example, using the previous example, pretend the speaker started the speech talking about a student who walked

into the first day of his speech class, nervous and feeling sick to his stomach because of extreme anxiety. Such a story helps students in the audience relate with the character in the story, especially the extreme nerves the student experienced. Then, in the conclusion the story could end as follows:

> *"Remember the deathly afraid student from my story in the beginning of this speech? I'm proud to tell you all that I was the student in this story. Today, I teach public speaking, for I learned how important it is to connect the passion behind my message to the power of the human voice. You all hold that power and potential in you today."*

Reference the Introduction

In addition to story splits, speakers can try other methods to bring the speech around full circle to whatever concept was introduced within the introduction. If the speech started with a quote, consider bringing the audience back to the wisdom from that quote, or even consider sharing another quote from the same person. If the speech begin with a startling fact or statistic, how can the conclusion bring the audience's attention back to the significance of that fact? Referencing the introduction helps put the entire message into a nice, neat package for the audience to remember.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR CONCLUSIONS

- **Avoid lengthy conclusions**. A good, effective conclusion should probably not take longer than a minute to a minute and a half. Exceptions to this rule can apply, but use discretion.
- **Never include new material**. The conclusion recaps the major talking points and reinforces the central idea, so don't include any additional information in this part

of the speech.

- **End strong**. Many newer speakers experience difficulty crafting strong conclusions, as they often feel excited about the prospect of ending the speech and finally getting out of the spotlight, so they rush it. Others fail to effectively practice the delivery of their closing lines and struggle to find the right tone, usually resulting in the speaker uttering a desperate "Thank you" or "That's all, folks." This represents the public speaking equivalent of an acclaimed author placing "The End" at the conclusion of an award-winning novel. This is unnecessary, for if the conclusion has done its job, the audience will automatically know the speech has ended.

Activity

Power Statement: The next time you rehearse your closing statement, consider trying this activity. As you speak your concluding lines, close your eyes and imagine yourself pounding your fist on the podium with each and every word.

As you do so, you will notice that your vocal rate

slows down, you dwell a bit longer on each word, and you utter the words with more strength and power. During your speech, don't actually hit the podium, but do so in your mind, as a means to remind yourself to slow down and add verbal punctuation.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY

Creating an outline provides a speech with a skeleton and foundation from which to prepare spoken remarks. The outline does not represent a transcript of what the speaker will say, though. Creating a transcript for a speech only works for those attempting a memorized or scripted talk, not an extemporaneous speech, the focused style of speaking this book recommends. Extemporaneous speakers start with a basic plan (the outline) and then prepare for a free-flowing, yet guided conversation with the audience using that outline as the plan.

The outline covered in this book identifies five-essential components: introduction, three main points, and a conclusion. Within the introduction step, the speaker should

incorporate four primary components: 1) the attention getter, 2) relate to audience, 3) establish credibility/relate to self, and 4) the core of the speech, which consists of the central idea and preview of main points. The body of the speech consists of three main points, each of which is supported by a minimum of two subpoints. Between each main point, the speaker should use smooth and seamless transitions. The conclusion of the speech consists of three parts: 1) signal the end, 2) briefly recap the main points, and 3) conclude with a clincher that reinforces the central idea.

Speaker should write outlines in such a way as to capture the essence of what they intend to say to the audience. Ideally, create an outline for a speech that could be redelivered to multiple audiences over great periods of time. While the phraseology and elaboration of points may differ slightly, the outline provides speakers with the core message of that presentation, so that they can effectively deliver the same essential information to a variety of audiences.

This chapter concludes with some sample course outlines. Note how each incorporate the basic elements of planning an extemporaneous speech.

SAMPLE 1A: SPEECH TO INFORM

Name: Cassidy Kobialka

Audience Analysis

Answer in complete sentences and use examples from your audience analysis questions.

A. How much does your audience already know about your topic and how will you design your speech regarding their level of knowledge? **No one could define for me what an engineer does, so I'll have to cater my explanations to this group's basic knowledge level.**
B. How much interest did the audience have in your topic? How will you make the topic interesting to them? **Over 30% of my class is interested in the social sciences, so they have not thought about engineering, but we are all still considering our career choices now.**
C. What is your audience's attitude regarding your topic? How will you address that attitude in your speech? **Most of my audience considers engineers to be nerds. I will show them the wide variety of professional**

careers that engineers go into to dispel this myth.

D. How will the audience demographics (not what you learned on your Audience Analysis) impact the development of your speech? **We have more females than males, and engineering is usually considered a "guy" career.**

Title: *It Ain't Rocket Science!*

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the career of an aerospace engineer

Introduction

A. **Grab Attention**: Have you ever wondered what an *aileron* does or what a winglet s? Have you ever heard the term "transonic" and wondered what it means?

B. **Relate to Audience**: Okay, I know what you're thinking—what the heck is she talking about? Or maybe you're thinking, no...not really—all of that sounds just too complicated. Well, to tell the truth, this stuff "ain't rocket science!" You could say it takes one to know one. Those strange terms are actually important to you, too, but you just don't know it yet.

C. **Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)**: Well, I "ain't no rocket scientist" myself, but considering the fact that five of my family members are engineers, I feel qualified

to talk to you about this career. Don't worry, that doesn't mean I'm going to explain what an aileron does or what a winglet is. That stuff I'll leave to the rocket scientists. I do think I want to become an engineer, however.

D. **Central Idea**: Aerospace engineering is one of the most progressive, challenging, and rewarding fields that can be studied today.

E. **Specific Purpose**: Today, I would like to inform you all about the career of an aerospace engineer.

F. **Preview Main Points**: I will cover…

   I. What engineers do
   II. Why aerospace engineers are important to us
   III. The skills needed in engineering—not the least of which is communication

Transition to #I: So what is engineering?

Speech Body

I. The role of the engineer is perhaps one of the least understood in society, according to Jeff Lenard of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

   A. The comic strip creator, Scott Adams, debunks the mystery of engineering through his famous character, Dilbert; when you read Dilbert, you

actually have a pretty good idea of what an engineer does.

B. Engineering is not a science; engineers generally don't "do" science.

C. "Scientists discover the world that exists; engineers create the world that never was."

D. Engineering is all around us; as a career it may be the best way to make the biggest contribution to society.

Transition to #II: Let's talk more about those contributions now.

II. Aerospace engineers are very important to us.

A. The settings in which aerospace engineers work is varied because of their demand.

B. Aerospace engineers are needed in NASA, the Department of Defense, with private defense contractors, and aeronautical firms. (NASA)

Transition to #III: One does not simply wake up one day and decide to work for NASA, though.

III. To be successful in this rewarding career, engineers are required to have excellent skills—especially communication.

A. Entry-level aerospace engineers require at least a BA

in aerospace engineering or mechanical engineering.

B. Courses in propulsion, thermodynamics, aerodynamics, chemistry, physics, and calculus are typical for the aerospace engineer.

C. There is a tremendous need for engineers to have excellent verbal and written communication skills.

Signal End: I could go on talking about engineering all day, but my time is limited, so now it's time to wrap up.

Conclusion

A. **Restate Central Idea**: Today, we learned about how aerospace engineering is one of the most progressive, challenging, and rewarding fields that can be studied today.

B. **Recap Main Points**: I explained to you what an engineer does, why we specifically need aerospace engineers, and the skills needed to become an engineer—especially those skills we learn in this course.

C. **Clincher:** Who knows? One of you may become a rocket scientist. It really is a high-flying career!

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SAMPLE 1B: SPEECH TO INFORM

Name: John Raines

Audience Analysis

Answer in complete sentences and use examples from your audience analysis questions.

A. How much does your audience already know about your topic and how will you design your speech regarding their level of knowledge? **Everyone is familiar with fear in general, so I'll try to focus on aspects of it that are specific to my topic.**
B. How much interest did the audience have in your topic? How will you make the topic interesting to them? **The audience was curious about the direction this speech would take, so I'll try to build on that and give them specific, solid examples that they can integrate into their lives.**
C. What is your audience's attitude regarding your topic? How will you address that attitude in your speech? **The attitude was mostly positive, so I'll try to use that**

to my advantage.

D. How will the audience demographics (not what you learned on your Audience Analysis) impact the development of your speech? **The majority of the audience is 18–20 years old, so I'll try to word my information in such a way that it is received as constructive advice from a fellow student with a little more life experience. Gender shouldn't be an issue.**

Title: *A Fearless Life*

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the nature of fear

Introduction

A. **Grab Attention**: Frequent urination, dry mouth, excessive sweating…these are but a few of the many symptoms of phobic anxiety.

B. **Relate to Audience**: Many of you are standing at the thresholds of your adult lives, with an excitement about the unknown.

C. **Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)**: I have always been a bit of a risk taker, looking fear square in the eye, and it hasn't always been easy.

D. **Central Idea**: But, to live without risk, is to risk not

living.

E. **Specific Purpose**: Today, I want to inform you about the nature of fear.

F. **Preview Main Points**: I will cover…

   I. What fear is

   II. What fear does

   III. How to master your fears

Transition to #I: "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear." (Mark Twain) So let's begin by talking about what fear is.

Speech Body

I. Fear is a complicated emotion.

   A. Fear is a perspective. (PsychCentral.com)

   B. It's a response to the unknown and uncontrolled.

   C. Fear is a controlling emotion. (MedicineNet.com)

Transition to #II: Now, let's look at how this plays out in our lives.

II. Fear controls our actions.

   A. Fear greatly reduces our options. (Encarta)

   B. Fear limits experience to the safe and the known.

   C. Ultimately, fear makes life dull and routine.

Transition to #III: There is no reason we have to live that way. We can master our fear.

III. Mastering our fears can be a way of life.
   A. First you must see fear for what it is.
   B. And by seeing it, develop a hatred for its controlling nature.
   C. Then love it, for the passion and excitement it brings to life.

Signal End: So before I close, let me recap.

Conclusion

A. **Restate Central Idea**: Remember, that to live without risk, is to risk not living.
B. **Recap Main Points**: Today, we talked about what fear is, what it does, and how you can master it.
C. **Clincher**: Now you have the tools to understand how fear might be affecting you. In the words of Philip Adams, "It seems to me that people have vast potential. Most people can do extraordinary things if they have the confidence or take the risks. Yet most people don't. They sit in front of the telly and treat life as if it goes on forever." (Philip Adams)

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SAMPLE 2A: SPEECH TO INFORM WITH VISUALS

Name: Cory Williamson

Audience Analysis

Answer in complete sentences and use examples from your audience analysis questions.

A. How much does your audience already know about your topic and how will you design your speech regarding their level of knowledge? **The audience knows very little about the actual science of attraction, so I'll need to keep the terminology very basic and not lose them with big, technical terms.**
B. How much interest did the audience have in your topic? How will you make the topic interesting to them? **The audience is very interested already, but I'll try to maintain that interest with some humor and some explanations of human nature that might surprise them.**
C. What is your audience's attitude regarding your topic? How will you address that attitude in your speech? **My**

audience seems to be mostly interested in how to use my information to get a date, improve relationships, etc. I'll try to use that inherent connection to the material as a way to keep them interested in the actual scientific explanations.

D. How will the audience demographics (not what you learned on your Audience Analysis) impact the development of your speech? **Most of my audience members are traditional college freshmen in age, economic status, etc. This means they probably have dating/attraction on their minds quite a bit.**

Title: *Are You Lookin' at Me?!*

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the science of attraction

Introduction

A. **Grab Attention**: Are you lookin' at me? Well that's alright…well…I like to write…I like classical music…I dress nice…I enjoy Mexican food…and on occasion I like to beat the person I'm with…Now hold on! That is an exaggeration. But that is how attraction works sometimes. You initially see someone and you are attracted in some way, but as you get to know someone that attraction could change for better or worse.

B. **Relate to Audience**: Every human has experienced attraction in one way or another.
C. **Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)**: I am greatly interested in why humans are attracted to one another and have experienced the feeling of attraction toward another, so I decided to look into the matter.
D. **Central Idea**: Human attraction is a scientific process that begins many kinds of relationships.
E. **Specific Purpose**: Today, I want to inform you all about the science of attraction.
F. **Preview Main Points**: I will cover…
    I. The visual aspects of attraction
    II. The biological aspects of attraction
    III. How attraction affects relationships

Transition to #I: Experiment number one: Sins of the Flesh.

Speech Body

I. Part of attraction is due to what our mind perceives as physically appealing.
    A. The human body is the first thing we notice in another human.
        1. Females are generally attracted to males that are sexually appealing and have good fatherly traits such as height, muscles, facial features, some hair.

2. Males are generally attracted to females that have sexually appealing features such as large breasts, waist-to-hip ratio, face, legs, and butt.

B. Symmetry plays a role in figuring out if the person has good genes.

1. When we see a person we are subconsciously analyzing if they have the features that would make for good offspring. (Science of Sex Appeal DVD)
2. The better the symmetry the more it shows that a person doesn't have any visible gene defects.

Transition to #II: Now to take a look at how human biology takes action in attraction.

II. The biological aspects of attraction are the natural human responses that trigger sex appeal in a person.

A. Pheromones are the chemically secreted odorless molecules that trigger sexual responses from animals. (Pheremoneking.com)

B. Females are more vulnerable to these pheromones.

C. Females find different males more attractive depending on if they are ovulating or not.

Transition to #III: Attraction is both what we see and what

we feel. Those experiences could lead to relationships or simply sex.

III. Attraction has the possibility of leading to relationships.
   A. According to Dr. Fisher (The Brain in Love and Lust), love is divided into 3 categories.
      1. Sexual cravings are sometimes mistaken for love.
      2. Attraction is craving for the individual.
      3. Attachment is when you are at peace and comfort with the one you're with.
   B. Getting to know someone can change where they belong on the love scale—up or down.
   C. Lust is the sexual drive of attraction.
      1. When humans experience an orgasm while having sex a chemical oxytocin is released that gives the feeling of attachment between males and females. (mcmanweb.com)
      2. Love is what you make it. It varies amongst all people, so love as you want to be loved.

Signal End: Enough about love. As I close, let us take a look back at what attraction is about.

Conclusion

A. **Restate Central Idea**: We now know that human

attraction is a scientific process that begins many kinds of relationships.

B. **Recap Main Points**: We saw that physical appearance plays a major part in initial attraction as well as biological occurrences in our body. Attraction has the possibility of leading us to sex and/or love in a relationship.

C. **Clincher**: The ideas of what I have said aren't meant for you to overanalyze a relationship you are in or could be in. Allow attraction to flow naturally and experience where it could take you...Let me leave you with one last thing. The next time you visit the strip club take a look around and see lust and attraction working at their finest.

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SAMPLE 2B: SPEECH TO INFORM WITH VISUALS

Name: Matt Kelso

Audience Analysis

Answer in complete sentences and use examples from your audience analysis questions.

1. How much does your audience already know about your topic and how will you design your speech regarding their level of knowledge? **Everyone knows a little bit about fire, but most don't know how to start one without the luxury of matches and lighters. I will try to focus the majority of the speech on information they don't already know.**
2. How much interest did the audience have in your topic? How will you make the topic interesting to them? **A couple audience members were avid outdoorsmen who didn't seem that interested, but several others seemed anxious to improve their fire skills. I'll try to maintain interest by stressing how useful fire-starting skills are for everyone.**

3. What is your audience's attitude regarding your topic? How will you address that attitude in your speech? **Only a couple seemed turned off by the topic, while the majority seemed curious and open to it. I will feed that curiosity with useful information.**
4. How will the audience demographics (not what you learned on your Audience Analysis) impact the development of your speech? **Most members of the audience are typical, college-aged students from North Idaho. This implies that they are somewhat interested in the outdoors and will find themselves camping, hunting, etc. at some time in the near future.**

Title: *Man's Best Tool*

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about fire

Introduction

A. **Grab Attention**: (magnesium block demonstration) These little sparks that you see have mesmerized mankind throughout history. Imagine a world without heat, cooked food, boiled water, and light sources after dark. Fire provides all of this and more.

B. **Relate to Audience**: Everyone in this class will at some time use fire for enjoyment, cooking, and possible

survival. It is extremely important that we all know how to effectively create a fire with the tools available to us in any given circumstance.

C. **Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)**: Obviously, I'm an outdoors fanatic, and as such I have created literally hundreds of fires. Last year I took a survival course that taught me how to make a fire from scratch using primitive sources.

D. **Central Idea**: Fire-building knowledge is crucial for everyone and could even save a life.

E. **Specific Purpose**: I want to inform you about fire today.

F. **Preview Main Points**: I'll do that by covering...
   I. The various uses of fire
   II. Both modern and primitive methods to create fire
   III. Steps needed to create a successful and safe fire

Transition to #I: Let's begin by discussing the history of fire use.

Speech Body

I. Our history has shown many uses for fire.
   A. Fire has been used for cooking and as a heat source.
   B. Fire has been used in blacksmithing.
   C. Many myths and stories have been created around the subject of fire.

Transition to #II: Fire has obviously played a huge role throughout the history of mankind, but let's turn to examining the different methods for its creation.

II. Fire can be created by using a number of methods.
    A. Primitive methods, such as magnesium flint and a bow drill, are still used today.
    B. Some modern methods include matches, lighters, lenses, or batteries. (AAA Wilderness Survival)
    C. Both sources require the use of good tinder material as the starting point.

Transition to #III: Now that we know how to create a fire, let's look into the steps needed to create a successful and safe fire.

III. Creating a successful and safe fire is essential.
    A. The teepee and log cabin style are both easy and safe.
    B. Use a shovel to clear a patch of land on which to build it.
    C. For safety purposes, always stay with your fire and maintain it.
    D. A fire of any size should be extinguished thoroughly. (Ken Long)

Signal End: It is now time to extinguish this speech.

Conclusion

A. **Restate Central Idea**: Fire-building knowledge is crucial to each and every one of you.
B. **Recap Main Points**: Today, we have discussed the importance of fire and its various uses. We have gone over some basic ways to create a fire with limited resources available, and we have discussed how to build a safe fire and extinguish it properly.
C. **Clincher**: There is only so much experience you can get from learning about fire, but to really hone your skills it takes nothing but repetition, practice, and experimentation. Now get out there and let your pyro side run wild!

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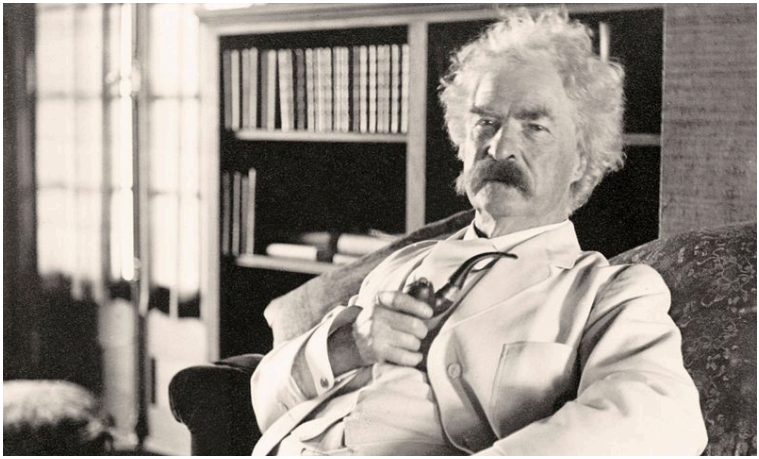
PART VII
CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 7: USING LANGUAGE TO FRAME THE MESSAGE



"The difference between the right word and the wrong word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug."
—**Mark Twain**

President Roosevelt addressing a joint session of Congress following the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

On December 7, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The first sentence he uttered would later become one of the most well-known phrases from just about any speech within the 20th century. As with any president, FDR had a staff of advisors and speechwriters, and one of his assistants began the speech as follows:

December 7, 1941: A date which will live in world history.

Just before he addressed Congress, FDR crossed out the words "world history" and scribbled the word, "infamy," which led to him starting his famous speech with:

December 7, 1941: A date which will live in infamy.

Today, this phrase has become one of the most famous in American history. Would the speech have had the same impact if Roosevelt had used the original line? History will never know for certain, but one thing is clear: Roosevelt's last-minute edit demonstrated his understanding of the concept inherent within the Mark Twain quote above. "World history"

technically communicated the same idea, but the substituted word "infamy" added color and emotion to the phrase at a time when the president needed it most. FDR's intended to request a declaration of war on Japan from Congress, effectively launching the U.S. into World War II, and he understood that his words would indelibly have an outcome on that decision.

As speakers consider their audiences for any given presentation, they must also consider how their language will impact the perceptions of their messages. Remember, effective communication does not take place if the audience does not understand the message as intended. When speaking at a pep rally or a motivational speaking event, the language selected should move and uplift an audience, while the delivery of a the eulogy at a funeral should sound respectful, yet somber. Speakers must choose the right words, for the right audiences, based on the needs of the situation.

FDR chose the word "infamy" because it carried a more ominous tone, highlighting the furor and anger felt by the American people as they watched the attack on Pearl Harbor in horror.

KNOW WHAT TO AVOID

"When in doubt, throw it out."

In order to become a mindful communicator, especially with respect to public speaking, consider the audience when deciding what words, terminology, and phrases to use. Being cautious and mindful about the language used goes beyond what some may call "P.C." or politically correct, which has become a loaded term in contemporary politics. If the language of a speech triggers a negative response from individuals in the audience, then it is highly likely that those audience members will no longer listen with the intent to understand. They have likely either turned off their attention spans or started to listen with the intent to defend themselves later.

In keeping this goal in mind, stay mindful of the language used and incorporate words that resonate with the audience. Some categories of language to consider avoiding include political, religious, racial, ethnic, or sexual references that some may consider offensive or, at the very least, off-putting. For example, words that may have once been acceptable may need slight edits before using them in front of a potentially diverse audience. These words include "stewardess" (flight attendant), "fireman" (firefighter), and "cleaning lady" (housekeeper).

Note to Self

You can find more examples of words you should avoid by conducting some simple research.

VARIED MEANINGS

Be aware to keep the two types of meanings in mind when composing language for a speech: connotation and denotation.

The **denotation** of a particular word refers to its factual/literal meaning or common dictionary definition. Speakers should confirm the meaning of all words they intend to use that they are not 100% sure of the denotation by looking them up, as some words could potentially have more than one denotation. Sometimes certain terms or phrases may mean something completely different to various audience members.

One of the denotative meanings of the word snake is "any of numerous scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptiles having a long, tapering, cylindrical body often found in tropical and temperate regions."

Alternatively, **connotation** has more to do with the additional emotional or cultural meaning associated with the word, term, or phrase. The connotation for the word *snake* could mean "danger" or "evil." Consider the terms "swamp" and "wetland." One word conjures images of bugs, snakes, and foul

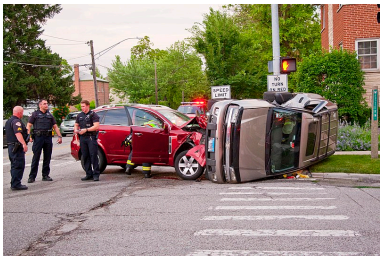
stenches, while the other inspires images of a picturesque scene with graceful birds and beautiful foliage. However, they could easily be used to refer to the same scene since they both have similar denotations. Identify the connotations of some words—or the attitudes associated with them—by examining pairs of words that share essentially the same meaning, but differ in the favorable or unfavorable attitudes they evoke in most people. Examples include:

- refreshing—chilly
- plain—natural
- clever—sly
- terrorist—freedom fighter
- snob—cultured
- assertive—pushy
- skinny—slender
- statesman—politician
- smile—smirk
- domineering—assertive

Be aware of the potential connotation the choice of language may have on diverse audiences. The word "diversity" implies race or gender to some listeners, when the actual dictionary definition simply means "difference"— without any connotation whatsoever.

Describing a group of people gathered on the street as a "rally" suggests a gathering of passionate, happy, and

celebratory participants, but calling it a "mob" connotes a darker, angry, or perhaps violent gathering. For instance, newscasts and articles by conflicting media organizations sometimes interpret the same event differently. The connotation applied by media can subtly imprint a particular viewpoint in one's mind and shape public opinion about such events (see framing theory).



Loftus and Palmer (1974) conducted an experiment to illustrate the impact that the connotation of one's chosen words can have on memory. They showed two groups of students a video of a car accident, and then, some time later, asked them questions about what they had seen. They asked the first group how fast they thought the cars were moving when they "hit" each other, and the second group was asked the same question with a subtle change: they substituted the word "hit" with "smashed." The results showed the group that they asked how fast the cars were moving when they "smashed" into each other estimated much higher speeds than those asked with a much more passive or neutral verb. Additionally, the group using the word "smashed" also reported seeing broken glass at the scene, yet no evidence of broken glass appears in the video.

Lastly, review the meaning of unfamiliar words so as not to accidentally communicate the wrong message. Most

importantly, make sure to master the pronunciation of the word. This may take some practice and repetition, particularly for tough medical terminology, but research online pronunciation guides that will illustrate how to pronounce such words. Many online dictionaries include an audio clip of the word's pronunciation.

CLARITY

Simply put, less means more when it comes to word choice. Audience members from all walks of life have probably endured at one point or another a speech in which the speaker attempted to use "big words" to make themselves seem smart, when in reality, it only ended up frustrating the audience and turning off their attention spans. Convey complex ideas easily by using simple, everyday language.

Ham. To be, or not to be, I there's the point,
To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:
No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,
For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,
And borne before an euerlasting Iudge,
From whence no passenger euer retur'nd,
The vndiscouered country, at whose sight
The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.
But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,
Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,
Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poore?

Shakespeare's famous soliloquy from Hamlet ("To be or not to be...") contains 261 words, and of those, 205 of them only have one syllable.

Avoid using big words unnecessarily, as this can result in an audience viewing the speaker as pretentious or disingenuous. For example, one might say, "It is important to take immediate and expeditious action to vacate the premises," when a simpler and more direct way to say the same thing in a speech might be, "Everyone get out of the building now!"

Concrete Language

In addition to keeping things simple, speakers should use words that clearly convey what they mean. In other words, avoid overtly abstract or vague phrases. For example, when describing a person's net worth, don't say, "She is very wealthy." Instead, use concrete figures, such as, "She is currently worth $1.2 million and owns homes in four countries." This provides the opportunity to practice the age-old writing advice: *show, don't tell.* Use language to vividly describe people, places, and things. Concrete, illustrious language can help make the presenter's points more memorable. Stay precise with language. Avoid overusing pronouns (he, she, it, they, etc.). Some people quip that the most quoted "source" in the world today is "They." For example, "They say we're going to get rain soon" or "I hear they're predicting an early spring!" Avoid generalizations and strive to provide concrete, precise sources for all information.

Accuracy

Audiences often judge the credibility of a speaker by her or his adherence to the rules of grammar, as well as usage. Grammatical errors annoy some listeners and may give the impression that the speaker possesses less intelligence due to poor word choice or syntax. Avoid common slang and regional dialect in a formal public speaking event. Words like "orientate" or "irregardless" may frequent informal conversations, but they do not demonstrate correct grammar. Likewise, audiences can find the usages of incorrect tenses and pronouns equally annoying. To sound articulate and polished, use "himself" instead of "hisself," "you were" instead of "you was," or "I went" rather than "I had went." To older generations, "busted" may mean having no access to monetary resources; someone younger might find the same word implies getting caught doing something embarrassing or illegal; someone else might think the word simply means "broken."

Euphemisms

Beware of misusing euphemisms, which offer indirect methods of restating unpleasant, blunt, or even offensive statements, for they can quickly mislead an audience. For example, "The proverbial excrement will strike the wind oscillating device" may sound more polite initially, but a closer inspection reveals the message's true intent, so it remains a

slightly nicer way of restating the old adage having to do with serious trouble. Euphemisms have their place, though; for example, speakers often refer to someone as having "passed away" rather than saying that person is dead, because it softens the blow of the terms.

Some euphuisms can lead to controversy. NASA and other government officials referred to the coffins of deceased Space Shuttle Challenger crew members as "crew transfer containers," which caused a swift backlash.

Avoid the "dark side" of euphemisms that occur when people use them to manipulate, distort, mislead, or obfuscate the true meaning of words and phrases. George Orwell coined the term **doublespeak** to describe this kind of language after publication of his novel, *1984*, where those in power created a language they called "newspeak." Politicians and corporations commonly used doublespeak when they desire to equivocate in order to avoid the emotional impact of more accurate language. For example, a politician referred to a controversial pipeline bill in Congress as the "Keystone jobs bill."

Inflated Language

"Domestic goddess" Roseanne Barr.

In a similar vein to euphemisms, inflated language has a similar tendency to come across as disingenuous. Inflated language occurs when someone renames something to make it sound greater than it really is, such as when Rosanne Barr famously referred to herself as a "domestic goddess" instead of a stay-at-home wife and mother. Other examples of inflated language include: "corrosion control specialist" (car wash operator), "reutilization marketing facility" (junkyard), or "price integrity coordinator" (sales clerk).

Jargon

Jargon refers to the technical language specific to a certain field or profession. Such language often gets labeled as "esoteric," which means the words are intended to be understood by a small group of people with highly specialized interest or training. For example, the military frequently uses acronyms. In the film, *Good Morning, Vietnam*, Robin Williams'

character pokes fun at this practice with the following illustration:

> *"Excuse me, sir. Seeing as how the V.P. is such a V.I.P., shouldn't we keep the P.C. on the Q.T.? 'Cause if it leaks to the V.C. he could end up M.I.A., and then we'd all be put out in K.P."*

Of course, speakers will find using jargon like this is perfectly acceptable if their audience is familiar with the jargon used. However, someone delivering a speech full of such acronyms to an audience that is completely unfamiliar with them would have trouble maintaining their attention. Most industries, such as restaurants, the military, or medicine, have terminology used specifically by members of that group. Jargon can also be regionally specific. In North Idaho, it is not uncommon to hear people refer to their truck as a "rig."

This is in addition to the age-old debate surrounding the use of the interchangeable terms, pop, soda, or Coke. This jargon is regionally specific. Southerners prefer Coke (regardless if Coca-Cola manufactured it or not); in the Southwest and East, they use the word soda; and, in the Northwest and Midwest, people prefer to say pop.

What do you call the pictured items?

People who speak English as a second language find jargon and slang especially confusing.

VIVID LANGUAGE

Yaslin Bey

Regarding the art form of creating imagery using language, American hip-hop artist Yaslin Bey (who once performed as Mos Def), said: "The ability to have somebody read something and see it, or for somebody to paint an entire landscape of visual imagery with just sheets of words—that's magical. That's what I've been trying to strive for—to draw a clear picture, to open up a new dimension."

Bring abstract ideas and concepts to life through the use of vivid imagery. Take a look at the following passage written by Dr. Josh Misner. He attempted to poetically capture the feeling of experiencing a fleeting moment while out on a hike with his two young children:

> ...then there are those magical moments between worlds, when we wait upon the silence and cast our gaze into the lights. The wind

> serenades us with the melody of a thousand years and trees dance to a rhythm of immemorial joy. Our palms caress crusted tips of wild grass as we comb through the meadow without words, yet mysteriously hearing their meanings echo among the chatter of nature. A smile and bright, wondrous eyes light the path ahead while we leave our cares behind for another day, another moment, but not this one. Today, we soak it all in, unfettered by definition or explanation. Today, we roam. Today, we marvel. Today is ours.

Misner could have described the exact same event in a more factual manner as follows:

> We paused to take in the silence of the forest around us. The wind blew gently through the trees, while we ran our hands across the overgrown wild grass. We smiled at one another and continued our hike.

The difference between the two descriptions of the exact same

event provides the reader (or listener, in the case of public speaking) with a wholly different experience of the same account. In the first passage, the imagery of bringing wind to life, along with painting a picture of the scene, almost places the audience there on the hike with them. While the second passage effectively does the same job, the first attempt clearly proves more effective at capturing the feel of the moment through the use of vivid imagery.

In addition to vivid imagery, consider using **similes** and **metaphors** to illustrate unfamiliar concepts and points. A simile provides a comparison between two seemingly dissimilar items that uses the word "like" or "as" to draw the comparison. For example, "That class session felt *like* a thousand years long!" A metaphor behaves similar to the simile, but does not use "like" or "as," effectively making a more direct comparison, such as, "That class session was a thousand years of my life I'll never get back!"

Be careful not to use **cliché** metaphors or similes, which are phrases and comparisons that people overuse in regular conversation, such as "last but not least," "better late than never," or "stuck out like a sore thumb." These do not add variety or spice to a speech, and, when speaking to a foreign audience, these types of metaphors may end up creating confusion since their intended meaning often gets lost in translation.

RHETORICAL DEVICES

Rhetorical devices offer a way for speakers to arrange language in an artful way so as to make the conversation more engaging and subsequently, more memorable for audience members. Professional and amateur speech writers can employ any number of rhetorical devices to spice up the delivery of a presentation (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 – Rhetorical Devices: Figures, Definitions, Illustrations

Alliteration	Allusion	Anadiplosis	Analogy
Anaphora	Anesis	Antimetabole	Antithesis
Aposiopesis	Appositio	Assonance	Asyndeton
Catachresis	Climax	Conduplicatio	Diacope
Distinctio	Enthymeme	Enumeratio	Epanalepsis
Epistrophe	Epitheton	Epizeuxis	Eupemismos
Exemplum	Expletive	Hyperbole	Hypophora
Metaphor	Oxymoron	Paradox	Parallelism
Personification	Polysyndeton	Rhetorical Question	Scesis Onomaton
Sententia	Simile	Symploce	Synecdoche

Greek and Roman scholars in the classical period developed and identified most rhetorical devices. Four of the most popular ones used in speeches include alliteration, antithesis, parallel structure, and repetition.

Alliteration

Alliteration occurs when the speaker uses the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. Alliteration appears in everyday uses of language, such as television shows (*Mad Men*), sporting events (Final Four), company names (Dunkin Donuts), and in famous phrases (home sweet home; right as rain). When used sparingly, alliteration can spice up the language of delivery, such as "We owe it to our city to help the hungry, the homeless, and the helpless among us." However, speakers can overuse alliteration, turning an otherwise innocuous statement into an exercise in pure silliness: "Nick's nephew needed new notebooks now."

Antithesis

The **antithesis** rhetorical technique juxtaposes two dissimilar or contrasting ideas. Consider President John F. Kennedy's famous example: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." Neil Armstrong

used an antithesis as he took his first steps on the moon: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Consider this technique when trying to draw attention to an important point. Other examples include:

- Many are called, but few are chosen.
- We are taught to speak, but rarely how to listen.

Parallel Structure and Repetition

Parallel structure uses the technique of arranging phrases or clauses of a sentence in parallel form, such as in the following examples:

- Dogs make great pets; they show loyalty, they show obedience, and they show love.
- Our coach told us we should get a lot of sleep, we should eat well, and we should think positively about tonight's game.

Martin Luther King, Jr. masterfully used parallel structure and combined it with repetition to add engagement to his oratory. Consider his famous *I Have a Dream* speech:

Martin Luther King, Jr.

> *I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."*
>
> *I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.*
>
> *I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.*
>
> *I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.*
>
> *I have a dream today!*

Repetition occurs when the speaker repeats certain words or phrases to garner emotional effect. Those repeated phrases sound pleasant to the human ear, because they carry with them a certain rhythmic quality, adding emphasis and aiding in

memory retention. Repetition as an element of public speaking works differently than it does in written communication. In public speaking, presenters should use repetition because it helps the audience remember key ideas. In written communication, repetition often gets avoided because a reader can review the original reference for memory and comprehension.

CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY

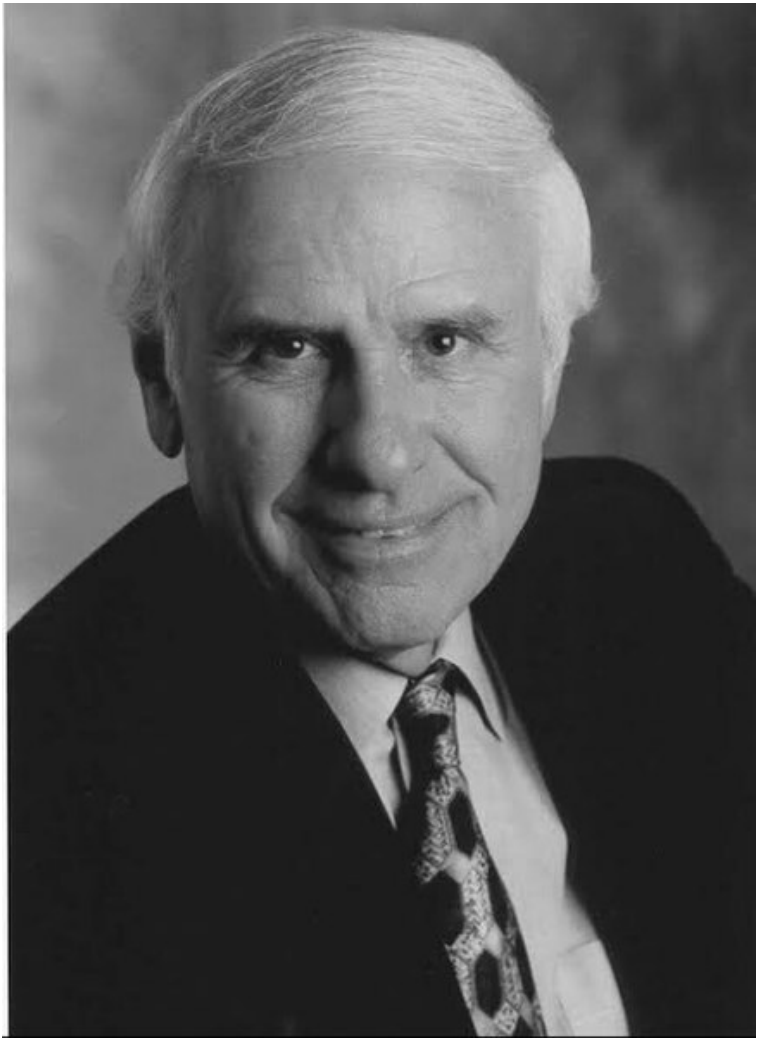
The nuance of language offers powerful options for speechwriters. As such, speakers should masterfully assemble the words of the speech with the audience in mind. Select the right language and tone for those words based on the context of the speaking arrangement; be sure the tone matches the expected and appropriate tone for the situation.

The language chosen when composing a speech should take into account both the denotation (dictionary definition) and connotation (emotional implication) of the words. Keep words simple, clear, concrete. Avoid overusing abstract

language and generalizations. Be aware of other types of language to avoid, such as euphemisms, inflated language, and jargon. Finally, employ vivid language through the use of metaphor, simile, and rhetorical devices such as alliteration, antithesis, and parallel structure or repetition to keep audiences engaged and listening.

PART VIII
CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER 8: PRACTICE, PREPARATION, AND DELIVERY TECHNIQUES



"Take advantage of every opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when important occasions arise, you will have the gift, the style, the sharpness, the clarity, and the emotions to affect other people." —**Jim Rohn**

As a general rule of life, learned skills require practice to refine,

develop, and perfect. Any dedicated athlete will confirm this fact. The average person off the street cannot pick up a textbook on the fundamentals of basketball, study it during a caffeine-fueled all-nighter, and then show up for tryouts with an NBA team, expecting a starting spot on the team. The same holds true for foreign languages, hobbies, crafts, and trades. It takes time, effort, and a vigorous commitment to the process of trial and error for a person to develop any skill.

Communication in general, but especially public speaking, essentially consists of a set of learned skills that speakers must develop through regular, dedicated practice. Some people have a seemingly natural talent for public speaking, while others fall on the opposite end of the spectrum and become crippled by the mere thought of standing up in front of an audience. This chapter aims to help the latter become more confident public speakers.

WHY PRACTICE?

As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, the element of uncertainty sparks one of the primary sources for public speaking anxiety. People fear all of the possibilities that could go wrong, including saying the wrong thing, forgetting what to say, or having the audience turn against them or view them as incompetent. Practicing a speech helps eliminate many of those sources of uncertainty, and with that practice, speakers start developing self-confidence with respect to the message they have to deliver. Practicing effectively trains their mouths to say the words, bodies to deliver the accompanying nonverbal

communication to supplement the message, and brains to perform under pressure.

GETTING STARTED

Successful and effective practice sessions begin with the outline, for a great speech depends on the quality and completeness of the written foundation. Remember that the outline will act as the roadmap for how to progress from the attention getter (opening statement) to the clincher (final statement). As with an actual road map, the speaker wants the directions to be as clear, complete, and concise as possible. Start practicing the speech after completing the rough draft of the outline.

STARTING TIPS FOR PRACTICE

Above all, avoid the practice of "cramming" when deciding on a practice strategy. While this strategy may work on a history exam when trying to memorize dates and facts at the last minute to regurgitate them before forgetting them, this strategy does not work as well for communicators. Remember, public speaking acts like any other learned skill that individuals develop and refine, like performing a saxophone solo, shooting a free-throw shot, or

Helpful Hints

Items missing from an outline will not magically appear during a speaker's delivery in front of the audience. For example, if the outline neglected to include a

central idea, and the speaker used the outline to practice the speech, then it is likely the central idea will ever get revealed during the speech. Be sure to complete the outline (this means taking into account all speech components outlined in Chapter 6) before beginning to practice.

learning a new language. Practice should begin well in advance of the speech and spread out over time, rather than concentrated all in one or two sessions. Brief yet frequent practice sessions held over a period of time works best.

When beginning to practice, understand the vast, yet subtle difference between memorization and learning. For example, people asked to tell the story of their first kiss, the time they learned to ride a bike, or the first time they flew in an airplane could most likely recall and tell others that story with relative ease. They did not need to memorize these stories or write down lines, study them, and then repeat them until they could recite them perfectly each time. People find these stories easy to tell without much advance preparation because they represent learned experiences. The speaker knows the material; telling the story involves putting

the concepts into words. At most, notes for telling these types of stories would consist of a few keywords and phrases to jog the memory and keep it on track.

Memorization, on the other hand, refers to the process of storing and recalling exact phrases and words. Actors use this process to recall exact lines in prewritten scripts, but for a public speaker, whose primary goal consists of having a fluid conversation with an audience, it will not suffice. Audiences, first of all, can easily see through a speaker with a scripted speech. From eye contact to vocal tone, rate, and variety, everything about that speaker's delivery will seem canned or manufactured, anything but genuine and authentic. Additionally, what would happen if the speaker forgot a line? Potentially, that could cause what some might refer to as a "speech fatality"—an unrecoverable error that causes extreme anxiety, resulting in panic and possibly failure. As opposed to memorized speeches, learned speeches offer speakers a backup plan, because they know the concepts they are trying to convey, so the words they choose to convey those concepts may vary, but the essence of the message remains the same. For that reason, avoid rote memorization at all costs, and instead, get to know the material and use notes to help provide guidance through that material.

When practicing, remember to recite certain phrases differently each time. Not only does this prevent memorization as a result of repeated practice, but it also effectively "trains" speakers to deliver their message in a variety

of ways, developing multiple phrases for saying the same thing. That way, if they get stuck trying to remember how they planned on phrasing a certain point, they will have numerous options from which to draw, keeping the speech fluid and conversational.

Remember that, during practice sessions, speakers should practice in the exact same way they intend to present when in front of the audience. This means that, if they plan to stand and move around, they should not practice from a seated position, staring at a computer screen, and going through the lines in their head. They will want to stand up, move around, gesture, and practice saying phrases out loud, projecting their voice just as they will in front of the audience. This practice method trains the body (the delivery vehicle) via **muscle memory**. In the same way a professional golfer practices hitting a drive hundreds of times to develop and refine the swing, a public speaker needs to train the muscles of the body like the neck so he or she remembers to move the head around the room, effectively maintaining eye contact with the entire room. This also includes the diaphragm, which is needed to expel enough air through the vocal cords to project the voice to the back of the room.

For instance, what would happen if a speaker only practiced from a seated position? That person will likely stand to deliver the message feeling uncomfortable due to the unfamiliar method of delivery, which leads to uncertainty and generates natural anxiety. In the same way, practicing phrases internally

instead of speaking them out loud only teaches a person to remain quiet and reserved.

Lastly, consider conducting at least one practice session as a full-dress rehearsal. The last place speakers want to discover that their heels hurt or that their shirt doesn't fit quite right is when they are standing in front of an audience and trying to concentrate on delivering the message.

Athletes, musicians, actors, dancers, or other performers who perform their craft in front of spectators often use a valuable technique called **positive visualization** (also called **positive imagery**). This technique involves engaging one's imagination to visualize a positive outcome from the upcoming performance. For example, a basketball player preparing to take a crucial free-throw shot to win the game at the last minute might dribble the ball a few times, then pause and *visualize* the shot before taking it, imagining the ball going through the air in a perfect arc and sinking through the hoop, touching nothing but the net. Only after that visualization will the player physically take the shot. Public speakers should imagine themselves successfully delivering the speech as close to an ideal reality as possible. One of the worst things a speaker can do prior to the speech is engage in negative self-talk, such as thinking "I'm not ready for this" or "This is going to stink!"

While everyone will have a different "best practice" number of practice sessions to effectively learn a speech, it requires some trial and error to find out what will work best. Some people have the good fortune to possess photographic

memories and can recall written information effortlessly, and for them, perhaps one practice session will work fine. Others may end up on the opposite end of that spectrum, requiring 30 or more practice run-throughs before they feel comfortable enough to deliver their speech. Despite most people falling anywhere along this spectrum, many novice public speaking students suggest that the following three practice "sessions" outlined in this chapter provide a recipe for success.

PRACTICE SESSION #1

Before practicing at all, the speaker must absolutely have a solid foundation established in the outline. Prepare the outline as fully and completely as possible before beginning. The only other tool required for this practice session is a timer. Most cellular phones have stopwatch apps readily available, but in a pinch, one could easily find a relatively cheap stopwatch or use the kitchen timer function on just about any microwave.

Speakers can take two approaches to using the timing during practice sessions. First, they can start the stopwatch, deliver the speech, and then see how much time has elapsed,

adjusting as necessary from that point. Another method is to use a countdown-style timer, setting the timer for the maximum amount of time allowed and delivering the speech after starting the countdown. If the timer beeps before the speech concludes, the speaker can note on the outline how much material in the speech remains, which informs them how much needs to be cut from the final draft. Regardless of how the timer gets used, the speech's likelihood for success relies on it. Practicing with a timer trains the brain to recognize how much time has elapsed, helping speakers to develop almost a "sixth sense" regarding the time, so that they will automatically know how long the speech has lasted while delivering it in front of the audience. When people experience situations that induce high levels of stress and anxiety, their perception of time becomes distorted. After a ten-minute speech, one student may sit down and feel like only two minutes have passed, while another student may sit down after three minutes and think that more than eight minutes transpired. Using this method provides critical **biofeedback**, which helps the body determine much time has elapsed, helping the speaker finish the message within the allotted time.

In this first practice session, the speaker should start the timer and deliver the speech from the outline, vocalizing it as closely as if delivering it in front of the intended audience.

Important Note to Self

If you mess up, stumble over your words, or forget to say something, keep going! These things happen when speaking in front of an audience, so train yourself how to adapt and recover.

After the conclusion of the first run-through of the speech, stop the timer to determine whether the speech ran under time, over time, or within the range allowed for this specific speech. Ideally, speakers will fall within the upper-middle point within the time range allotted. For example, the practice run for a 6–8 minute speech should aim for the 7:30–7:45 mark. As people get increasingly nervous, their vocal rate has the tendency to follow their heart rates. Increased heartrates will likely lead to increased speaking rates. Good speakers take this into consideration and give themselves a little extra room, just in case.

If this practice session ends up over time, go back through the outline and determine what information to edit out of the speech. Don't randomly remove content. Prioritize removing any information that does not seem to fit with the audience's needs. If the speech falls under the time limit, go back to the

outline and consider elaborating further on some of the points. Again, utilize the audience analysis to determine which points would better suit their needs.

Speakers should continue practicing the speech in this manner until they confidently deliver the speech while making sure the timing comes out consistently. At that point, they should put the speech aside and walk away. There is a point of diminishing returns when it comes to practicing a speech. Practice too much, and it will become too rote and rehearsed. This first practice session serves only one purpose: testing the time limits and determining if the amount of information included fits within the parameters of the speaking engagement. Once that has been accomplished, any further practice could actually damage the ability to remain conversational.

PRACTICE SESSION #2

By now, the outline has neared final draft status and should require very few changes, but it still has its uses for this practice session. Bring the timer once again, but include note cards. Begin transcribing the outline to the note cards at this point using only short phrases and keywords that will jog the memory regarding what information to deliver. To demonstrate what this could look like, consider the main point from one of the sample outlines in Chapter 6:

I. Part of attraction is due to what our mind perceives as physically appealing.
   A. The human body is the first thing we notice in

another human.

1. Females are generally attracted to males that are sexually appealing and have good fatherly traits such as height, muscles, facial features, some hair.
2. Males are generally attracted to females that have sexually appealing features such as large breasts, waist-to-hip ratio, face, legs, and butt.

B. Symmetry plays a role in figuring out if the person has good genes.

1. When we see a person, we are subconsciously analyzing if they have the features that would make for good offspring. (Science of Sex Appeal DVD)
2. The better the symmetry, the more it shows that a person doesn't have any visible gene defects.

A note card for this main point could look like this:

–Attraction – physical appeal

- Body noticed first

- Women → Men with height, muscles, face, hair
- Men → Women with large breasts, waist/hip, face, legs, butt

- Symmetry – genes
- Science of Sex Appeal DVD→ subconscious analyzing
  - Good symmetry – no gene defects

Notice that this speaker has deliberately written the notes on the card almost cryptically. Part of the trial-and-error process of learning to be an effective public speaker involves learning what basic keywords and phrases will jog the memory in the midst of high anxiety. One thing, however, is certain and must be remembered at this stage:

Note to Self

The more text you write on a note card, the more likely you will read directly from it instead of maintaining eye contact with your audience.

Helpful Hint

Use only one note card per section of information within the speech. For example, use one card for each point of the introduction, one card for each main point, and one

Speakers should only Include the minimum amount of text needed to jar the memory so that they can spend a majority of the time making meaningful eye contact with the audience. The only time speakers should write full sentences occurs when transcribing a full quote, at which point, the audience almost expects them to read from the card to do justice to the original source.

Also notice how the creator of the notecard above used a highlighter to identify the fact's source? Using color, symbols, bold font, etc. offers a great way to immediately find important information when needed. The longer speakers look down at their

notes, hunting for the material they need, the greater the chances that anxiety could begin to rise.

Speakers can also include notes to themselves regarding how to deliver the speech during certain portions. For example, as long as the speech's topic is not heavy, serious, or depressing, consider drawing smiley faces on the note cards to serve as a reminder to smile once in a while, or draw arrows that point to the sides of the room to prompt movement or eye contact with the audience. These tips could prove remarkably useful.

After transcribing the outline to note cards, deliver the speech from the note cards, but have the outline nearby. Make a note of any difficult areas of the speech and come back to those parts later. If certain areas consistently prove problematic, edit the note cards to ensure they read as clear as possible. Check the timer after

card for the conclusion.

Not only does this minimize the number of cards needed, but it also provides a visual cue to another important part of the speech: a transition. Flipping to a new card when stating the transition provides the audience with a subtle nonverbal cue that indicates

movement to new material.

Number the cards. This will help reduced anxiety if they get disorganized or dropped during the speech.

each practice round to ensure the timing remains steady and toward the upper-middle range of the limit. Once the speaker can effectively deliver the speech from the note cards alone, they should stop there and practice no further until the next session.

PRACTICE SESSION #3

Speakers who have the opportunity to practice at the speaking venue should take the opportunity to do so if economically feasible.

For this practice session, use only the timer and note cards. Start the timer, and just as with session #2, deliver the speech solely from the note cards. During this session, speakers should pretend they have an audience and interact with them during delivery instead of the note cards.

Note to Self

Want to maximize your chances for success? Preview the venue where you will speak in advance and imagine yourself in that room, looking at how you expect the audience to arrange itself. Continue your practice run-throughs, challenging yourself to wean away from the notes as much as possible. Ideally, you will spend a minimum of 70% of your speech not looking at your notes, but instead, at your audience. Remember to vary your phrases, so as not to memorize, but to *learn* your material well enough to deliver it as conversationally as possible. At this point, your note cards effectively become more like a parachute and less like a crutch.

The more speakers push themselves to get away from the notes and use them only when they forget what to say next, the more they will learn the speech and give off the impression of credibility, preparedness, and confidence.

During this third practice session, consider incorporating one or more of the following techniques:

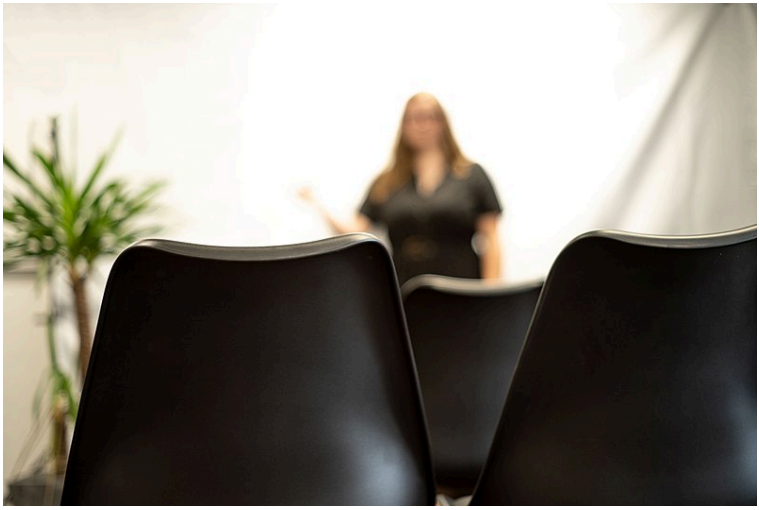
- **Deliver the speech to a test audience of family or**

friends. Hearing feedback from familiar faces can offer perspectives that may help identify problem points.

- **Deliver the speech in front of a full-length mirror** without looking away. This helps to desensitize the part of the emotional brain (the limbic system) that controls the natural aversion to eye contact. This exercise helps build confidence to maintain eye contact with audience members.
- **Record the delivery of the speech** using a phone, camera, or webcam and watch it for self-review. As uncomfortable as this feels, it provides truly valuable feedback, leading to greater development as a speaker.

Following the techniques outlined for these three practice sessions will provide speakers with a good starting point with which to work. Some people may require more practice, while others may be able to get by with less, but this much is certain: Practice makes perfect and helps the speakers develop confidence in their abilities to deliver a credible message to the audience.

PLANNING THE DELIVERY



Once speakers have mastered the content portion of their speech, they must next consider how to use the delivery of the message to give it more impact among the audience members. Remember the goal of an effective communicator at all times: have the audience memorably understand the message as originally intended. The best and most well-written speech in the world will still fall short if not delivered effectively, so during practice, take into account how to manage first impressions, as well as improving nonverbal communication,

which includes personal appearance, eye contact, vocal quality, and movement.

First Impressions

Generating a positive rapport begins with setting a good first impression with the audience. Always show up early and come prepared. Arriving at the last minute, frantic and nervous, can set a negative tone among audience members that may prove difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. Prior to the introduction, prepare all visual aids. Manage any nonverbal cues, particularly when an outside party provides a formal introduction. Stand tall and exude confidence, even if the opposite feels true. When it comes to confidence, great speakers "fake it until they make it," which eventually transforms nerves into confidence. After the introduction, it is time to "take the stage." Walk tall and slowly up to the podium, all the while remembering that nothing else matters but the message in this moment.

Note to Self

Remember all the preparation and practice that has

led up to this moment and remind yourself that you can do this. As you take your place at the podium (or wherever you plan on beginning), pause for a moment and smile, ensuring you have the audience's attention.

Take a deep, cleansing breath and exhale slowly before beginning, and then begin strong. Avoid saying unnecessary phrases like "All right..." or "Okay..." or greeting the audience. Time restrictions limit the amount of time it takes to convey very important message to the audience, therefore devote every last word toward delivering that message. Pausing before commencing the introduction demonstrates self-control and respect for the audience.

Appearance

The speaker's appearance should them apart from audience members. To achieve this goal, keep two general rules of personal appearance in mind: 1) Anticipate the audience's attire and dress about one or two steps more formally than that so as to project a professional,

credible image to the audience; 2) Use clothing as a visual aid if it enhances the message. When in doubt with respect to rule #1, aim for business casual attire by wearing appropriate clothes for a professional job interview, such as an interview for an office manager, a supervisory position, or a marketing specialist. Additionally, avoid wearing anything that might distract the audience from focusing on the message, such as hats or shirts with text of any kind and/or flashy logos. Ignore this advice if such clothing serves as a visual aid.

Finally, speaker should take the following aspects into consideration when planning their personal appearance: the occasion, audience, topic, and the image/persona desired. First, note the occasion for the speech. Presenters delivering a commencement address should look totally different than those eulogizing at a funeral or celebrating a wedding, so the occasion sometimes dictates what the speaker needs to wear. Second, consider the audience. Sometimes dressing one level more formally may involve wearing jeans and a T-shirt, especially if the audience is going to be wearing shorts, sandals, and tank tops. Generally speaking, plan on dressing at least as nice as the nicest-dressed person in the audience, but when in doubt, err on the more formal side. Thirdly, speakers can sometimes look to their topic to find inspiration for their wardrobe. For example, a Hawaiian print shirt, shorts, and sandals serve as perfect attire for explaining tourist attractions on Oahu, while yoga pants and no shoes work great for demonstrating yoga poses. Lastly, speakers should take into

account what type of persona they want their audience to see. Trying to emulate power and authority? Dress more formally in darker colors. Going for more lighthearted humor or an upbeat, positive tone? Wear lighter colors. Dressing more formally helps make the audience take the speaker more seriously.

Eye Contact

Eye contact, according to Andersen (2007), performs several interactional functions, including the following:

- Regulate and monitor human interactions
- Signal cognitive activity
- Express a desire for involvement
- Signal attentiveness

The number-one reason novice speakers fail to engage their audiences with sufficient meaningful eye contact occurs due to relying too heavily on reading notes. Such speakers use their notes even when they are well prepared, simply because they find it more comforting to look down at the notes, rather than at all those pairs of eyes staring. A lack of eye contact with an audience damages the possibility to create rapport because, as mentioned above, if eye contact stays poor or inconsistent, it cannot regulate or monitor interaction, nor can it generate a desire for involvement or engagement with the presented

material. Audiences most likely will tune out a speaker who fails to engage them with consistent eye contact.

Eye contact means much more than merely scanning the audience, however. "Lock on" each person in the audience for at least a couple of seconds before moving on to the next person. Do this randomly to individual members of the audience, so as to feel more natural in the interaction with them. One technique that may help with this is to look at the person in the front corner of the room, then move to the audience member in the opposite rear corner, then the other rear corner, then the opposite front corner, and then fill in the gaps between them all randomly. Speakers should aim to reach every audience member meaningfully at least once.

Movement and Use of Space

Most novice speakers, quite frankly, forget that they possess bodies, complete with working limbs, particularly legs. They become so heavily focused on delivering the message that they neglect to utilize the space they have at the front of the room. Still others choose to remain glued to the podium, because the podium provides a feeling of "cover" in

such a hazardous situation as public speaking in front of a crowd. Movement, however, as mentioned earlier, provides people with a way to dispel much of their nervous energy. It does not take much in the way of movement to burn off excess adrenaline that pools in the cells of muscles, resulting in involuntary trembling and twitching. Walking around can help the speaker move past the initial wave of anxiety. Additionally, an animated speaker becomes more engaging and easier to follow than one who never moves from the same spot. However, keep movement intentional and use it to supplement the speech's main points.

Movement from one side of the room to another can be used while transitioning from one point to the next, providing the audience with a physical reminder to expect new material. State the transitional phrase when beginning to walk to the other side of the speaking space. When emphasizing an important point, consider moving toward the audience. Closing the physical gap between the audience generates more *immediacy*, or sense of urgency to listen or interact, among audience members. Moving away from the audience can signal an impending conclusion. Above all, avoid pacing like an animal trapped in a cage. While pacing may make the speaker feel better, excessive, uncontrolled movement actually creates a distraction for the audience.

VOCAL QUALITY

In a speech, obviously, the human voice delivers the majority of the message. While other nonverbal qualities may complement or supplement that message, the vast majority of the literal message gets delivered via the voice, and as such, the speaker must consider all of the qualities of the voice to ensure the most effective and memorable delivery possible.

Volume vs. Projection

Ever gone to a concert one night and noticed a difference in vocal quality the following day? The hoarse voice that resulted

is most likely due to the strain placed on the vocal cords due to an increase in volume, which can be avoided by using the art of projection. Actors refer to projection as having a "stage voice," which they employ by filling the diaphragm with air while breathing. This shifts that strain away from the vocal cords. Most people when they want to be heard loudly, simply increase the volume of their voice. Do this often and sustain it long enough and the throat will suffer. Learning to project the voice, however, involves using the diaphragm, the muscle below the lungs that fills and contracts the lungs during breathing, to expel more air through the vocal cords as they work. This effectively projects the voice throughout the room. Projection removes strain from the vocal cords and prevents the feeling associated with having a tired, hoarse voice the next day.

To develop projection, practice the presentation with a partner who slowly increases the volume of background music during the speech's delivery. As the volume of the music increases, try projecting the message over the music, concentrating on expelling more air while speaking.

Clarity

During conversations, most people are relaxed enough not to have to think about the clarity of their enunciation, and as a result, they tend to slur their words, drop syllables off the ends of words, and mumble. During practice session, slow

down and pronounce consonant sounds sharply and crisply. Speakers that exaggerate effectively train their voice to articulate the sounds more clearly when it comes time to deliver the speech.

Additionally, certain words may present problems with pronunciation, such as the word phenomenological (go ahead, try to say it five times fast). Devote extra time to practicing these words to ensure proper pronunciation of them effortlessly and correctly. Look up the words using a tool such as YouTube to hear others use the words organically. Don't settle for one source. Look up several in this manner to ensure the correct pronunciation, especially when using foreign language-based words or medical/science-based terminology. Saying words correctly improves the credibility of a speaker.

Pitch and Intonation

Pitch refers to the highs and lows of a vocal tone, while **intonation** indicates variations of pitch. When a speaker reads an entire speech off of a prewritten manuscript, things like pitch and intonation often get sacrificed, while in everyday conversation, pitch and intonation vary widely, leading to often engaging conversations that draw people in and keep them hooked. Even a staggering statistical fact could end up lost on the audience if the speaker used a monotonic voice while presenting it. However, adding enthusiasm and the right

amount of emphasis will help the audience recognize the sheer importance of the fact.

Intensity

Speakers demonstrate intensity by varying the loudness and softness of their voice.

Note to Self

To experience this, try saying the following aloud, as directed:

(Softly) "Are we going to put up with this?"

(Switch to loudly) "No! Today, we fight!"

As you tried this exercise, did you notice the meaning change as you altered the intensity?

Playing with intensity can drastically alter the mood or feel of the message. Try to vary the intensity throughout a speech. Start soft at first, but then build toward a climax near the end of the speech. This technique works especially well when utilizing narratives (stories) to convey important points.

Rate

Most people speak at a conversational rate of around 150 words per minute (roughly two words for every heartbeat), and as the heart rate increases, so will the rate of speaking. Auctioneers have the capability to say up to 300 words per minute, but in doing so, they sacrifice clarity and complexity in order to deliver their messages rapidly. Public speakers should want to keep their rates down to around the 150-word range. Keeping the rate of speech conversational helps demonstrate confidence and control to the audience. Breathing offers an effective solution to combat anxiety and regulate the heart rate. Novice speakers often forget to breathe, and instead, take short, choppy breaths that often lead to an oxygen deficiency that quickens the heart rate, leading to an increased rate of speaking. By using controlled breathing and pauses in between sentences to take deeper and purposeful breaths, the speaking rate should sound comfortable and relaxed.

Pauses and Fillers

During regular conversations, people often insert filler words, such as "um," "uh," "you know," and others while talking. Filler words serve as a sort of placeholder for the conversation, used when someone needs to retreat into her or his mind to think of a word or what to say next. People insert those filler words or **paralanguage**, which represent the sounds people

make that are not necessarily language, to let the other person know they have not finished their thoughts yet. In a speech, however, such words provide no function since the audience will not interrupt the delivery of the speech (unless dealing with a hostile audience). The audience will likely forgive the usage of some filler words. They may make the speaker come across as more natural and conversational, but at some point, too many of them becomes a distraction from the message. Instead of filler words, allow silence to fill the void between thoughts and sentences. Silence sounds much more eloquent and provides the audience with the impression that the speaker remains in control of the speech's delivery, helping them to exude confidence.

Note to Self

To reduce your use of filler words, first become aware of what fillers you use and at what points in your speech you use them. Invite a friend to one of your practices and have them bang on something or make a loud noise whenever you use a filler word. This kind of feedback, though somewhat jarring at first, provides invaluable data because, as you become more aware of the fillers, you quickly

become more able to control them and use pauses instead.

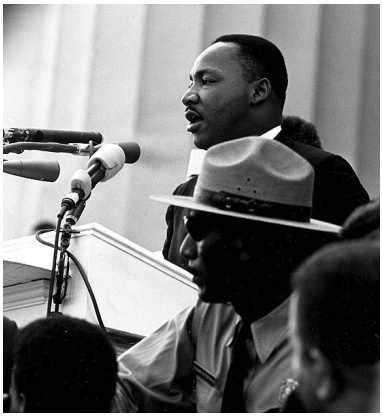
Using pauses regularly augments the message's impact. Short pauses (two seconds or less) add emphasis by using the silence to draw brief attention to the previous point. They can also separate ideas, serving almost as a nonverbal transition. Speakers should employ long pauses (3–4 seconds) more sparingly, such as following a rhetorical question or after making a powerful or provocative point. Long pauses command audience attention in dramatic fashion, but used too frequently, can give the audience the impression that the speaker's unprepared or overly nervous. Save long pauses only for the most powerful moments within the message. Speakers may also try to use the "spontaneity pause," a planned pause

that appears unplanned from the perspective of the audience. When using such a pause, stop for a moment to consider the right word or way to phrase a point, only to miraculously come up with the perfect word at the last moment.

ADVANCED DELIVERY TIPS

Speakers should incorporate all of the above tips into their delivery planning. At some point, they may choose to take their public speaking skills to the next level, so this chapter provides additional tips to help refine the speech's delivery and increase the power of the message.

Pronoun Consideration



Martin Luther King, Jr. was well known for his frequent use of inclusive pronouns (we, us, and our) instead of singular pronouns (I, you, your, me, or mine). He understood that to invite an audience into his message, he needed to rearrange the language to make it subtly more inviting to them. Take a look at the following examples:

1. *Today, I will show you what I mean by inclusive pronouns being inviting.*
2. *Today, we will look at how inclusive pronouns help us become more inviting.*

Although each sentence essentially states the same core message, the second one has the tendency to draw an audience into it through its inviting language, while the first one almost creates a sort of psychological divide between the speaker and audience members. Strive to use inclusive pronouns when possible.

Balance

Strive for balance in all aspects of the speech's delivery. When presenting serious or heavy material, seek to balance it out with lighter, more positive material. For instance, what if a person wished to discuss the atrocities of the Holocaust? Such a weighty topic needs to be treated seriously, but at the same time, an audience may find this topic emotionally draining, so how might the speaker balance it out? Though the speaker might spend the majority of the time speaking to the atrocities, near the end of the speech, however, the person could share an uplifting story of perseverance and survival despite the odds. Similarly, if the speech topic focuses on a humorous and lighthearted subject, seek to include research-based information that has serious value to it.

People that speak softly should look for ways to increase their intensity during important talking points. Likewise, those who have a booming voice that projects well should attempt to soften it a bit for more variety and impact. Stand still often? Try to get out from behind the podium and use the space. If the opposite's true, then attempt to balance movement out patterns by standing still more often.

WOW Factor

Every speech, at some point within the delivery, should attempt to deliver what some refer to as a "wow factor." Think of this as a moment of highly memorable and profound brilliance that captivates the audience and potentially makes the hairs on their arm stand straight up. A wow factor could include any one of the following or a combination thereof:

- A powerfully gripping story, well told, that builds suspense and pays off with a satisfying ending. Such a

story could begin in the intro, continue through the body of the speech, and conclude with an epic finish in the conclusion.

- A memorable and striking visual aid that perfectly encapsulates the main idea of the message and drives it home within the audience's minds.
- The speaker's personal appearance could potentially provide a wow factor, such as a speaker dressing and speaking like a zombie to discuss the importance of preparing for disasters.
- A startling fact that resonates with audience members, especially if it is powerful enough for them to want to share the fact with others outside of the context of the speaking engagement.
- A practical demonstration that shows people the content of the message, rather than merely telling them, such as a black belt in karate demonstrating a flying roundhouse kick.
- The general tone of the delivery could also provide a wow factor. A comedian named Anthony Griffith has a speech on YouTube, delivered for the storytelling project The Moth, where he talks about the year he lost his young daughter to cancer. His delivery covers a wide range of extreme emotions, using varied levels of intensity from soft-spoken to all-out rage, leaving audience members in tears by the end—and it lasts only nine minutes.

MORE ADVANCED DELIVERY TIPS

Momentum vs. Accuracy

Sometimes speakers may forget important points of their speech. Even worse they might forget entire sections! However, if they get to the recap point in their conclusion and suddenly realize that they may have forgotten something back in the first main point, it is generally best to continue with the conclusion. Sacrificing the momentum or "flow" for the sake of delivering all planned information does little for audience

information retention. The audience, unless they have a copy of the outline, will not know that information accidentally got left out, so it is best to save it for another time. Try to sneak the missing information into the Q&A portion of the speech when answering audience questions.

Using "Bits" for Practice

In public speaking terminology, a "bit" refers to a smaller section of interrelated material from a larger speech, such as a main point, an introduction, or a conclusion. Professional speakers do not memorize their talks, but instead, practice their speeches using the concept of bits. They break up their speeches into these bits and then spend time practicing each bit, often out of order. This manner of practice more closely plays to the brains' strengths since people tend to compartmentalize information when processing it. For example, memorizing a 9-digit number may seem daunting at first, but people do it all the time when remembering their social security number. Most people separate the 9 digits into three bits: a three-digit bit, a two-digit bit, and another three-digit bit. People also do the same for telephone numbers, addresses, and many more important unforgettable items.

Learning a speech in this way helps speakers rapidly and efficiently get away from their notes so as to maintain their full attention on the potential audience. In doing so, the speaker's credibility automatically rises, since the audience gains the

impression of the speaker as a person who knows the material so well that notes become unnecessary. Learning bits to get away from notes also has other benefits, like freeing the speaker from trapping themselves behind the podium. Instead. he or she has the ability to move around the room without carrying anything, placing them closer to the audience, which increases the tendency to create rapport. Learning bits also tends to help people speak more naturally and conversationally. This can also increase confidence by helping the speaker get to know the material more intimately. As a result, practice times become shorter and more efficient as the speaker works on the speech in 3–5 minute increments rather than running through the entire thing all at once.

Mental Preparation Before the Speech

On the day of the speech, public speakers may take certain steps to help put them in the right frame of mind. For exciting and upbeat speech topics, consider listening to music that shares these characteristics. The faster rhythms tend to help establish the right mood for such an occasion. Similarly, speakers with a somber speech topic should consider listening to music that projects the same emotional feeling, likely something slower and more downbeat. Some people choose to develop their passion and vocal power through listening to speeches from famous or powerful orators, such as those

found on TED.com or even historical heavyweights such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, John F. Kennedy, or Eleanor Roosevelt. Visit www.americanrhetoric.com to hear what some consider to rank as the greatest and most significant speeches ever presented.

Expressing Emotion

When speaking about potentially emotionally heavy topics, speakers must prepare themselves for an emotional flood. As adrenaline hits the bloodstream, it alters the way people experience their emotions by magnifying their effects. Someone experiencing an adrenaline rush due to the fight-or-flight response that comes with public speaking will be more likely to experience overwhelming emotions than the same person in a normal state of rest. Therefore, if the speech topic, for example, will reference a close and well-loved family member who recently died, that person should be prepared to cope with the inevitable emotional reaction that could bubble up to the surface. Even if such emotions did not surface during practice sessions, it remains highly likely that the same speech, when given in front of an audience, will result in tears that well up, seemingly out of nowhere. If this happens, let it. One of

the worst things people can do is to fight the tears if and when they arise, because that will only hinder their ability to continue speaking. Though emotions may arise and overwhelm speakers, if they persevere through the emotion regardless, the audience will likely sympathize with them and respect their decision to continue. Audiences are remarkably empathetic and supportive in such situations.

Note to Self

Don't allow yourself to end the speech prematurely because your emotions bring you to tears. Be prepared for such situations by having a tissue handy, just in case, and consider how you will respond in such an eventuality in advance.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

While first impressions are incredibly important—and it is the speaker's job to maintain these impressions throughout the speech via effective delivery methods—it is also vitally important to maintain a positive final impression as well. This can be accomplished through effective moderation of a Q&A period. As the conclusion wraps up with the final clincher, prepare for the audience to applaud. Absorb the applause, but don't rush the audience by interrupting their ovation, however uncomfortable it may feel to receive public praise.

As soon as the applause dies down a bit and before leaving the podium to remove any visual aids setup, announce the opportunity to field audience questions. As a general rule, try not to allow the Q&A to run any longer than about 25% of the total time allotted for the speech. For an hour-long presentation, allow up to 15 minutes for questions. For a 10-minute speech, allow up to two minutes. After announcing the Q&A, it becomes a matter of calling on people in the order they raised their hands. However, with some topics, it may take the audience a while to think of questions, but show patience.

If nobody raises a hand, don't take this as an indicator that the speech performed poorly; it could mean the audience simply needs a moment to digest the information. Wait for at least 10 seconds before deciding to end without a single question.

When fielding questions, answer fully, yet briefly. This is not the time to dive headfirst into a whole different speech topic. Maintain eye contact with the question-asker while he or she asks the question, but when answering, return to making eye contact with the entire audience.

Note to Self

Do not make up an answer. If you do not know the

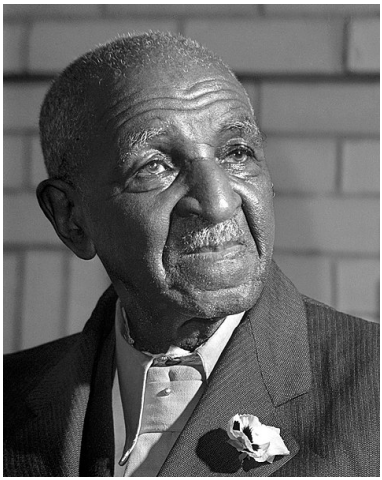
answer to a question, simply say so, and then offer to find out the information for that person. More importantly, actually follow up with the answer later to increase your credibility with that audience.

Speakers who try to bluff their way through a Q&A run the risk of having an audience member who knows the correct answer, in which case, her or his hand will likely immediately go up to correct the speaker, which will hurt credibility.

If someone asks a "gotcha question" designed to entrap or directly points out misinformation from the speech, avoid getting defensive with that audience member. Instead, acknowledge the possibility, be humble, and promise to look further into the matter later. If certain questions end up too far off-topic, it is perfectly acceptable to decline to answer. Consider offering to meet with that audience member afterward to discuss the question.

As the time comes to a close, end the Q&A session even if the audience has further questions. Respect the audience's time, as well as other speakers. Politely announce the end of the Q&A and thank the audience for their time and attention.

CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY



Agricultural scientist and inventor George Washington Carver once stated, "There is no shortcut to achievement. Life requires thorough preparation."

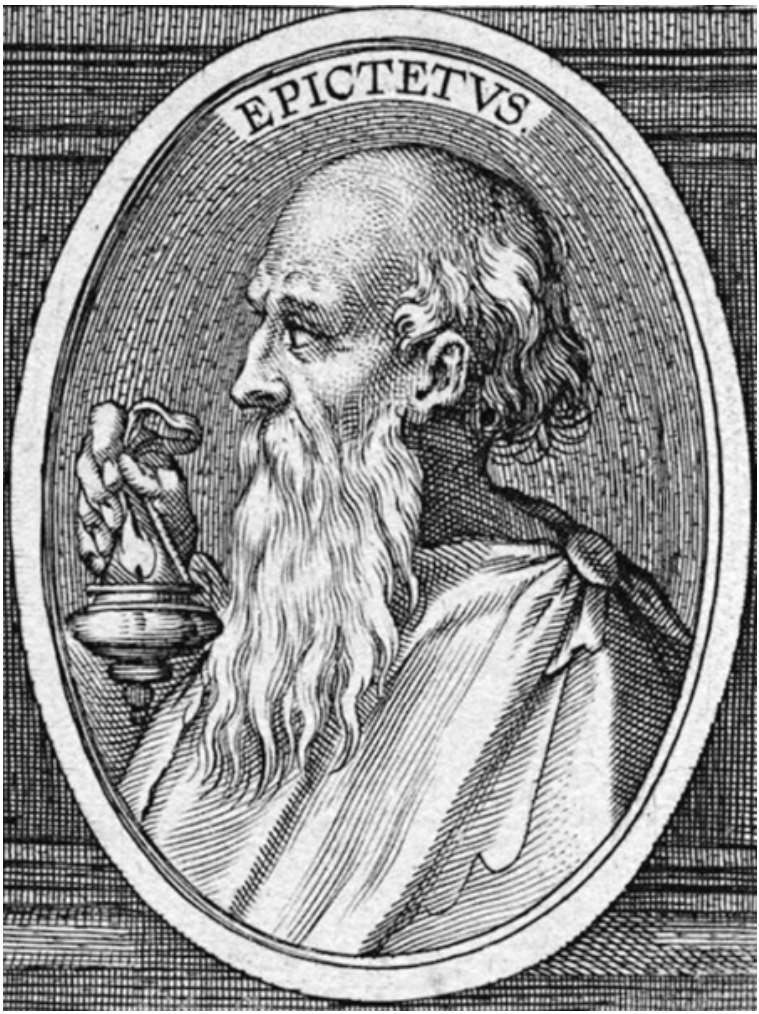
Speakers can memorably connect their message to an audience through careful planning, practice, and strategy regarding how they will deliver that message. Practice and preparation must be undertaken early and often. Start with a minimum of three separate practice sessions. The first session tests the amount of time the speech will take to deliver. The second session transfers the information from the outline to note cards. The third session familiarizes the speaker with his or her notes while working on delivery style. Any and all sessions of practice after that help to refine the delivery and potentially add many of the advanced tips offered in this chapter.

Public speaking and communication in general are learned

skills that require dedication and commitment to refine and perfect.

PART IX
CHAPTER 9

CHAPTER 9: LISTENING SKILLS AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

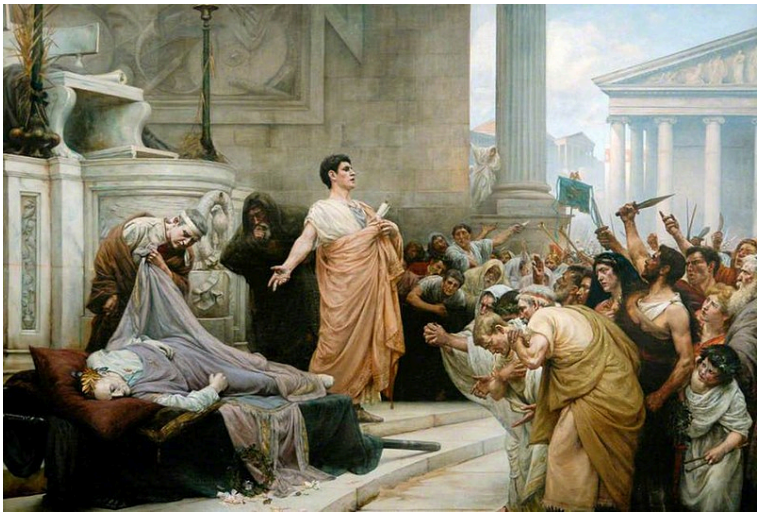


"We have two ears and one mouth so that we may listen twice as much as we speak." —**Epictetus**

Listening effectively provides a challenging task. It acts as essentially one-half of the communication process, yet it remains the more neglected half that fails to get taught or put

into practice. This chapter examines the practice of listening as a learned skill and demonstrates how critical listening in the context of public speaking involves complex processes that people can perfect through practice.

HEARING VS. LISTENING



"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears..." If Brutus and his fellow conspirators in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar listened to this message instead of merely hearing it, they may have acted much differently.

Ever spend time sitting in an audience, "listening" to a speaker, only to realize moments later that the speaker's message has been lost due to a distraction? Most likely yes, because everyday life seems to offer many ways to distract, especially with the rise of digital technological innovations. As a result, attention spans have become fragile and easy to manipulate.

This highlights the difference between hearing and

listening. **Hearing** operates as a passive process. Changes in air pressure in the form of sound waves enter the ear, pass through the ear canal, and vibrate the structures within the ear, creating nerve impulses that get sent to the brain and processed as sound. People do not need to do anything active for this process to take place; as long as the ears function and remain unhindered by barriers such as headphones or earplugs, the sound will register. That explains the practice of hearing. **Listening**, on the other hand, requires individuals to take hearing a step further and process or interpret the sounds they hear. Listening requires an active cognitive component that works with the hearing process.

PREPARING TO LISTEN

As mentioned in Chapter 1, humans listen with a set of preconceptions or filters through which they interpret what they experience. For example, a fanatical devotee to the world of science fiction will likely process everything he or she hears through a science-fiction lens. Likewise, a political junkie will view various experiences through a politically charged viewpoint. To truly listen, people must be willing and able to set aside these preconceptions, at least initially, so that they can take in what they are experiencing nonjudgmentally. People

can analyze the message through their personal frame of reference after they have received the entire message.

Listening requires people to clear their minds of distractions, both external and internal. Focusing on a message can prove challenging when a message competes with a loud air conditioner in the room, a train passing by outside, or noisy next-door neighbors, but it is necessary to decipher the message. Similarly, any internal interference, such as anxiety about a future exam, a job interview, or a fight with a loved one, must get set aside for the time being, or else such distractions will impede listening.

In addition to setting aside filters and distractions, listeners should remain aware of nonverbal signals that they send to the speaker.

Note to Self

While you might be tired or have a sore neck, and your hand and forearm offer you a handy kickstand to rest your head upon, remember how the speaker might view your resting pose: "I must be boring the audience!" Or, you might feel perfectly comfortable tying up your arms in a knot to keep them from dangling about, but to a nervous speaker, your pose

may appear defensive. Lastly, if you are nervous about an upcoming interview or have an urgent appointment after the speech, and you keep glancing up at the clock, to the speaker it may appear as though you cannot wait for the speech to end.

Be aware of how posture, gestures, or facial expressions could possibly be interpreted by the speaker, and practice behavior that remains supportive and attentive.

Recognize that listening is an active process that requires energy. When people listen, their brains perform work and burn calories. The harder people listen and the more effort they expend, the more draining the process can become. This stands in stark contrast to binge-watching an interesting program, where the person acts more passively and simply absorbs the material without contemplation. Critical listening requires listeners to remain alert, undistracted, attentive, and focused. External or internal factors may challenge a person's ability to pay attention, so try to stay aware of these tendencies and attempt to break these habits through self-awareness and empathy.

Activity

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: *https://nic.pressbooks.pub/messagesthatmatter/?p=443#oembed-1*

Watch *Five Ways to Listen Better* by author and orator Julian Treasure, who postulates that people have lost their ability to listen. In a world bombarded by sound and visual stimuli, a person's ability to listen will continues to dwindle. Treasure suggests improving listening skills by sitting in silence for three minutes a day and removing all distractions. Try this exercise. It may prove challenging due to the addictive qualities of cellular phones and social media content. These few minutes of silence may help to, as Treasure calls it, "recalibrate" the listening process to help gain appreciation for the variety of sound that permeates the world.

STRATEGIES FOR LISTENING WELL

As speaking begins, focus on individual portions of the message, rather than examining the overall message itself. Identify main ideas and supporting points. Listen for oral citations that often begin with the phrase "according to…" and evaluate the credibility of the statement. Listen analytically when piecing together all of the components of the speech individually. Consider paraphrasing the speaker's message internally. The average person may speak conversationally at a rate of about 150 words per minute, but the average listener possesses the capability to think at the much faster rate of

around 400–500 words per minute. Taking this into consideration, listeners can use "down time" in between words and sentences to paraphrase speakers' points into their own words, adding to their ability to retain and understand them.

Kinesthetic or tactile learners find taking notes during the speech provides a valuable tool for retaining information, even if they never refer back to those notes again. The physical action of writing the notes helps the brain register and record the consumed information. On the other hand, a visual learner who needs to see the speaker during the presentation may find taking notes detrimental to their ability to listen.

One of the hardest things to do while listening involves resisting distractions. Auditory distractions include a loud fan or buzzing noise, people talking loudly in the hallway, or someone sitting nearby with a cold and the sniffles. Visual distractions may consist of a compelling visual aid left up by the previous speaker, someone with a visually striking outfit or item of clothing seated nearby, or a speaker who wears clothing with a distracting message emblazoned across the front. Physical distractions include hunger, leg cramps, a headache, sinus pressure, or fluctuations in temperature, not to mention the worst distraction of all: a vibrating cell phone! Lastly, mental or internal distractions could impair the ability to

listen. To resist these distractions requires self-discipline and careful preparation before the speech begins. Turn off the phone. Do not arrive to the speech hungry. Set aside distracting thoughts. Use the moment to focus on the art of paying attention on purpose.

Give each and every speaker the benefit of the doubt.

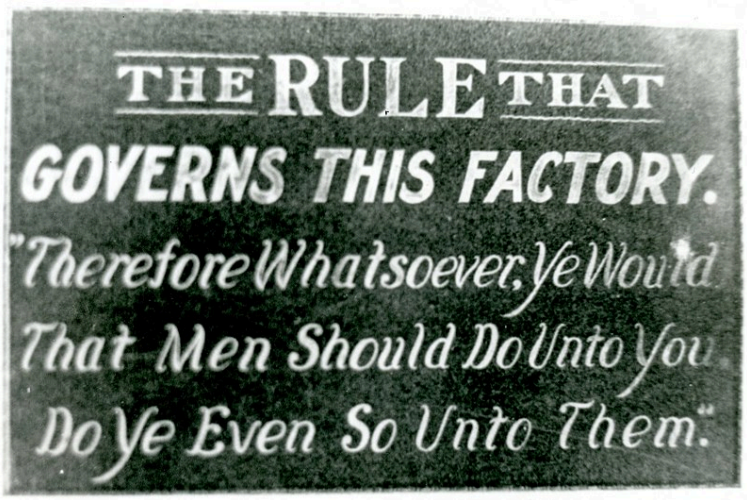
Note to Self

Some speakers may come out with "guns blazing," so to speak, and deliver their message bluntly, almost as though they are trying to get a rise out of the audience. If you tune out these speakers initially, you may not have the wherewithal to notice when they take an unexpected turn or twist. Likewise, if a speaker takes a while to warm up into the speech and you tune out due to boredom, you may miss out on incredibly valuable information that the speaker simply failed to deliver in a sufficient manner.

Keep emotions in check. It is highly likely that a speaker will say something at some point that will evoke a question, and this could easily lead to temptation to dwell on that question, allowing it to ruminate, or circle round and round in the mind.

If this happens, consider writing the point or question down to save it for later. Some speakers skillfully evoke questions that they end up answering later in the speech. This technique requires a lot of practice to perform successfully, but effectively keeps audiences listening closely for the answers.

ACTING AS A RESPECTFUL LISTENER



The Golden Rule suggests that people treat others how they would expect others to treat them, and in public speaking, this rule holds especially true.

Note to Self

Ask yourself, how would you feel if someone leaned over and started talking to a neighbor during your speech? In such a moment of high anxiety, you would likely assume these two people were making fun of you, resulting in a pretty serious distraction. However, the person could have just as likely leaned over to remark on your amazing performance, but when individuals experience high levels of self-doubt, that is the last thing that runs through our minds. Would you want someone texting under the table as you talked, or would that come across as rude and disrespectful? What if someone yawned or fell asleep during your speech? What might that do for your self-esteem? How would you feel in this situation if the roles were reversed?

Electronic Distraction

During speeches, avoid phone, tablet, or laptop use, unless previously arranged with the speaker in advance due to a special and documented accommodation need. With electronic devices, it is almost impossible not to check email, the internet, or social media. Studies indicate that this kind of multitasking impairs learning (Murphy Paul, 2013); once people engage with electronic devices, they no longer pay attention to what happens in the room.

Shouldn't audience members have the choice about whether they want to use their time engaging actively with the material at hand, or whether they would prefer to multitask? After all, they think they are not bothering anyone as they quietly read email or check social media platforms. This assumption has flaws. First, such activity damages the learning

environment for others, even when conducted in silence. A study (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013) found that, not only did the multitasking student in a classroom do worse on a post-class test on the material, so did the peers who could see the computer. In other words, the off-task laptop use distracted not only the laptop user, but also the group of students surrounding the laptop user.

In addition, the speaker can find multitasking on a laptop a bit distracting because sometimes the audience member does not type at the most opportune times. Typing suggests the "listener" has more important things to do than engaging with the topic and listening to the speaker. That thought alone serves to distract the speaker's attention.

Also consider the speaking environment. When working on a laptop, the speaker's attention gets drawn to the back of the computer screen, rather than sustaining eye contact with the user. Learning in communication happens best when everyone actively engages with one another in the exchange of information. This can mean looking up from taking notes to listen, which means making strategic decisions about what to write down. Note taking should support the learning and retention of material; note taking itself does not qualify as learning.

A 2014 study (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014) that got a lot of attention in mainstream press suggests that taking notes by hand rather than typing them on a laptop improves comprehension of the material. While students taking notes

on a laptop (and only taking notes—they were not allowed to multitask) wrote down more of the material covered in class, they often typed what the instructor said verbatim, which seems to have led to them process the material less. Meanwhile, the students taking notes by hand had to synthesize and condense as they wrote because they could not get everything down. As a result, they learned and retained the material better. Handwritten pages also permit the opportunity to easily create visual connections through the use of arrows, flowcharts, etc.

In public speaking scenarios, it's best to break addictive patterns with regard to email, texting, social media, and internet usage. It may seem a bit silly to find it difficult to go for an hour without checking a phone or other electronic devices, but it happens quite often. Modern life offers many distractions, and though checking devices may have become a force of habit, people can use the opportunity as a listener to create or reinforce a habit of not checking them as well.

Provide Encouragement

One of the best ways to support a speaker is to provide solid nonverbal encouragement while staying mindful of the nonverbal messages sent. First, start with eye contact. Full, consistent, and prolonged eye contact tells speakers they have garnered attention. Also, sit up straight or lean forward, as this posture also suggests a higher sense of immediacy or intention to become involved in the communication taking place. If the speaker mentions something agreeable, smile in approval and show support with a head nod, though do not make it appear fake or forced.

Speakers, like many other performers (singers, athletes, dancers, etc.) derive their energy from supportive crowds. When crowds lack energy, it tends to deflate the impact of

the message. The more encouragement the audience provides to the speaker, the more confident the presenter becomes. In return, as the speaker's performance improves with the audience's encouragement, their return on investment grows larger as well, since they witness a much higher caliber of speech.

PEER EVALUATIONS

Learning to evaluate a speaker is a valuable skill to have and should be practiced even beyond a public speaking class. Evaluation employs the skills involved with critical thinking to listen to, dissect, analyze, and critique a message. This provides an opportunity to commend what worked well in the speech, as well as list areas of improvement for future speeches.

Essentially, a peer evaluation serves as a formal critique based on a set of pre-established criteria used to evaluate the speaker. To complete this task requires practice of all that has been laid out within this chapter, including setting aside all distractions,

focusing on individual portions of the speech objectively, and maintaining a laser-sharp focus.

Good evaluators act like good coaches, and a good coach encourages good behaviors. In a quest for excellence, good coaches also point out areas that need improvement. When good coaches can express their opinions accurately with good interpersonal skills, the participants can excel and feel good about that important teaching moment. Encourage good behaviors, and help the speaker become even better in the future.

Note to Self

Here are some points to keep in mind:

1. **Be prepared to evaluate**. Bring peer evaluation forms (if required) to class on speech days. These forms offer invaluable guidance to help evaluate the various components of the basic speech organizational pattern.
2. **Learn how to evaluate correctly early on in the semester**. During speeches, your

evaluations will count toward your grade. Bottom line: learning how to do a proper peer evaluation will not only help your grade, but will also help you become a better speaker!

3. **Know the "criteria" for evaluating speeches**. The criteria are the standards by which you will judge the speech. Look over the assignment objectives and the appropriate evaluation forms for criteria.
4. **Write while the speaker presents the material.** This may seem rude at first, especially if you are not accustomed to note taking. It may seem difficult initially, but you will soon feel that it comes naturally as you learn to listen for and provide constructive feedback. Most students don't take long to become efficient and effective at completing evaluations.
5. **Read over and study the samples at the end of this chapter**. These were taken from actual student evaluations. Use them as a model for your own evaluations.
6. **Use the "3-2-1" method of evaluation**:

    1. Begin by listing **three positive**

aspects of the speech, or three things you think the speaker did very well. Be sure to support these with specific examples. Do not just say, "Good speech," or "I really liked it." Take it further and articulate not only which details you found effective, but why.

2. Follow this up by discussing **two areas that need improvement**. What could the speaker have done better? List and then support your assertions with clear and specific details. How might the speaker improve upon these areas or learn from them for the next speech? For example, if you found the speaker's opening statement rather lackluster, provide a suggestion or strategy for how to improve it, such as, "In future speeches consider opening with something such as a quote or staggering statistic for improved impact." This last component is essential to growth; the speaker must not only know what needs improvement but also how to improve

it.

3. Lastly, include your **overall impression**. If this was an informative speech, how well informed did you feel afterward? How unique and innovative was the speaker's treatment of the topic? How well did the speaker relate the topic to you as an audience member? Again, support this impression with details from the speech itself.

Above all, remember that the peer evaluation process helps others learn from their experiences to become better communicators, so all feedback provided during this process should pursue that purpose. Positive feedback should encourage speakers to capitalize on those strengths. Constructive criticism should not break a speaker down, but instead, point to areas where further development and refinement are required to communicate more effectively.

CHAPTER 9 SUMMARY

Listening is an active process that requires preparation, effort, and commitment—the same skills required for effective public speaking. Listening is vastly different than the passive process of hearing, so take steps to resist or eliminate common distractions and set aside any personal bias. This alone takes practice to develop, refine, and eventually perfect, but through a process of trial and error, this increase in self-awareness leads to becoming a sharp, focused listener.

Also, remember the Golden Rule. Avoid disrespectful behaviors such as side-talking, cell phone interactions, or

falling asleep. Also avoid behaviors that could possibly derail the speaker, such as an unintentional nonverbal signals like folded arms. Be mindful of how a nervous speaker might interpret such nonverbal signals, so focus on activities that support them instead.

Lastly, the process of conducting critical speech evaluations provides listeners with a skill that's useful in many other situations throughout life. Learning to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of a speaker can motivate the evaluator to apply the same concepts to their future speeches.

COMPLETING IN-CLASS PEER EVALUATIONS

At a minimum, **write five comments**: three positive comments and two areas for improvement. Address only one criterion per comment.

- Use a "+" or "–" sign in front of each comment to help identify them easily. Address one criterion per statement.
- Start with a positive comment. Always begin by commenting on a strength.

- Use "you," not "he" or "she."
    - *What is good?* Describe using specific examples.
    - *Why is the behavior positive?* Explain.
- After stressing good aspects of a speech to ensure the person will continue to do what works well, point out two weaknesses/areas of improvement so the person can improve. While pointing out areas of weakness of a speech can help the speaker improve in the future, accompany each comment with a constructive alternative. Be sure to word each comment demonstrating interpersonal skills.
    - *What was not so good?* Describe the behavior using specific examples.
    - *Why was the behavior considered an area of needed improvement?*
    - *How can the speaker improve that behavior?* Give a helpful coaching suggestion.
- Be specific. Study the differences between the two samples provided at the end of this chapter when it comes to specificity. What critique provides more valuable insight? What makes a comment effective or not effective?

SAMPLE 1: GOOD PEER EVALUATION - SPEECH TO INFORM

Speaker: Zeke

Evaluator: Zelda

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER:

Introduction

- Gain attention
- Give audience incentive to listen
- Establish credibility
- Introduce subject; central idea
- Preview main points
- Transition to body

Body

- Clear, well-developed organization
- Sufficient support material
- Related topic to audience
- Oral footnotes
- Transitions between main points

Conclusion

- Signal the end
- Recap main points

COMMENTS

+ When you previewed your main points, I liked how you repeated the phrase, "Alternative schools are…" and then added the point. That is what the text talks about to keep your audience focused. Good job!

+ Your visual aids were well done and followed the guidelines outlined in the book. They added to your speech rather than becoming a speech by themselves.

– You use the phrase "and stuff" like some use the filler "uh." Such fillers become noise interference. You may begin to eliminate that by just becoming aware of it.

– I don't believe you had a real attention getter. In fact, I think you began with a purpose statement, "Today I'm going to talk about…" The text says avoid such starts! Starting with the purpose statement doesn't really pull me into your speech. You've had so many experiences with troubled kids, you could have started with a story—one that connects with us.

+ I really liked the way you followed the speech recipe. When I listened to you, I could follow you easily, especially when you made your transitions clear. You made me think you really wanted us to understand your message.

After listening to this speech, the degree to which I feel informed (1 represents "Not at all," 3 "Somewhat," and 5 "Very"):

1 2 3 4 5

What was the central idea of this

• Clincher **Delivery** • **Eye Contact**: Looked at everyone in audience and held eye contact • **Notes**: Used to jog memory; did not read from notes • **Vocal/Verbal**: Volume, rate, fluency • **Appearance**: Appropriate attire, posture	**speech?** I'm not 100% sure, but I think the C.I. was "Alternative schools have several unique benefits over traditional schools."

SAMPLE 2: POOR PEER EVALUATION - SPEECH TO INFORM

Speaker: Hilda

Evaluator: Jake

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER:

Introduction

- Gain attention – Was OK but could have been better
- Give audience incentive to listen
- Establish credibility – yes
- Introduce subject; central idea – yes
- Preview main points
- Transition to body

Body

- Clear, well-developed organization – OK–I followed it pretty good
- Sufficient support material
- Related topic to audience – OK
- Oral footnotes – Kind of awkward

- Transitions between main points

Conclusion

- Signal the end – ? Needs work!
- Recap main points – Not sure
- Clincher – OK

Delivery – good

- **Eye Contact**: Looked at everyone in audience and held eye contact
- **Notes**: Used to jog memory; did not read from notes
- **Vocal/Verbal**: Volume, rate, fluency
- **Appearance**: Appropriate attire, posture

COMMENTS

After listening to this speech, the degree to which I feel informed (1 represents "Not at all," 3 "Somewhat," and 5 "Very"): 1 2 3 4 5

What was the central idea of this speech? Alternative schools

PART X
CHAPTER 10

CHAPTER 10: DESIGNING AND USING EFFECTIVE VISUAL AIDS

"Create your own visual style...Let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others." —**Orson Welles**

Even the most well-written and carefully crafted speech has the potential to tax an audience's collective attention span. In this media-rich society, images tell stories and help people retain information more effectively than mere words alone. In creative writing, an old saying—Show, don't tell—demonstrates the importance in engaging an audience

to help them see whatever point the author wishes to convey. **Visual aids** serve this critical purpose in public speaking.

First, ruminate on the components of the term, visual aid:

- ***Visual***: *Of, or pertaining to, the sense of sight*
- ***Aid***: *To help, add support, or give relief*

Combining these two terms together suggests that the primary purpose of such a presentation tool is to give visual support to a speaker. All too often, novice or unprepared speakers treat visual aids as though they were the speech itself.

Note to Self

Think back to a time when you witnessed "PowerPoint karaoke"—when a speaker lost your interest because he or she turned away from the audience and, instead, read everything off the screen to you.

Not only does this tend to challenge audience's attention spans, but in the worst cases, it can insult their intelligence. When this happens, the visual aids overtake the speaker as the central focus in the room, meaning that they no longer provide

aid, help, support, or relief, but have become the speech itself. Speakers should strive to create engaging visual aids that will hold the audience's attention and add tremendous value to the main idea behind the message. Keep this in mind when designing visual elements for a speech.

A well-designed set of visual aids offers many advantages over mere words alone. Visual aids enhance:

- **Clarity**: Think about how difficult it would be to explain how to tie a shoe without a visual aid!
- **Interest**: It would be one thing to discuss the after-effects of an oil spill, but another entirely to show images of catastrophic environmental damage.
- **Credibility**: Well-designed visual aids dramatically increase how audiences perceive the credibility (or believability) of a speaker; unfortunately, the inverse equally applies when speakers design poor visual aids, as an audience may perceive the speaker as having far less credibility in that case.
- **Information retention**: Audiences presented with visual representations of information recited orally are considerably more likely to remember that information.
- **Brevity**: Using visual aids can cut down on the amount of time required to explain difficult concepts.
- **Appeal to a broader array of learning styles**: Different people learn in different ways. Some people prefer to learn visually, some through sound, and others

through their sense of touch. Using visual aids when speaking provides an added dimension for the audience by providing elements that will enhance their ability to retain the information presented.

TYPES OF VISUAL AIDS

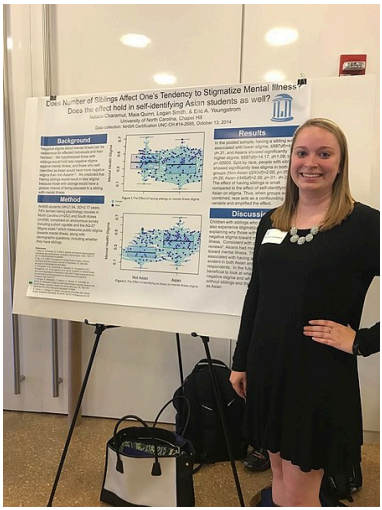
Before designing visual aids for a speech, do not forget about the importance of thinking about the best type of medium to use to communicate the message. Some media may work better than others, depending upon the subject matter or desired effect of the speech. Ultimately, visual aids can be divided into two major types: active and passive visual aids. Speakers use and interact with an **active visual aid** throughout the presentation of information. For instance, when someone discusses how a car's engine works while utilizing the actual

engine as a visual aid. A **passive visual aid**, for the most part, remains in the background during the presentation, but its presence in the room still adds value to the information, such as an image of a person being displayed on a screen while the speaker talks about that person.

Generally, speakers want to utilize more active visuals than passive, but the ratio of active to passive visuals will depend upon the topic of discussion.

Poster Boards, Flip Charts, and Tri-Folds

Poster boards have their time, place, and purpose, but when attempting to establish credibility, speakers need to think critically about the impressions each visual aid imparts on the audience.

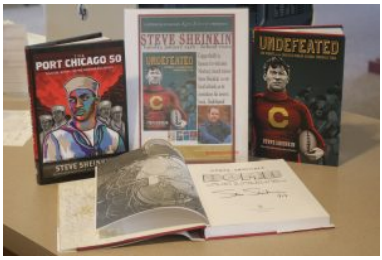


Though the speaker obviously put a lot of effort into creating this visual aid, do you think an audience would find it useful during a public speaking engagement?

A poster board made at home with markers and cut-outs from a magazine simply will not do the job; a professionally printed poster has a more likely chance of creating a positive impression. However, creating such posters are fairly expensive in comparison with other visual options, so use a poster board or tri-fold as a last resort or when no other option will suffice. For example, a poster would likely work well at a convention or trade show, which would allow passers-by to stop and review information for themselves, up close, at their leisure. They could also work in a smaller meeting with limited access to electronic media. Everyone in the meeting

could easily view the poster, but for larger audiences and rooms, however, posters simply will not work.

Static Displays



A static display offers a visual accompaniment to the presented information, and serves mostly as a passive visual aid. For example, while delivering a biographical speech on a well-known author, a speaker could set up a static display of some of her or his most popular books on a table near the center of the room. This adds value to the presentation because it adds listener interest and reinforces the speech's subject matter.

Maps

When discussing a location that may be unfamiliar to members of the audience, consider using a map to show the location. For example, if a speaker discussed how to take a family road trip with an audience, he or she could use a map as an active visual aid to explain the process of designing a route, which would effectively reinforce the topic's main point. Speakers can use maps for anything from explaining historical trade routes to how to navigate to a scenic hiking path. When incorporating a map, be sure to avoid overcomplicating the visual. This keeps listeners from straining to read captions.

Graphs/Charts

Graphs and charts present a highly effective method for showing an audience how statistics and figures affect them personally. As with maps, remember to keep them simple and clear, allowing the listeners to digest all the information at once.

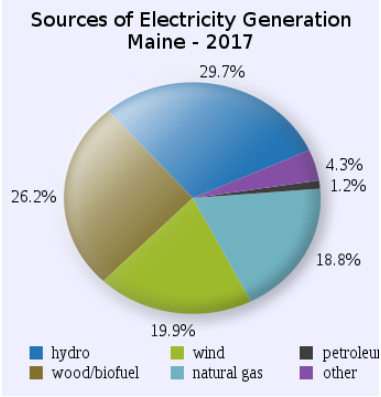


Figure 10.1 Sample Pie Chart

A **pie chart** uses regions of a circle to show how the proportion of each component represents the whole. Use this type of graph to show how elements relate to one another, giving the audience an idea of size and relationship.

A **line graph** is a useful type of visual aid to show trends over time. An effective line graph must have a clearly labeled x- and y-axis, along with data labels showing how the numbers change over time.

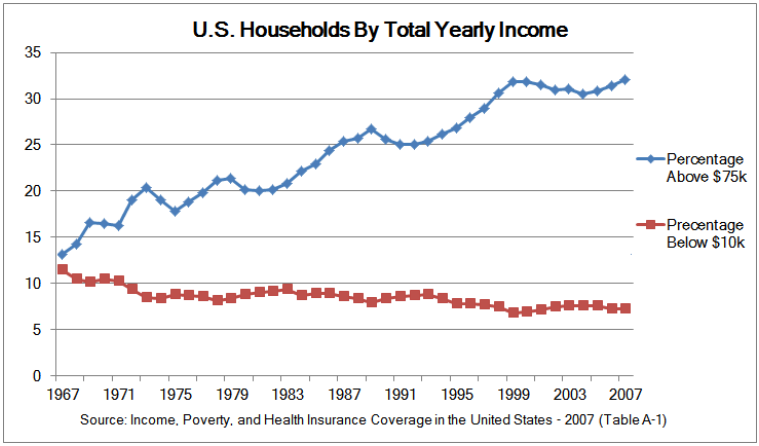


Figure 10.2. Sample Line Graph

A **bar graph** effectively demonstrates quantity relationships between items (as with pie charts) and and how things can change over time (as with a line graph). Bar graphs present a method for potentially detailing a large and complex amount of information using a single image.

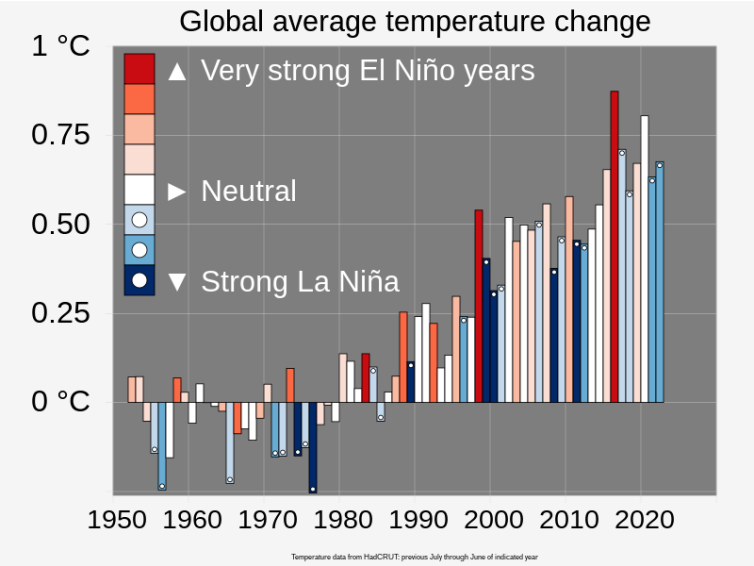


Figure 10.3. Sample Bar Graph

Physical Objects

An object, whether large or small, can bring an element of presence to the visual presentation of information. It is one thing to present a picture of the topic of discussion on a two-dimensional screen, but it is another to allow the audience to physically see the object in question.

For example, in a speech on breast cancer and early detection, a student utilized a set of marbles of varying sizes to show the audience the scale of real-life tumor sizes when discussing breast cancer detection. The student walked the samples around the room as she talked, allowing listeners to see

what she discussed, before returning to the front of the room, where she displayed the very same marbles using a picture on the screen. Had this student only used the visual on the screen, the audience may have had difficulty formulating a sense of proportion when discussing the size of the items in question. Since size represented the most important characteristic of the visual aid, this student thought critically about how best to present it.

Avoid passing around physical objects during the speech unless absolutely necessary. When most listeners receive an object, their attention span is broken momentarily, causing them to miss out on potentially important information in the speech. Instead, as in the example above, presenters could walk around with the object, still allowing everyone the opportunity to see it, but maintain focus on the speaker.

Video/Audio

If one believes the old saying, "A picture is worth 1,000 words," then a brief video clip can be worth 100,000 words! For example, if delivering a speech about the importance of supporting a specific charity, look into the charity to determine if they have a brief promotional

Helpful Hint

When using video or audio clips, try to keep the clip length to less

than 10% of the total amount of time for the speech. For a 10-minute speech, keep the total time of clip(s) to one minute or less. For an hour, keep them to less than 10 minutes total.

video or commercial to supplement the main talking points within the presentation.

When using a clip, preface it with some sort of introduction, pointing the audience in the right direction and priming them to watch for or listen for specific information. Also, avoid talking over the sound in a clip, as competing for the audience's attention during such a viewing could prove difficult at best.

Handouts or Leave-Behinds

A handout is something, usually printed material, given to audience members to remind them of what they learned during the presentation. Sometimes, these are called "leave-behinds." For example, in a speech on the science behind chocolate chip cookies, the speaker might want to hand out a copy of a favorite recipe. If speaking on donating blood, a handout might include a summary of the steps involved and where audience members can go to donate blood. Regardless of the leave-behind, be sure that, as with physical objects, that

they do not get passed out during the speech, as they can create an unneeded distraction.

Yourself

When can the speaker become the visual aid? Consider a speech on firefighting. Such a student could show up in full protective gear, and although it would likely feel pretty hot for that student to deliver the full speech in uniform, it would provide for a powerful visual aid. Similarly, a student doing a speech on yoga may choose to demonstrate certain poses and may want to dress appropriately to do so.

Note to Self

In addition to yourself, there may be times when you need a volunteer's help, such as in demonstrations of martial arts techniques or, as one student courageously attempted, a blood draw to

demonstrate phlebotomy. Be cautious in using other people (or animals) as they could become problematic or unpredictable. Always have a backup plan, just in case, and be sure to prearrange any volunteer activities to ensure smooth operation and use as little time used as possible.

POWERPOINT/PREZI

Presentation software, such as PowerPoint or Prezi, allows relative newcomers to design to create powerful and engaging visual aids of all types. Tools such as Prezi often offer free access for educational purposes and can offer a fresh, unique take on the classic presentation slides. However, it can come with a much steeper learning curve, though they offer pre-made templates available for use. Other free open-source presentation software options include Google Slides and LibreOffice. Many of these offer simplified design templates and provide video tutorials on getting started.

PowerPoint/Prezi Tips

Regardless of the software used, make all elements on a slide

large enough to be seen by anyone in the room, also referred to as "aiming for back-row comprehension." Make the font choices easy and large enough to read without making the audience squint. In general, choose fonts for screen projection that do not have serifs, such as Arial, Verdana, or Tahoma. Exotic fonts or word art can be used to accent the presentation, but don't overdo it. Other tips include:

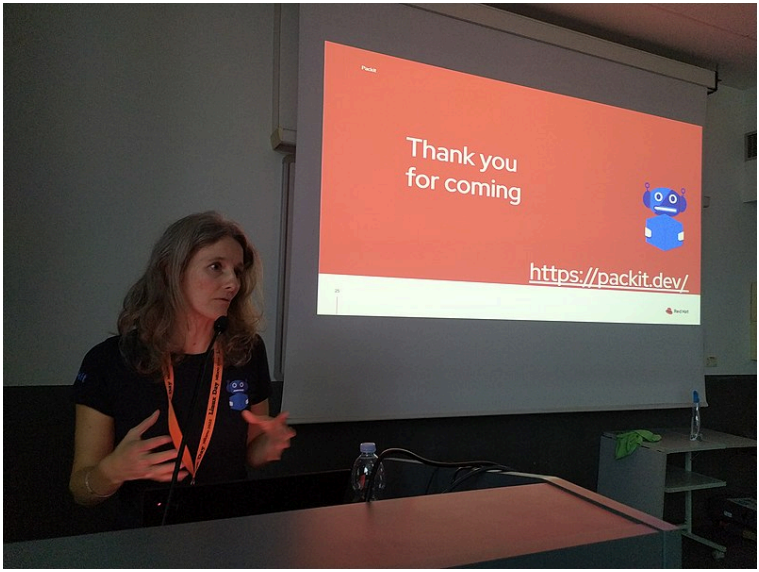
- **Make it simple**. Too many novice speakers try to do too much with their visual aids when something simple would have done the job just as well. Do more with less.
- **Make it clear**. Try not to assume the audience will "get" the point of the speech. Make sure to fill in the blanks with missing information and leave nothing open to random interpretations.
- **Make it consistent**. Avoid changing up the slide design, background, animations, or font styles halfway through the speech.
- **Think critically about the chosen colors**. A bright white background with plain black text may look simple, but for listeners up front, it may strain their eyes. Similarly, a black background with red text without sufficient contrast could be difficult to see.
- **Use images wherever possible, instead of text**. A picture is worth 1,000 bulleted points!
- **Do not use images for decoration**. All images chosen should support the information presented in the speech,

whether they do so actively or passively.

- **Avoid using disturbing or offensive photos.** They might evoke a strong emotional reaction from the audience. If it is necessary to use graphic images, first, warn the audience before showing them. This helps them overcome the shock factor and pay attention instead to the message. Second, do not display them for any longer than necessary to make the desired impact. Once speakers gross someone out or overly shock them, they have lost their attention for the remainder of the speech. There is a fine line between shock value and shock overload.

Note to Self

Ask someone to look over your images to give you an outsider's perspective and help determine whether a photo adds value to your speech or whether it becomes a distraction.



- **Keep to a single message per slide**. Make sure that the slide matches the topic of discussion.
- **Use the 5 × 7 rule (or 5 × 5 or 6 × 6, depending upon the specific professor's advice) rule**: Avoid having excessive lines of text on each slide (5–6 lines total. This general rule helps prevent slides from becoming too wordy.
- **Use black slides in between points as filler slides**. This can help prevent the blinding light from the projector.
- **Don't allow the slides to take the place of the speaker**. If the audience becomes too focused on the visual aids and the speaker fades into the background, then the visuals have no longer provided aid but have

stolen the spotlight.

- **Use only high-resolution images.** To avoid pixilation, fill the space on each slide with the image.
- **Do not talk to the screen**. There is a natural human tendency for people to look in the same direction as others in their vicinity, so when the audience looks up at the screen, resist the urge to turn toward the screen as well. However, maintain eye contact with the audience while explaining the visual, or at least as much as possible.

Note to Self

If you must look, try not to turn your whole body away from the audience and look only briefly, for about 1–2 seconds. Helpful tip: Plant your foot that is closest to your visual aid solidly. When you look back at your visual, leave your foot planted, and you will naturally spring back toward the audience.

- **Use progressive revelation.** When using multiple lines of text on a slide, reveal only one point at a time. By doing so, only one subpoint get revealed at a time,

helping to build suspense and maintain attention.

WHEN/WHERE TO USE VISUAL AIDS

Try using visual aids at key, critical, or confusing points in the message. Consider using a powerful visual aid when attempting to gain attention in the beginning of the speech. In addition, using visual aids during transitions can prove quite effective. Think of these visual aids as mini attention getters to keep the audience engaged with the material. Visual aids can also be used to clarify difficult, complex, or potentially confusing information, as well as to reinforce main ideas.

Be mindful of how well the audience can see the visual aids. It may become necessary to move furniture or objects around

to ensure every audience member can easily view the visual information.

PLAN EVERYTHING

Even the greatest speakers make mistakes, but the hallmark of a great speaker rests in how well he or she adapts when such mistakes occur. For example, if the battery to a presentation remote fails mid-speech, a great speaker has already thought of the "what ifs" and adapts accordingly, walking calmly over to the computer keyboard and using the space bar to advance the slides instead, without skipping a beat. Or, in the worst-case scenario, perhaps a projector light bulb burns out and a speaker has only brought a PowerPoint presentation. A great speaker will have a backup plan in place, having brought printed copies of the slides to hand out in such a situation. While handouts might not seem ideal and break the rule of handing things out during the speech, they offer a better

alternative than having no visuals at all. Additionally, as the audience sees this level of preparation and foresight, it automatically increases the perceived level of credibility.

Test all technology *before* the presentation. Often, what works on a personal computer at home may not work on the computer available at the presentation venue. Differences in operating systems such as Mac vs. Windows, versions of presentation software, or even different browsers (Firefox vs. Chrome vs. Safari) can cause drastic differences in the way a presentation appears (or even whether or not it will function). Not only should speakers test everything before speaking, but they should also preset the system volume, ensure all links to outside media work, and have a backup plan ready in case of a system failure.

CHAPTER 10 SUMMARY

Remember that a visual aid's primary purpose is to assist the speaker in delivering the core meaning of a message. They should supplement the message, working with the speaker rather than against them. Too many speakers try to make visual aids (especially PowerPoint) overly complex in an attempt to wow their audiences, but end up missing the mark because audiences often become overwhelmed by flashy visual aids. Start with a well-written speech and design visual aids around the core of the message, focusing all efforts on designing visuals that will clarify the message, add credibility to the presentation, and provide the audience with a memorable visual experience. Above all, when inserting a visual aid, ask if the presentation benefits from its inclusion. Will it help further the specific purpose and reinforce the central idea? If the answer is no, throw it out. Do more with less.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Dribbble**—https://dribbble.com/
- **Prezi**—http://www.prezi.com
- **Six Minutes Blog**—http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/contrast-repetition-alignment-proximity

PART XI

PART III - CHAPTER 11

Chapters 11 and 12 outline how to prepare for speeches to persuade.

CHAPTER 11: PERSUASION THEORIES

"They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel." —**Maya Angelou**

The first two parts of this book have covered strategies and techniques for preparing to speak informatively to audiences. The final portion focuses on speaking to persuade. Whereas an informational speech seeks to impart new, unique, and innovative messages to an audience, persuasive speaking takes it a step further by attempting to influence audience members' ways of thinking or motivate them to action. In this respect,

the art of persuasion requires careful planning and strategic composition, as well as delivery, to succeed. This chapter will explain why some strategies work and why others fail, as well as cover tips for refining an audience analysis to work more efficiently for a persuasive presentation.

People use **persuasion** to influence another person's values, beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. When thinking about persuasion, note the difference between *influence* and *power*.

Note to Self

A professor may threaten to fail you if you do not complete an important assignment, but if you choose not to do it anyway, then, despite the professor's attempt to exercise power, he or she has not necessarily persuaded you to complete the assignment. Influence often remains divorced from power. Unlike direct measures, influence can come across as subtle, often so subtle as to barely get noticed. The same professor could choose not to employ power tactics to convince you to complete the paper, but instead, share with you the benefits of the paper on your education, as well as the consequences tied to not completing the

assignment, leaving the decision to you. In that case, the information may compel you enough to influence your decision to act in the way the professor wanted you to act.

Persuading others is truly an art form, which, when wielded properly and ethically, wields a unique power of its own—the power of communication that can change the world, even if it only changes it one person at a time.

SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND PERSUASION

Before diving too deeply into persuasion theory (which is regularly offered as a full semester-long college course in communication studies), this chapter will examine the different types of specific purposes available to choose from within the domain of persuasion.

Speech to influence belief or attitude: In this type of speech, the speaker attempts to win over audience members to adopt a thought, attitude, or belief.

For example, if a speaker felt passionately about climate change, she could present facts, figures, and examples, before working toward a conclusion attempting to persuade the audience that climate change poses a serious problem. Keep in mind that changing deeply held beliefs provides an extremely difficult challenge in any situation, let alone a 10-minute speech.

Speech to influence behavior: This type of speech uses the elements of persuasive speaking to inspire the audience to participate in some action as a result. Using the prior example, if the speaker wanted to convince the audience that, not only is climate change a real phenomenon, but that they should begin carpooling to help curb carbon emissions, then the speaker has spoken to influence behavior. This type of speech sometimes gets referred to as a speech to motivate to action.

Regardless of the speech's specific purpose, get to know the audience before preparing a persuasive presentation. Failure to

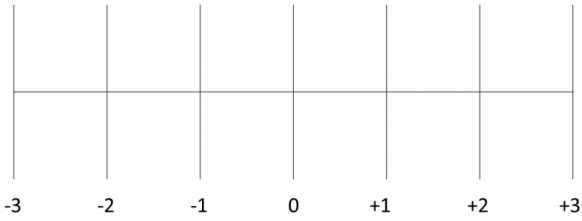
gather knowledge about the audience diminishes the speech's chances to successfully persuade. With persuasion, learning information about the audience become even more critically important, for an audience will not change their minds, take action, or become inspired if the speaker knows nothing about their existing attitudes, opinions, values, or beliefs. Start with an audience analysis, but this time, focus on gathering attitudes, opinions, values, and beliefs with respect to the chosen topic. Use this information to formulate a strategy for the speech.

Note to Self

For example, if you have an audience that strongly opposes the information you want to present to them, then you know you need to prepare for an uphill battle, so try considering the most realistic strategy possible.

PERSUASIVE STRATEGY

The following example below showcases a **semantic differential scale**, which might not look like much, but serves as a useful tool for a persuasive speaker:



The numbers represent levels of agreement, with strongly disagree (–3) at one end, neutral (0) in the middle, and strongly agree (+3) at the opposite end. When designing audience analysis questions, use something similar to this to determine what attitude the audience currently holds regarding the topic. An example question may look like this:

Climate change is a scientific certainty (circle one):

Strongly Disagree (-3) **Disagree** (-2)

Somewhat Disagree (-1) **Neutral** (0) **Somewhat Agree** (+1) **Agree** (+2) **Strongly Agree** (+3)

After collecting the completed audience surveys, simply add up the total responses for each segment along the scale. Then, divide each result by the total participants in the survey to find out the percentages for each one. From there, use this information to determine the best strategy to present the message.

Strongly Opposed (–3)

For an audience that (unfortunately) registers toward the strongly opposed side of the semantic differential scale, try to create uncertainty in their minds. At this point, accept that, no matter how effectively the message gets delivered, the audience may be too firmly entrenched in their beliefs to convince them to act upon something related to the topic. Think realistically and only attempt to create an element of uncertainty. Plant a seed for the future that may one day grow into a full-fledged idea. Provide the audience with information that will sway them to adopt the viewpoint.

"I know you haven't given me an allowance before, and I know I haven't done much to earn one, but that could all change. I'm not opposed to working to earn an allowance, so maybe this is something we could discuss."

Moderately Opposed (–2)

For audiences not entirely opposed to the idea, first seek to create uncertainty in their opposition, as above, but then follow that up with attempts to reduce resistance to the proposed topic. Spend energy on refuting objections.

"Perhaps you think I am not responsible enough to complete my chores, but I've already made my bed and fed the dog. Or, maybe you don't think you have enough money to pay me allowance; however, you will actually save money. I know I'm not going to convince you to give me

an allowance of $20 a week right now, but perhaps you could consider meeting me in the middle at $10 a week."

Neutral or Weak Opinions (−1, 0, +1)

For relatively unknown topics, the audience may end up somewhere along the midpoint of the semantic differential scale, having either neutral/no opinions, or they may slightly lean to one side or the other. In such cases, ignore the previous two strategies and begin striving for actual changes in attitude and behavior. Simply put, if the audience has no opinion, the speaker can provide them with information leading to opinion shift resulting in behavioral or attitude change. Spend energy on explaining the problem.

"You know, Mom, I was just thinking the other day about the possibility of earning an allowance. Right now, any time I want to buy something, you have to buy it for me. If I had an allowance, I wouldn't have to bug you for money."

Moderately Favorable (+2)

Public speaking starts getting more fun when dealing with audiences that register on the positive end of the scale. When an audience already holds a moderately favorable attitude toward the presented material, then all the speaker needs to do is amplify their attitudes. Focus on showing the audience why the solution provided offers the most desirable outcome. Use inspiration to craft a masterful message.

"I've really been enjoying helping out around the house lately, Mom. I always feel so accomplished whenever I finish a chore, but, as I was thinking about it, I remembered that there was this sort of expensive toy I really wanted to start saving for, so what are the

chances I might be able to earn some money for the chores I've been doing?"

Highly Favorable (+3)

The ideal setting for a public speaker as the speech resembles the proverbial "pep rally." At this point, the audience is ready to commit to action, so it is merely a matter of capitalizing on those attitudes to gain behavior or action. As with the previous step, begin by amplifying attitudes before connecting those attitudes to the desirable action they need to take.

"Remember when you mentioned the other day how proud of me you were for all the work I've been doing around the house lately, Mom? Also, remember when you were mentioning to Dad how you would like to teach me how to save money? Well, do I have a suggestio

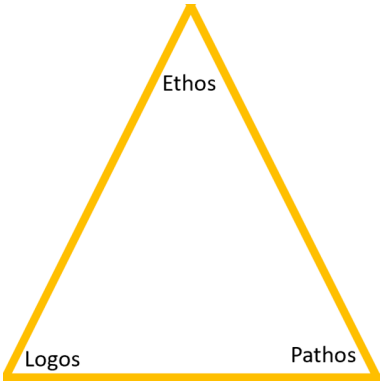
n for you..."

Knowing these strategies in advance help speakers devise a suitable message for a particular audience, whatever its current beliefs may be. Approaching a strongly opposed audience overconfidently and seeking to get them to commit to action is doomed from the beginning. Likewise, approaching a strongly favorable audience sheepishly and attempting to reduce their resistance to the idea will quickly lose their attention. Match the level of persuasive approach to the level of audience agreement. Refer to Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Persuasive Strategies

LEVEL OF AUDIENCE AGREEMENT	*PERSUASIVE STRATEGY*
Strongly Opposed	Plant the Seed. Provide information.
Moderately Opposed	Refute objections.
Neutral or Uninformed	Explain the issue.
Moderately Favorable	Show why your solution is most desirable.
Highly Favorable	Get the audience to take action.

RHETORICAL TRIANGLE



Over 2,300 years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle developed a three-pronged strategy for persuading others. He suggested that speakers employ a careful balance of all three vertices of his rhetorical triangle to achieve effective and successful persuasion. He labeled the three elements of that triangle as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, which students have probably encountered before in a writing class at some point. Looking at each concept individually will help demonstrate how each fits together with respect to persuasion in oral communication.

ETHOS

The 2002 film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* reminded audiences that many words in the English language derive from the Greek language, and their word **ethos** forms the basis for several words, including ethics, ethology, and ethnicity. Literally translated from the Greek, it means "spirit" or "character" and forms the basis of a speaker's credibility or persona. A speaker's ethos essentially represents **personal appeal**, or how an audience views a speaker or the speaker's image that he or she portrays outwardly. Think of ethos as the first impression imparted by a speaker.

Note to Self

Ask yourself these questions to help think critically about how to establish a solid ethos:

- *How will you generate respect from your audience?*

- *How will you create a connection or rapport with your audience?*
- *How will you build trust with your audience?*

To begin, one way to gain the respect of an audience is to establish expertise, a reputation, or a closeness with respect to the topic. Biology majors speaking about biological pathogens should establish their experience in the beginning of a speech. If a person with extensive experience working on cars speaks about changing oil, he or she better explain that early in the speech as well. Speakers discussing the dangers of drunk driving who have unfortunately lost a close family member to the practice forge a that closeness that can earn the audience's respect if they reveal that detail about themselves.

Secondly, generate rapport with the audience by seeking out similarities with them. Students talking to students should use that knowledge to their advantage. Be sure to adapt to the "style" of the audience, similar to the way a chameleon changes color to adapt to its environment. This includes adapting the style of the visual aids, the language used, clothing and

appearance, and even mannerisms to reflect the audience. Essentially, the more similarities the audience notices between the speaker and themselves, the easier the speaker will find it to establish rapport.

Trust remains one of the most difficult items regarding ethos to build and maintain. Begin the quest to earn trust before the audience can even begin to formulate a first impression. Show up early. Dress for the occasion. The way a speaker looks will make a strong first impression. Be prepared, and demonstrate that readiness in advance. Stand tall and confidently (even if nervous—revisit Chapter 2 for techniques to help moderate this) to establish credibility early in the speech (third step in the introduction) and do so sincerely. While progressing through the speech, use easily identifiable stories to illustrate the main points, and even better, share personal stories to help the

audience form a connection. Use familiar language to avoid overwhelming the audience with an impressive vocabulary; using "big words" can often turn an audience away. Reference the people in the audience, such as referring to an earlier speech, highlighting similarities or parallels between the topics, or referencing the audience survey, if possible.

Note to Self

Above all, speak with conviction, for if you don't believe yourself, why should your audience?

Trust is built one step at a time, but combining these seemingly minor details together interlock with one another to build a trustworthy and inherently believable sense of ethos.

PATHOS

Pathos, like ethos, inspired a significant number of words in the English language, such as pathogen, pathetic, pathological, sympathy, empathy, apathy, and many more, all derived from the Greek for "suffering" or "experience." Pathos refers to **emotional appeal** in the context of the rhetorical triangle. Human beings act as highly emotive animals, and they base their decisions primarily on their emotions. In fact, almost all decision making takes place in the limbic brain, which is responsible for those "gut feelings" and yet, this region of the brain has no capacity for language. For public speakers, this

means that tapping into the audience's emotions can persuade them to take just about any action desired. However, that also means pathos is often the most easily manipulated of the three components of the rhetorical triangle.

To begin thinking about how to utilize emotional appeals in a persuasive speech, first consider how the central idea ties to specific emotions, as well as how each individual main point evokes emotion. For example, a speaker wanting to persuade people to work on their public speaking delivery would not name the speech "How to speak in public better" when naming it "How to conquer your fears of public speaking" evokes a much stronger emotional response.

Note to Self

Always try to find the emotional tie-in with the material you plan on presenting by asking yourself, "How do I want my audience to feel about this?"

Next, think about the emotions evoked by the language within the speech, for certain words have stronger emotional connotations, such as the difference between "injured veteran" and "wounded warrior." Language can potentially frame the message in such a way as to encourage development of certain

emotions in the audience. Consider the use of rich analogies and/or metaphors here as well, such as stating "Terrified, you suddenly feel like you're drowning in quicksand," versus saying "When fear hits, you feel as though you cannot move."

As with establishing ethos, using stories can also build an emotional connection to the message. Consider the difference between two speeches on cancer, where one revealed nothing but facts and statistics to demonstrate advancements in cancer research, while the other one told deeply rich and emotionally heavy stories about people who had survived bouts with cancer thanks to research breakthroughs. Which one would potentially be more moving to convince an audience to donate money to research? Odds are, the money goes to the speaker who told the most compelling story.

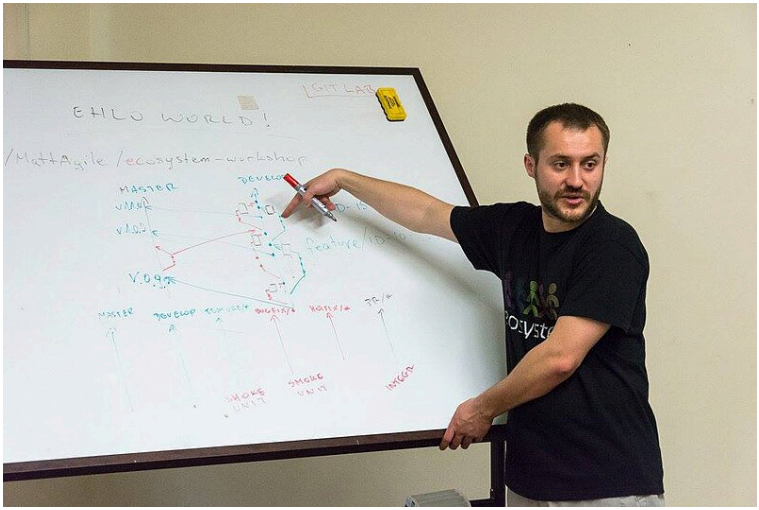
Not only can speakers make that connection through the usage of stories, but they can also enhance pathos through the variety of visual aids displayed during the presentation. Imagine telling the story of a cancer survivor and seeing images of that person going through treatment, only to come out the other side of that treatment looking happy, healthy, and surrounded by loved ones. When people can see such emotions being played out in front of them instead of simply having

information told to them, they naturally feel a significantly greater connection to the topic.

Above all, when dealing with pathos, be genuine and authentic, not forced. Speakers should allow their emotions to come through in their delivery. The vocal tone should match the level of emotion the speaker wishes to convey. Speakers with a heavier, serious, or somber topic should slow down their speaking rate, and be deliberate about how serious they sound. On the other end of the spectrum, speakers intending to deliver a more upbeat, positive, and happy speech might want to avoid sounding as monotonic as the high school teacher in the classic 1980s film, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off.*

Lastly, when it comes to intentionally deciding which emotions to evoke, consider this: associate the message and its point of view with positive emotions (happiness, satisfaction, contentment, love, belonging, etc.), while lumping competing perspectives with more negative emotions (guilt, fear, obligation, jealousy, sadness, disappointment, etc.).

LOGOS



Logos, as with the previous two Greek words, provides the English language with several words, with the most obvious one being logic. Literally translated, logos means "word" or "to reason." People use logos to invoke logical, rational arguments to make an **appeal to reason**. The most important element to logos is whether or not the argument makes sense to the audience. Establishing strong logos involves using credible facts, statistics, and evidence that supports the various claims of the speaker.

Sometimes people find themselves subjected to a persuasive

argument that did not make much sense, leaving them wondering why they became persuaded at all. Perhaps a salesperson convinced them to purchase a product that they would never likely use, leaving them wondering how the salesperson arrived at the conclusion that it would be a natural fit. This offers a glimpse pf what it feels like to experience arguments based in poorly constructed logos.

Types of Reasoning

To construct well-reasoned logos, understand the two types of reasoning people may use to develop arguments: inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, **inductive reasoning** is:

> ...an argument that is intended by the arguer merely to establish or increase the probability of its conclusion. In an inductive argument, the premises are intended only to be so strong that, if they were true, then it would be unlikely that the conclusion is false.

For example:

- Two witnesses claimed they saw Eric commit the murder.
- Eric's fingerprints are the only ones on the murder weapon.
- Eric confessed to the crime.
- Therefore, Eric committed the murder.

Though unlikely, certain scenarios exist where Eric did not commit the murder. **Deductive reasoning**, on the other hand, tends to be more grounded and possible to prove true. According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, a deductive argument is:

> ...an argument that is intended by the arguer to be (deductively) valid, that is, to provide a guarantee of the truth of the conclusion provided that the argument's premises (assumptions) are true. This point can be expressed also by saying that, in a deductive argument, the premises are intended to provide such strong support for the conclusion that, if the premises are true, then it would be *impossible* for the conclusion to be false.

For example :

- All members of the Honor Society must have a 3.8 GPA or higher.
- Sarah is the a member of the Honor Society.
- Therefore, Sarah must have a GPA of 3.8 or higher.

Deductive reasoning, therefore, offers a more concrete way of arriving at logical conclusions, whereas audiences will often use inductive reasoning in response to a deductive argument when they create objections to the speaker's reasoning.

To explain this concept using a real-life scenario, pretend a speaker is trying to convince an audience to try a new weight loss program or diet:

- This new diet will reduce your hunger. (Premise A)
- This reduction in hunger will reduce the amount you eat. (Premise B)
- Reducing the amount you eat will result in weight loss. (Premise C)
- This new diet will, as a result, cause weight loss. (This is a sound, deductive conclusion that must be true if premises A, B, and C are true.)

While using sound, concrete deductive reasoning, what could the audience be thinking?

- 

  "Every time I have tried something like this in the past, I failed miserably." (Premise D)
- "This new program is just like those failed diets."

(Premise E)

- "This new diet will fail miserably." (This is a reasonable inductive conclusion drawn from premises D and E.)

Because the audience based their conclusion on strongly ingrained emotional experiences tied to failure, it presents a high degree of pathos and probably outweighs the strength of any deductive conclusion. If the audience has to resolve conflicting emotional conclusions, then they will look for flaws amid the speaker's arguments, often resulting in imaginary flaws that do not even exist. Regardless of the sound deductive conclusion, the audience will doubt the premises:

- "But I'm always hungry when I am on a diet!" (Counters premise A)
- "But if I reduce how much I eat, I won't have enough energy to exercise, and I'll gain weight anyway!" (Counters premise C)

How could a speaker remain persuasive in this challenging scenario?

Note to Self

Remember, that in persuasion, your success depends greatly on your ability to make your argument stronger while, at the same time, making opposing arguments sound weaker.

A speaker has a couple of options:

- Boost the argument by providing supporting facts, research, or even a personal success story with the new diet program.
- *Show* why this new program is unlike past failures.

If successful, the speaker would cast a shadow of doubt on premise E, and therefore, the audience's entire inductive argument.

ADDRESSING OBJECTIONS

Speakers must remain vigilant to address potential objections, rather than allowing them to take root in the audience's minds to create barriers to the persuasive message. The longer the speaker allows an objection to sit and ruminate (or swim about inside an audience member's head), the greater the chance that objection will prevent that listener from becoming persuaded.

Note to Self

Ask yourself the following question to determine which objections to address: Why would any member of my audience not want to take this action or adopt this position?

For example, speakers attempting to convince their audience to take additional courses in communication studies to improve their skills in interaction with others and build a stronger résumé would need to consider all of the possible reasons why someone would not want to take these classes, which may include:

- "I'm terrified of public speaking."
- "There's not enough room in my schedule with all other degree requirements."
- "I'm not a communication major."

Any speaker could discover these objections fairly easily with the right audience analysis (see Chapter 4), and once known, compose refutations to these objections to include in the

speech as a way of heading off objections before they can take root, as follows:

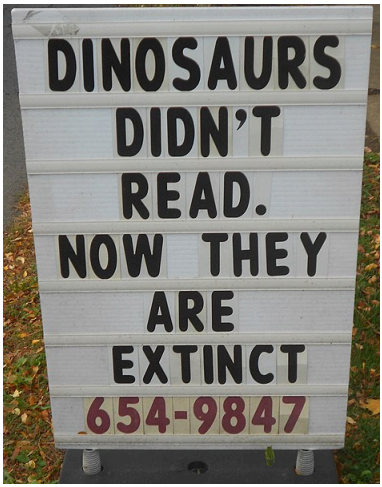
- "Not all communication classes focus on public speaking. In fact, most courses, outside the public speaking course, focus on in-class discussions, writing papers, and performing fascinating activities outside of class."
- "Students can use communication courses to fulfill a wide variety of degree requirements, including social sciences, arts and humanities, and of course, oral communication."
- "You don't need to be a communication major to refine your communication skills, seeing as how, regardless of industry, all employers consistently rank communication skills as their #1 most desired soft skill in a potential employee."

Syllogisms

Syllogisms and fallacies relate very differently to public speaking versus writing an argumentative essay. A **syllogism** is typically defined as a deductive argument with two premises and one conclusion, essentially the most basic kernel/nugget of deduction. This intuitive reasoning structure gets used quite often without most people even realizing it. For example, "All dogs are mammals. Fido is a dog. Ergo, Fido is a mammal."

A syllogism can represent a sort of mathematical formula devised for analyzing persuasive speaking points. A syllogism uses reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two or more propositions (premises) that may or may not necessarily be true. For example, "All ordinary men are mortal. Bruce Wayne is no ordinary man. Therefore, Bruce Wayne is immortal." With respect to public speaking, for a syllogism to work effectively, the audience need only *perceive* it as true and accurate. A speaker who has established a strong ethos has a significantly higher chance of the audience expecting a syllogism as true, regardless of its accuracy.

Naturally, such syllogisms could show evidence of relying on fallacies, so critical listeners need to understand how they work and how people use them. A **fallacy**, simply defined, demonstrates faulty reasoning or a deficiency in one's attempt at formulating a rational argument. Common fallacies include the following:



What type of fallacy do you think this sign represents?

- **Ad hominem**: Derived from the Latin for "to the

person," this type of fallacy gets used when a person directs criticism at the person, rather than that person's position. ***Example***: "Why would anyone believe someone that dresses like that?"

- **Ad populum**: Derived from the Latin for "appeal to the people," this fallacy often gets referred to as the bandwagon effect, which implies someone should do something because everyone else does it. ***Example***: "Everybody knows the Earth is flat, so why do you persist in your crazy claims?"
- **Hasty generalization**: This type of fallacy involves making an inductive argument without sufficient evidence for the conclusion, or using a single instance to generalize a much larger group of people. ***Example***: "My grandmother smoked a pack of cigarettes a day and lived to be 95, so I don't think smoking is really hazardous."
- **Red herring**: This fallacy involves misdirection, or distracting someone from the argument at hand with something completely unrelated. ***Example***: "While we understand your frustration with not getting a raise in the last five years, we do work hard to provide great customer service."
- **Straw man**: This fallacy involves substituting an actual position or argument with a distorted, exaggerated, or misrepresented version of the position of the argument so as to make it easy to refute. ***Example***: "After John said

we should spend more on health and education, Dave responded by saying he was shocked that John hates our country so much that he wants to leave it vulnerable to attack by cutting military spending."

- **Post hoc**: This fallacy is short for the Latin phrase, *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. When translated from Latin, it means "after therefore because of." Also called the "false cause" fallacy, this occurs when someone assumes that correlation automatically means causation. ***Example***: "Incidents of shark attacks correlate directly to increases in ice cream sales; therefore, we should reduce our ice cream intake before swimming in the ocean." In this example, no cause-effect connection exists between the rates of ice cream sales and shark attacks. The high temperatures associated with summer likely caused both of these independent effects.
- **Slippery slope**: This fallacy (also called the domino fallacy) occurs when someone claims that A will lead to B, which will lead to C, and so on, all the way to F, without providing good reasons for predicting all the cause-effect connections between A and F. ***Example***: "If we let our teenage son leave the house, the next thing we know, he will be running with the wrong crowd, drinking alcohol, and doing drugs!"
- **Weak analogy**: Similar to the hasty generalization in a specific context, the weak analogy attempts to connect two items based on a thin or irrelevant thread of

similarity. ***Example***: "Guns and hammers are both made of metal and can kill people, so if you want to regulate guns, then you might as well regulate hammers, too." Analogies provide a good way to help an audience understand information. However, when using an analogy to support a conclusion, the similarities need to be both strong and relevant.

- **Appeal to authority**: Just because someone famous or credible said it, then it must be true. ***Example***: "Abraham Lincoln once warned us that we should not believe everything we read just because we see it on the internet." Far too many quotes are attributed to figures such as Einstein, when in reality, he may have never weighed in on the topic. Advertisers have keyed into this fallacy when they select celebrities to endorse their products.
- **Burden of proof**: This fallacy occurs when the person putting forth the argument suggests that the burden of proof lies with someone else to disprove the argument. ***Example***: "There is currently a truck orbiting Venus, but because you cannot disprove it, then it must be true."
- **False dichotomy**: When someone suggests that two—and only two—possibilities exist, they have set up a false dichotomy, which sometimes gets called the black-or-white or either-or fallacy. ***Example***: "You're either with us or you're against us!" or "My way or the

highway—there's no in between!" FYI: There is no fallacy if only two options truly exist. It's only a fallacy when two are offered but more than two actually exist.

- **Genetic fallacy**: Related to the old saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater," this fallacy occurs when someone doubts the validity of a claim simply on the basis of who said it. ***Example***: "The president suggested that this year has 365 days, but everyone knows how much of a liar he is."
- **No true Scotsman**: Often used as a last resort out of desperation, this fallacy proposes an appeal to purity, as if to suggest criticism is invalid if certain "pure" conditions aren't met. ***Example***: "No real man would drink his coffee with a pink straw" or "They must be from California; a true Idahoan would not do that."

Fallacies might sound highly persuasive to the untrained eye or ear; however, an ethical speaker would never knowingly use fallacies to persuade an audience. A speaker might unintentionally or accidentally use fallacious reasoning, but only unethical speakers knowingly trick an audience with poor reasoning.

BLENDING ETHOS-PATHOS-LOGOS TOGETHER

Think about what a speech would look like if a speaker focused solely on one of these three elements.

A speech employing pure ethos, but no pathos or logos, would likely sound charismatic and enjoyable, but upon reconsideration it would appear empty, vapid, and devoid of substance. In the end, audiences would find it hard to make an emotional connection to the topic and likely doubt the

information due to the lack of logical arguments made to support the claims.

A speech using pure pathos, but little ethos or logos, would come across as emotionally manipulative.

A speech utilizing pure logos without ethos or pathos would likely sound dry and boring due to the barrage of factual information and lack of emotional or personal connection to relate those claims to the audience.

These points illustrate effectively why Aristotle was so adamant about the need to present balanced arguments. Think of ethos as setting the stage for engaging the audiences to earn their trust and respect while maintaining their attention. When it works in conjunction with ethos, it helps nurture the emotional connection necessary to generate action based on the persuasive messages. Logos effectively balances out pathos by providing substance to those emotional connections and makes good on the promises made by the use of ethos. Using all three elements in careful consideration with one another provides not only a more balanced persuasive message, but a more effective one as well.

COMMUNICATION-SPECIFIC PERSUASION THEORIES

While many theories surrounding effective persuasion exist, several of them apply specifically to the field of communication studies. This chapter will conclude by discussing two of those theories: the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Social Judgment Theory (Sherif, 1963).

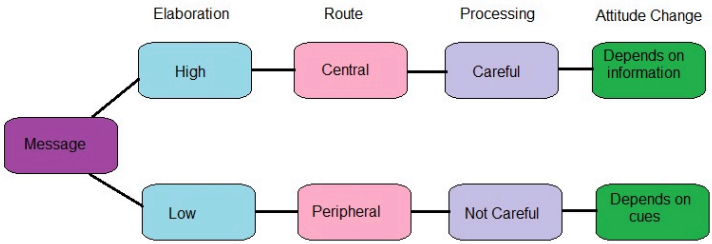
Elaboration Likelihood Model

This theory, abbreviated as ELM, attempts to describe why certain methods of persuasion work, even though mysterious, and why others fail. Known as a dual-process model, ELM describes a *central route* to persuasion and a *peripheral route* to persuasion. According to communication theory expert, Em Griffin (2014) :

> *Message elaboration is the central route of persuasion that produces major positive attitude change. It occurs when unbiased listeners are motivated and able to scrutinize arguments that they consider strong. Message-irrelevant factors hold sway on the peripheral path, a more common route that produces fragile shifts in attitude.*

In the **central route**, the persuader practices many of the techniques described in this chapter. For someone to utilize the central route, ELM suggests that audience members need motivation in order for persuasion to work. In other words, each person the speaker's attempting to persuade must commit the mental energy required to listen to the persuasion process. ELM also suggests that, at the beginning of a persuasive interaction, listeners decide almost immediately if they will continue to listen or not. This showcases why the speaker's initial persuasive communication remains of critical importance. The listener may find the central route cumbersome and difficult, as it requires 1) mental effort, 2) use of logic and rational support, and most often, 3) more time

and commitment than the peripheral route. Its use can result in significantly larger attitude or behavior changes.



In the **peripheral route**, the message recipient has little to no interest in the subject material, and as such, has no desire to commit the mental energy to go through the central processing route. If the listener takes the peripheral route, he or she will look for information that "feels right" and often make decisions solely based upon first impressions. In the peripheral route, listeners become swayed more by irrational appeal to emotion than logical and balanced messages. Advertisers frequently rely on the peripheral route, as most commercials last only 30–60 seconds. Celebrity endorsements or unrelated humor in commercials highlight examples of advertisers attempting to engage its audience using the peripheral route to persuasion. Consumers making purchases based on factors like these means that the persuasive message was effective, however these effects are often short-lived and vulnerable to outside influence, unlike the central route. For example, a person may purchase car insurance based on a funny advertisement, but

will likely stop laughing when their first bill does not match the quoted price.

Social Judgment Theory

This theory, developed by Muzafer Sherif, attempts to explain how people evaluate and rationalize various ideas and positions. According to SJT, every new idea individuals hear from a persuasive message gets weighted and evaluated against their current points of view before being placed on an attitude scale. SJT explains how people subconsciously sort out ideas as they occur at the instant they perceive them. Em Griffin (2014) explains SJT as follows:

> *The larger the discrepancy between a speaker's position and a listener's point of view, the greater the change in attitude—as long as the message is within the hearer's latitude of acceptance. High ego-involvement usually indicates a wide latitude of rejection. Messages that fall there may have a boomerang effect.*

As people assess the feasibility of new ideas, they place those ideas within one of three zones, or latitudes:

- The latitude of acceptance (agreement with the idea)
- The latitude of noncommitment (no opinion)
- The latitude of rejection (opposition to the idea)

When individuals have a high level of interest or involvement with the idea, their scale reduces to two, as the latitude of noncommitment shrinks with more rigidly held opinions. If the idea falls within the latitude of acceptance, they will adjust their attitude or behavior to match the idea, but if the idea falls inside their latitude of rejection, they will adjust themselves away from the idea.

Em Griffin (2014) suggested that persuaders wishing to achieve the greatest level of influence should choose a message on the edge of the audience's latitude of acceptance or noncommitment.

Note to Self

In other words, if your audience has a high level of interest, find out what minimum acceptable connections you can make between their current attitudes regarding your topic and the action you want them to take, and then tailor your message along that idea.

Griffin also noted that persuasion often occurs at a slow and gradual process that most often consists of small movements.

CHAPTER 11 SUMMARY

Persuasion is truly an art form, one that often takes years of trial and error to develop into a natural habit. However, people can actively learn this art and practice it by first considering the speech's specific purpose: persuading, motivating, or inspiring? Next, focus on getting to know the audience and what motivates them based on their attitudes, opinions, values, and beliefs. Without this critically important information about the audience, even the best and most carefully worded persuasive message has the potential to fail miserably. A poorly

worded persuasive message that is mindfully tailored to the audience for which it is intended will achieve more success than a well-polished message that does not take the audience into consideration.

After researching the audience's attributes, compose the persuasive message by considering how to balance ethos, pathos, and logos. Draw connections with the audience by tapping into mutual similarities, establishing rapport, and earning their respect and trust as a speaker. What emotions will the speaker evoke to resonate emotionally with the message's listeners? What facts, statistics, figures, and evidence will the speaker mention to add substance and ensure sound and well-reasoned arguments? Answering these questions carefully and methodically can set a speaker up to become a powerful and dynamic, yet ethical and authentic, persuader.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Thou Shalt Not Commit Logical Fallacies**—http://www.yourlogicalfallacyis.com
- **Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**—http://www.iep.utm.edu/

PART XII
CHAPTER 12

CHAPTER 12: MOTIVATING OTHERS TO ACT

"Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it." —President **Dwight D. Eisenhower**

In the middle of the 1930s, Purdue University communication professor Alan H. Monroe began noticing that successful

persuasive messages all shared a strangely common pattern. He defined "success" as instances where a speaker could motivate one or more listeners to take action, even in situations where it would seem that the listeners appeared to oppose the core of the message itself. Monroe examined the psychological principles of these successful messages and, from analysis of these messages, derived a five-step speaking process, affectionately named **Monroe's Motivated Sequence**. Evidence of this sequence can be found just about everywhere, from static display advertisements like billboards or print publication ads, to more active marketing such as television or internet commercials. Experts estimate that modern individuals living in an urban society subject themselves to anywhere from a conservative estimate of 300 to a more realistic estimate of 1,000 persuasive messages every single day (Gass & Seiter, 2019).

This five-step pattern shares similarities with the earlier pattern of speaking for the purpose of speaking to inform, which has an introduction, three main points, and a conclusion. Monroe's Motivated Sequence also contains an introduction, three main points, and a conclusion, but in using this specific method, each of these steps provides more direction and structure regarding what the speaker should address during each step. As a result, Monroe relabeled the five-step process as follows:

1. **Gain Attention**: This first step performs essentially the

same function as the introduction discussed earlier in Chapter 6, but in a speech to motivate others to act, this step becomes even more critical. Failing to grab the audience's attention up front will limit the effectiveness of all subsequent steps.

2. **Present the Need**: Also referred to as the "problem" step, this establishes the first main point of the speech and immediately follows the introduction. In this step, the speaker presents a need to satisfy or a problem to solve. Show the audience the importance of the need and how it affects every listener.
3. **Satisfy the Need**: In the second main point, speakers should attempt to satisfy the need or present a solution to the problem framed in the first main point. They must show the audience not only how to apply the solution in a concrete, step-by-step fashion, but they must also show them that what they suggest will adequately satisfy the need or solve the problem.
4. **Visualization**: In the final main point, speakers verbally paint a picture of the benefits associated with their proposed solution to satisfy the need. Conversely, they may also present the consequences of not applying the solution should the audience choose to ignore the proposal.
5. **Call to Action**: Structured more or less the same way as in the speech to inform from Chapter 6, but this version incorporates a slight twist. The speaker should signal the

end and recap each main points, but instead of concluding with a "clincher" that reinforces the central idea, the speech ends with a final call to action, where the speaker directly calls on the audience to act upon the presented solution.

PLANNING THE TOPIC

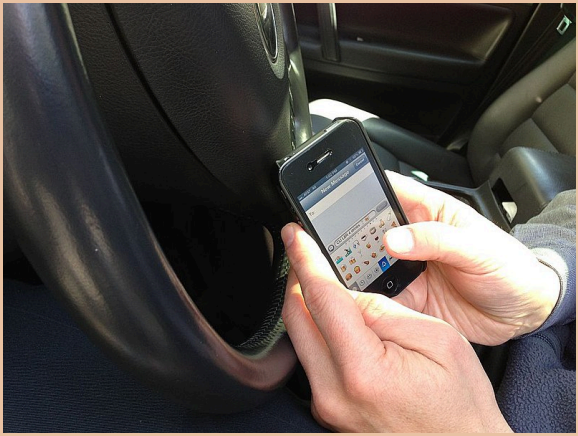
To examine each of these steps more closely, this chapter provides a sample speech topic to demonstrate how the principles of persuasion theory discussed in Chapter 11 apply to Monroe's Motivated Sequence as outlined above. Pretend a speaker wishes to deliver a speech to persuade audience members not to text and drive. After selecting a topic, the next step involves answering a number of questions that will help lay the groundwork for a persuasive strategy, and help compose significant portions of the speech.

Note to Self

Answering these questions can potentially help you head off a number of creative roadblocks later in the speechwriting process:

1. ***What is the action you want your audience to take?*** Answering this question prevents a disastrous public speaking occurrence from unfolding. By definition, a speech to motivate others to act necessitates the inclusion of an action, and if you do not have 100% clarity on what that action entails, then you will run into major difficulties later on. For example, you may be passionate about speaking out against the death penalty and may want to persuade your audience that it does not belong in a civilized society, but what action do you recommend the audience take? As written, the topic works as a speech to influence others' thoughts. If you had a petition for audience members to sign as a way to send a message to lawmakers, then it

would become a speech to motivate others to act.



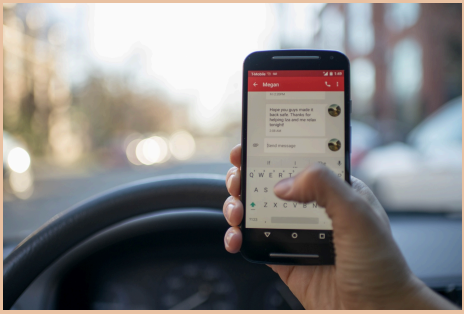
Example answer: I want my audience to stop texting and driving.

2. ***Why do you want to deliver this speech?*** By answering this question, you discover your motivation behind the speech. By understanding your motivation to deliver the speech, you can better understand what motivations you may want to use to tap into your audience's motivation. Answering this question also prepares you to establish your credibility within the Gain Attention (introduction) step.

Example answer: I was struck by a driver who was texting while driving, which resulted in my hospitalization and a six-month rehabilitation before I could walk again.

3. ***Why does your audience need to take the action you propose?*** Be careful with answering this question. Many novice speakers approach this question by describing the benefits to their proposed actions, but that only answers the "what" of the speech, not the "why" motivating it. Benefits result from an action, they do not spark the driving force behind it; you need to understand the *need* behind your action. Ideally you will state

this as the problem you will attempt to solve through the action you propose.



Example answer: Texting and driving, an all-too-common occurrence on roads today, drastically reduces driver attentiveness and creates life-altering hazardous driving conditions.

4. ***How will your audience satisfy this need?*** Answer this question with your concrete, step-by-step set of solutions to the problem you established as a need. State not only your solution, but also specifically how the audience will enact this solution. Be detailed and clear.

Example answer: To stop texting and driving, my listeners will need to shut off their phones whenever they start their cars, put them away in the trunk or glove compartment, or pair their phone with a

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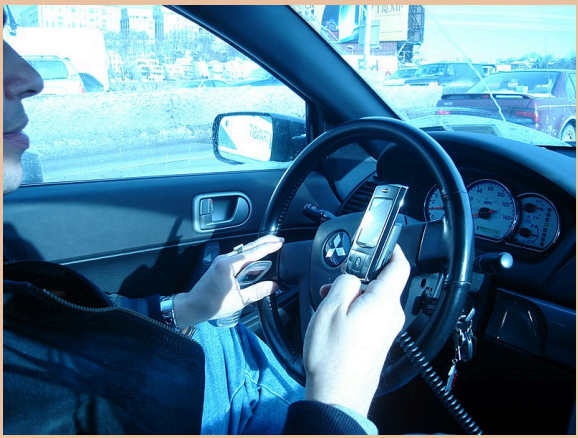
5. ***If your action satisfies the need, then why is your audience not already doing it?*** Answering this question often guides the research approach for your proposed solution(s) and may require you to conduct an audience analysis survey. If you find your audience already does what you propose, then you may need to refine your topic.



Example answer: Using mobile technology to stay socially connected to others is remarkably addictive, and even the most moral person can find her or himself succumbing to the temptation of glancing down at a recently received notification.

6. ***What obstacles will likely prevent your audience from doing what you propose and what counterarguments could you raise against those objections?*** As mentioned in question 5 above, audience members likely have reasons for not enacting your proposed solution, so prepare for those arguments. As mentioned in Chapter 11, you must not allow potential objections to take root in your audience's minds, so you need to

refute these objections early.

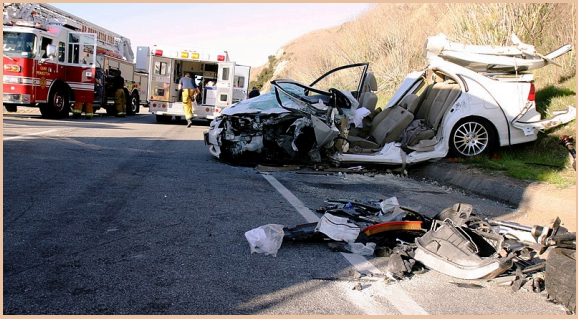
Example answer: "Checking a text only takes a second, and I'm a good driver." Refutation: "According to a recent study, the average person glances at their phone for 5 seconds to check a message, and the averag

e crash happens within 3 seconds of driver distraction."

7. ***What are the benefits of doing what you ask?*** Identify the benefits early, before you even write the speech. This may require some research and even a little creativity, but task yourself to identify the most tantalizing benefits possible for your audience. Also, consider what benefits may matter most to your specific audience members. Think critically about where their priorities lie and what motivates them.

Example answer: The benefits of putting your phone away while driving go beyond staying safe, as you will be able to feel free from distraction and worry. You won't need to worry about your phone dinging every few seconds and feeling pressured to respond immediately. You will feel responsible and alert.

8. ***What are the consequences of your audience not acting on your proposed solution?*** Sometimes you may find covering the consequences of not listening to your advice can have far more impact than listing the benefits. Depending on the topic, you may struggle to list benefits, such as with the sample topic. In those instances, cover the negative aspects of the consequences individuals could face if they choose not to follow your proposed solution.



Example answer: Text messaging while driving puts you at a higher risk of getting into a serious crash. Nearly two million auto accidents a year are caused by texting and driving. According to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, texting while driving is six times more likely to cause an auto crash than driving when intoxicated.

By identifying all eight of these responses, speakers can complete nearly half or more of the work involved in composing a motivational speech. They can now confidently compose a specific purpose, such as "My specific purpose is to motivate my audience to stop texting while driving," as well as the central idea, such as "Texting and driving is dangerous, not only to yourself, but to all other drivers sharing the road with you." From here the speakers needs only to fill in the blanks of the outline and starting working on the details within each of the five steps: **Gain Attention**; **Need**; **Satisfaction**; **Visualization**; and **Call to Action**.

GAIN ATTENTION

While the attention step served an important purpose in an informational speech by setting the tone and providing the audience with a reason to listen, it serves an even more critical role in the speech to motivate others to action. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, if this step does not capture the audience's attention, subsequent steps will not have the psychological effect needed to make the message persuasive. Fortunately, the introduction outlined in Chapter 6 shares the subcomponents of the Gain Attention step with this speech type:

- Grab attention
- Relate topic to audience
- Relate topic to self (establish credibility)
- State central idea and specific purpose
- Preview main points

Look at how the sample topic might look using this formula:

- **Grab attention**: *On February 19, 2011, a young girl named Ashley Jones-Davis was killed in a gruesome automobile accident. She was texting and driving when she swerved out of the center lane and drove head-on into a box truck. Ashley died on the scene. Since that time, her family has dedicated countess hours and emotional energy telling Ashley's story, because they don't want other families to go through the trauma and sense of loss they experienced.*
    - ***Notes***: This speech begins with a story that many can relate to, whether audience members consist of parents, students, women, or simply drivers who have texted while driving before. While brief, the story sets the stage for subsequent information by sharing a personal connection to the topic. This speaker could also show Ashley's photo, juxtaposed with a photo from the crash for added appeal to emotion.
- **Relate topic to audience**: *According to my audience*

survey, nearly 100% of you stated that you have read and/or answered a text while driving before. Though many of you stated that you try to save phone use for stoplights, statistics show that you are not alone. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than 11% of drivers on the road at any given time are distracted by phone use.

  - ***Notes***: By appealing to the audience survey, this speaker connects directly to the people in the room, but then broadens out the appeal by relating statistics from a credible national organization.

- **Relate topic to self (establish credibility)**: *Two years ago, I saw my light turn green, and as I started to drive through the intersection, I was struck from the side by a driver who ran a red light because he was texting while driving. This accident not only totaled my car, but also resulted in extended hospitalization and a six-month rehabilitation before I could walk again.*
  - ***Notes***: Copy and pasted from prep question 2 (Why do you want to deliver this speech?), this speaker clearly has a vested interest in sharing a story that motivates others to avoid texting and driving, but more than that, it also relates to the initial story and the statistics shared in the previous step, carefully weaving the three steps together with a common thread, adding to the flow of the message.

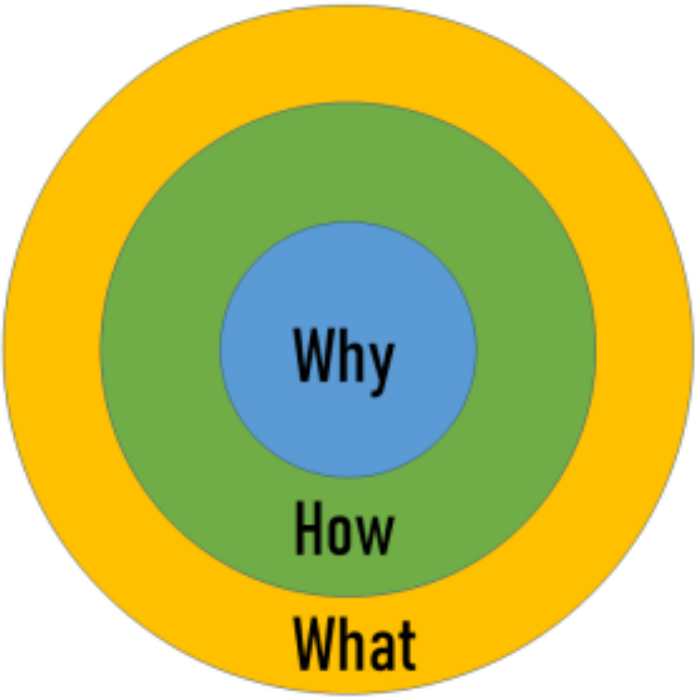
- **State central idea and specific purpose**: *Texting and driving is dangerous, not only to yourself, but to all other drivers sharing the road with you. Today, I would like to motivate you all to stop texting while driving before stories like mine and Ashley's become the norm, rather than the exception.*
    - ***Notes***: The central idea and specific purpose encapsulate the core of the speech's message, but they also tie together all threads present within the introduction so far.
- **Preview main points**: *I will show you how big of a problem texting and driving has become today* (**point #1**, Need step), *what you can do to stop it* (**point #2**, Satisfaction step), *and how you can personally benefit from doing so* (**point #3**, Visualization step).
    - ***Notes***: The speaker did not reveal too much information too soon, effectively sharing with the audience what they can expect to hear in the next few minutes or so and clue them in to the direction of the conversation.

NEED STEP

As opposed to the speech to inform, the first main point must serve as the **Need step**. Here speakers will frame a need for their audience so that they can follow it up with a satisfying solution (i.e., the action they will propose later in this speech). Also referred to as the "problem step," this main point involves explaining the *why* behind the proposed action.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://nic.pressbooks.pub/messagesthatmatter/?p=427#oembed-1

In September of 2009, Simon Sinek, an author and speaker in business and leadership studies, gave a TEDx talk in the Seattle area, where he presented the idea of what he dubbed "The Golden Circle." To explain this, Sinek used the following diagram:



Using this model, Sinek explained that the majority of persuasive messages that people see, read, or hear on a regular basis work from the outside inward. They start with the *what*, or the result, and then explain the *how*, which represents their method or product, but stop there, expecting people to buy into their idea, their services, or their products. The examples Sinek used in his speech included: "Here's our newest model of SUV (*what*). It has dual airbags, great gas mileage, and looks sharp (*how*)." Sinek went on to explain that these messages fail because they come across as uninspiring. They do not tap

into the decision-making center of the brain—the limbic system—because they fail to inspire or engage by explaining *why* people need to buy this product.

Sinek then went on to describe the model used by Apple, which uses a highly successful persuasive model because it works from the inside out. As a company, Apple's messages clearly begin with an explanation of *why* they conduct business by communicating with the world that, in everything they do, they believe in challenging the status quo and thinking differently. Only after Apple finishes explaining the *why* do they state that they achieve this goal by creating products that are beautifully designed, easy to operate, and challenge the limits of technology (*how*). Apple's message then ends with the *what* by showing its audiences the products they can expect to benefit their lives.

In motivating an audience to action, speakers must tap into their audience's *why* by explaining to them that a genuine and relatable need exists. They can complete this task by addressing the Need step in four components:

- Show the audience that a need or a problem exists and that it can and will affect each and every member of the audience in some way.
- Explain to the audience why it exists by providing context and history behind the need or problem. In other words, explain where the need arose and perhaps why nothing has been done about it until now.

- Demonstrate to the audience that this problem needs to be solved or this need must be addressed immediately—that it will not simply disappear on its own if left alone.
- Overcome potential objections. Why might the audience not believe that this need or problem affects them personally?

Returning to the example speech from earlier, the breakdown could look as follows:

Need Step

A. Texting and driving is an all too common occurrence on our roads today.
    1. Using mobile technology to stay socially connected to others is remarkably addictive, according to a study performed by Dr. David Greenfield, founder of the Center for Internet and Technology Addiction, when cell phone users compulsively check their devices it is in an effort to stimulate the brain's pleasure centers.
    2. In this way, cell phone use can be compared to gambling or gaming addictions, making even the most moral person succumb to the temptation of glancing down at a recently received notification.

***Note*: This half of the Need step provides the audience with context and background, effectively setting up the problem. Additionally, it shows the audience that the problem will not go away.**

B. Texting and driving drastically reduces driver attentiveness and creates life-altering hazardous driving conditions.
   1. According to a recent study, the average person glances at their phone for 5 seconds to check a message, while the average texting-related crash occurs within only 3 seconds of driver distraction.
   2. According to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, texting while driving is six times more likely to cause an auto crash than driving when intoxicated.

***Note*: This half of the Need step relates the problem to the audience, while also demonstrating a severe and life-threatening need to address the problem immediately.**

SATISFACTION STEP

Next comes the **Satisfaction step**, the second main point within the body of the motivational speech designed to elicit audience action. Here the speaker attempts to satisfy the need or solve the problem presented in the previous step. Demonstrate that the solution fully and adequately addresses that need or problem for every aspect of the problem or need that the speaker has presented up to this point.

Note to Self

For example, if you presented a need to cut down on fossil fuel usage because you painted a bleak picture of the Earth in 50 years resembling a toxic wasteland, then in this step, you must clearly and explicitly show how the audience's specific actions will avert such a scenario. It would not be enough to simply suggest the audience carpool or drive hybrid electric vehicles. If you make that suggestion, you would need to include credible research to show that this solution can reliably avert the problem you presented previously.

Avoid presenting a problem or a need that is larger than the solution can fulfill. Ensure that the Need step and the Satisfaction step complement one another perfectly.

Speakers should prepare themselves to address potential objections during this step. As with the eight preparation questions discussed at the beginning of this chapter, think of all the hurdles or barriers that might prevent audience members from adopting the proposed solution to the problem. Then, consider the best way to address and refute those objections *before* they have a chance to take root in the audience's minds.

Overcome objections by looking at the number of steps involved in enacting the solution. Think of the solution as a

transaction, and find ways to make that transaction as easy and straightforward as possible.

For example, if a speaker wanted the audience to write letters to their senators and representatives, think of how this person could reduce the number of steps involved. To write such a letter, one must: 1) find the time to sit down and write; 2) compose the letter; 3) print the letter; 4) look up the address; 5) find an envelope; 6) address the envelope; 7) locate a stamp; 8) seal the envelope; and 9) drop it in the mailbox. Regardless of the speech's impact, audience members may stop trying at any of these nine steps due to the many distractions life can manifest. To reduce these specific steps, the speaker could prewrite the letters for them, place them in preaddressed, stamped envelopes, hand them out to each audience member, and then instruct them to sign them and drop the envelopes in the mailbox after the speech.

Take a look back at the sample speech, and see how the Satisfaction step plays out:

Satisfaction Step

A. The first step in reducing and eliminating texting and driving is to increase your awareness of how much your phone's notification system controls you, and not the

other way around.

1. One way to do this is to instruct a partner to ride with you as a passenger and record the number of times you give in to the temptation of glancing at your phone.
2. Another method involves the psychological technique of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), where you shut off your phone completely when you get into the car, and as you drive, regularly assess your anxiety levels out loud. For example, every mile or so, talk your way through the anxiety or discomfort you experience as you wonder what you might be missing.

Note: **This half of the Satisfaction step directly addresses the first half of the Need step, employing highly specific and guided actions to address the problem the speaker previously established.**

B. To stop texting and driving, we need to cut it off at the source, which involves shutting off our phones whenever we start our cars.
    1. In addition to shutting them off, I recommend putting them away in the trunk or glove compartment so that they are completely out of sight.
    2. If you have the option available to you, you could

pair your phone with a compatible Bluetooth hands-free system before putting it out of sight.

3. Being out of sight significantly reduces the temptation to use a phone while driving, as you will not be able to physically get to it.
4. If you find yourself feeling the effects of "nomophobia" (the fear of being without your phone), simply remind yourself that anything anyone has to say to you can wait, as it is not worth your life, your safety, or the well-being of others around you.

***Note*: This half of the Satisfaction step addresses the second half of the Need step by providing a concrete solution to the dangers presented earlier, but additionally, it acknowledges and addresses the potential objections (barriers) the speaker identified in the eight preparation questions at the beginning of the chapter.**

VISUALIZATION STEP

The final main point within the body of the speech, the **Visualization step**, attempts to motivate others to act on a specific issue. Its purpose to help the audience "see" the amazing benefits they can expect to enjoy if they apply the solution to the problem or the satisfaction to the need does not mean that the message must remain positive and rosy. Some topics will require adopting a negative approach by outlining undesirable consequences arising as the result of ignoring the proposed solution. The best persuaders understand that negative emotional appeals here act fast, meaning that people

may easily get scared into immediate action, but such gains are short-lived, while positive emotional appeal takes longer to manifest but tends to last considerably longer.

Note to Self

How would you structure the Visualization step? Will you focus solely on benefits, solely on negative consequences, or a mixture of both? If you choose a mixture, will you start with the bad news and end on a positive note, or the other way around? These decisions will affect the flow and style of your delivery here, so think critically about this decision.

In this step, use colorful, rich, descriptive language. Also consider saving some of the most prominent visual aids to use here as well. The Visualization step becomes most persuasive when the benefits appear so tantalizing the audience simply cannot imagine life without them. Conversely, this step could persuade audiences if the consequences seem terrifying or off-putting enough to make them adapt the proposed solution without hesitation. Think of this step of the speech as the "What's in it for me?" stage. By this point in the speech, the speaker has successfully presented a stark need and

demonstrated to the audience how to satisfy that need, so now, the time has come to show them what they can expect to happen once they enact the solution, or what can happen if they continue allowing the need or problem to persist and worsen. Consider using a lot of vivid imagery, as well as "what ifs" in this step. Engage the audience's imagination and help them picture themselves applying the solutions.

Take a look at this final main point using the sample speech topic:

Visualization Step

A. The benefits of putting your phone away while driving go beyond staying safe, as you will be able to feel free from distraction and worry.
    1. You won't need to worry about your phone dinging every few seconds and feeling pressured to respond immediately.
    2. You will feel responsible and alert, as a properly defensive driver should feel.

B. If you choose not to put your phone away, however, understand that nearly two million auto accidents a year are caused by texting and driving. Text messaging while driving puts you at a 23% higher risk of getting into a serious crash.

CALL TO ACTION

As with the previous speeches to inform, the speech to motivate others to action on an important issue requires a conclusion, and in Monroe's Motivated Sequence, the whole conclusion is called the **Call to Action**. Begin the conclusion, as before, by signaling the end of the speech, followed by a brief recap of the three main points that address why the audience needs to take action, what the speaker proposes to solve this problem, and what advantages the audience will gain by adapting the solution.

Also, recall that, in a conclusion, the speaker should not introduce any new information or main ideas in this portion of the speech. This portion of the speech serves as a recap, not a chance to insert one more shocking fact that will drive the central idea home. Bringing in new information at this point would only confuse the audience. After finishing the recap, the speaker should end with a clincher that makes the final call to action. This clincher should clearly reinforce the

central idea from the beginning of the speech, while explicitly reminding the audience in a simpler fashion what action to take. Be direct and firm. Avoid vague or wishy-washy statements during this step.

> A great acronym for assessing a Call to Action is ***C.A.S.T.***, or concise, achievable, specific, and tangible. A call to action should be ***concise***, meaning that it doesn't take long to explain. It should be ***achievable*** by every single person in the room, and furthermore, they should be able to achieve the goal in a relatively short amount of time. It should be ***specific***, and finally, it should also be ***tangible***, meaning that the speaker outlined a concrete action for the audience members to take.

Take a look at the sample topic's conclusion:

Call to Action Step

Signal End: *As you all leave here today, you will undoubtedly check your phones to see if there are any new notifications. It is likely that even I will do this as well.*

Recap Main Points: *However, remember what we talked about today. I showed you how addictive checking our phones*

can be, even while driving. I also showed you the dangers of giving in to those temptations while operating a motor vehicle, before I showed you some possible solutions, including shutting your phone off when you get into your cars or using a Bluetooth hands-free system. Lastly, I shared with you not only the benefits of doing so, by becoming a safer, more responsible, and more alert driver, but I explained how, if we all continue to do this, the problem can only get worse.

Clincher (Call to Action): *Texting and driving is dangerous, not only to yourself, but to all other drivers sharing the road with you. Don't allow this (show picture of screen capture from text messages) to lead to this (show picture of my surgery scars while in a wheelchair). Turn off your phones while driving, and keep your eyes on the road where they belong.*

CHAPTER 12 SUMMARY

Monroe's Motivated Sequence can be found just about everywhere when analyzing the various persuasive messages across all media. The formula employs five steps: 1) Gain Attention, 2) Present the Need, 3) Satisfy the Need, 4) Visualize, and 5) Call to Action.

Successful persuaders that use Monroe's Motivated Sequence start by explaining the *why* behind their message. Answer the eight preparation questions before composing a persuasive strategy. Identifying the motivations behind the

topic beforehand can help speakers develop the *why* behind it. Help the audience members identify and relate with the topic by demonstrating why to care, which naturally leads them to seek out the *how*: the proposed solution.

Failing to motivate the audience to understand the *why* will likely mean subsequent steps will fall flat, so concentrate on presenting a need so pressing that the audience begins desiring satisfaction for that need or a solution to the problem. Then, ensure that the satisfaction or solution presents a realistic solution clearly, explicitly, and concretely, with plenty of step-by-step detail. Make the solution as easy as possible for the audience to enact. Then, drive the persuasive message home by showing (not telling) the audience what they can expect once they have adopted the wonderful proposed solution. Tantalize them with rich imagery, but again, do so realistically— don't advertise falsely.

Lastly, follow through with a firm, direct, and clear call to action, reminding the listeners why they need to take action, how to do it, and what they can expect from doing so. Balance this approach to ensure that each step builds upon one another. Make sure to craft the Need step specifically for the intended audience. Ensure that the solution adequately addresses each aspect of the problem. This molds the message to communicate directly to the audience's decision-making centers of their brains, activating their limbic systems by providing information that satisfies all components of the rhetorical triangle.

For additional guidance, review the exemplary sample outlines in the following pages to see how other students from the past have approached Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

SAMPLE 3A: SPEECH TO MOTIVATE TO ACTION

Name: Kristopher Arnold

Audience Analysis

Answer in complete sentences and use examples from your audience analysis questions.

A. If what you are asking the audience to do is such a good idea, think about those in the audience who might object to your idea. How will you address possible objections in your speech? **I am planning to hit head-on any varying objections within my speech, to refute the refuted. Some people think buying products made in other countries means they can have more stuff. I will show them how short-sighted this is.**
B. How much interest did the audience have in your topic? How will you make the topic interesting to them? **The audience didn't have a lot of interest in my topic since they like to buy "lots of cheap stuff." I will show them that by supporting American-made**

goods that their chances of high-paying jobs will increase when they graduate from college. That should get their interest.

C. How will the audience demographics (not what you learned on your Audience Analysis) impact the development of your speech? **Being mostly students, it impacts my speech greatly. Most college-aged individuals do not have plenty of money floating around, nor are they usually working full-time, so they have good and feasible reasons to want to purchase cheap foreign products.**

Title: *Made in Chimericakorpan*

General Purpose: To motivate to act

Specific Purpose: To motivate my audience to purchase American-made products

I. **ATTENTION Step**

A. **Grab Attention**: My neighbor Pete is currently unemployed but is a hard-working American. He goes to bed at 11 pm and wakes up to his alarm clock (made in Japan). He turns on his coffee pot (made in China), stands on tile floor in the bathroom (made in Italy) while he shaves with a razor (made in Hong Kong). He puts on his dress shirt (made in Sri Lanka), designer jeans (made in Singapore), and tennis shoes (made in Korea),

jumps into his car (made in Japan), turns on the radio (made in India), checks his watch (made in Switzerland), grabs his briefcase (made in Japan). And, Pete wonders why he cannot find a good paying job.

B. **Relate to Audience**: Actually, you all need to be thinking about this. This scenario likely hits close to home with most of you and you don't even know it (or don't really want to admit it). Most lower-priced items which so many of you are purchasing are not made in America. I would even go as far as to say that most of the possessions you have here with you today are not made in America.

C. **Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)**: In the past I have simply not known what the consequences of purchasing foreign products does on a mass scale, but I will have you know that over the past several years I have changed my ways and have personally made a point to buy local and buy American-made. All of my automobiles and recreational vehicles are made in the good ol' U.S.A., and I now regularly make an effort to keep my money in America and so should you.

D. **Central Idea**: You should buy American-made products whenever possible.

E. **Specific Purpose**: Today, I would like to invite you to consider this option.

F. **Preview Main Points**: I will go over…
   II. **Need**: Why we all need to buy American-made products.
   III. **Satisfaction**: How you can implement this behavior into your life.
   IV. **Visualization**: How your lives will be better after implementing this solution.

Transition to #II: Let's begin exploration of this topic by taking a good look at the problem.

II. **NEED Step**
   A. Buying products from China affects employment in the U.S.
      1. Mr. Robert Scott indicates that it's a fact that buying products that are made in China decreases jobs in the U.S. (Economic Policy Institute)
      2. Something you all know but probably wouldn't want to admit is that buying products made in China also supports the abuse of exploited workers. (*Businessweek.com*)
   B. China has become the world capital of contaminated goods.
      1. One million toys were recalled recently in China because lead paint was used on the

toys, and chewing on these toys can lead to behavioral problems and sometimes death in children. (*USA Today*)

2. Chemicals that are used to make antifreeze are being found in toothpaste from China. (*MSNBC.com*)

Transition to #III: Now that you can see what you support when you buy foreign products, let's look at solutions.

III. **SATISFACTION Step**

A. With a little common sense, it's easy to find American-made products.

1. Look at the packaging for the "made in" sticker.
2. Visit MadeInUSA.org for a list of American manufacturers and a list of items that are 100% made in the U.S.

B. Even though it is impossible to get around buying foreign products, we shouldn't use that as an excuse to avoid buying American-made products when possible.

Transition to #IV: Solving this foreign products issue for the United States will take focus on my part (as well as each of you), but the rewards are worth it.

IV. **VISUALIZATION Step**

A. Imagine what it could be like searching for a job and actually finding many good-paying jobs to choose from.

B. You will feel good knowing that the toys your children and grandchildren play with are safer than before.

C. You will have the satisfaction of knowing you do not support the abuse of other human beings.

Signal End: If you have been listening, you now better understand the benefits of spending your money a little more wisely, so I will conclude now.

V. **ACTION Step**

A. **Restate Central Idea**: Buying products made in America leads to a better future for you.

B. **Recap Main Points**: Today, I told you why we need to purchase American-made products, how easy it is to do, and what benefits you'll experience as a result.

C. **Call to Action (Clincher)**: I want to ask for a show of hands. I am going to ask each of you to raise your hand showing that you will just try...just try to pay closer attention to the things you are buying. Let's raise our hands for the future of our children and grandchildren. Let's fight this fight

from our own soil and spread the word. Will you raise your hand for America today? Thanks. Please go from here today and purchase wisely, and you remember Pete, my neighbor? For Pete's sake, let's buy American.

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SAMPLE 3B: SPEECH TO MOTIVATE TO ACTION

Name: Justine Bunch

Audience Analysis

Answer in complete sentences and use examples from your audience analysis questions.

1. If what you are asking the audience to do is such a good idea, think about those in the audience who might object to your idea. How will you address possible objections in your speech? **Some might object to that planning is yet another task to complete, but I will argue that good planning actually frees up time for the planner.**
2. How much interest did the audience have in your topic? How will you make the topic interesting to them? **They were somewhat interested, but they've had people telling them how important time management is for most of their lives. I'll try to use some current statistical data/research to approach the topic from some unique angles to give them a new perspective**

on it.

3. How will the audience demographics (not what you learned on your Audience Analysis) impact the development of your speech? **Since my audience consists of college students, my planning strategies will focus around the main items that college students must plan for.**

Title: *Time Management*

General Purpose: To motivate to act

Specific Purpose: To motivate my audience members to manage their time better

I. **ATTENTION Step**

   A. **Grab Attention**: How well do you plan? I consider myself a generally good planner, but whenever I find myself writing a paper at midnight, I must pause to consider the effectiveness of my time management. Let us complete a short quiz from the Dartmouth College Academic Skills Center to determine your individual planning effectiveness before continuing on....

   B. **Relate to Audience**: As college students, each of us has procrastinated, prioritized poorly, and generally failed at planning. Even if you feel comfortable with your time-management abilities, it always helps to reassess your effectiveness and to

find new strategies to plan well.

C. **Relate to Self (Establish Credibility)**: Being a person who struggles with procrastination as well as over-extensive planning, I went on a quest to find the most effective time-management strategies.

D. **Central Idea:** You should improve your time-management strategies.

E. **Specific Purpose**: Today, I would like to motivate you all to manage your time more effectively.

F. **Preview Main Points**: Today I will cover…

II. **Need**: The reasons why it is necessary to be an effective time manager for the community college student

III. **Satisfaction**: The means by which each of us can make better use of our time

IV. **Visualization**: And the future benefits to our time-management choices now

Transition to #II: First, why must we manage our time better?

II. **NEED Step**

A. When we forsake effective time management, our present decisions do not serve to fulfill future goals.

1. "Planning is about the future impact of present decisions." (Warnick)
2. Planning frees us up to focus on the

important rather than the urgent.

3. Planning allows us to focus on people, not tasks.

B. Not planning leads to anxiety.

1. "Anxiety is the warning light on our spiritual dashboard." (Warnick)
2. If your daily routine is not going to complete your goals, there is a problem with your daily priorities.
3. Planning allows us to complete necessary tasks without stress.

Transition to #III: Now that we have assessed the reasons to plan, let us determine the methods by which to plan.

III. **SATISFACTION STEP**

A. Plan around your short-term and long-term goals.

1. Plan tasks that follow the "Smart Tips" strategy.
2. Write a paragraph to determine your individual mission statement, and make sure your schedule is serving to follow your set of values.

B. Create a master/weekly schedule. (Dartmouth College)

1. Write everything down.
2. Create margin within your schedule. (Leave

time for things you don't expect.)

Transition to #IV: In the end, what does it look like after you've improved your time- management strategies?

IV. **VISUALIZATION Step**

A. When good planning occurs in your life, you have time to do the things that are most important.

1. Good planning allows you to have worry-free rest.
2. When short-term goals are fulfilled, it is refreshing and fulfilling.

B. When things are orderly in your daily life, you can pursue excellence in a carefree manner.

1. If you're living to fulfill a long-term calling, the end goal is what will motivate you in your daily life.
2. When your vision is for the long-term, the worries of the short-term are only temporary.

Signal End: Let us review what we have learned and decide what to do about it.

V. **ACTION Step**

A. **Restate Central Idea**: After listening to my speech, I expect that you will have taken away effective tools for better managing your time.

B. **Recap Main Points**: After discussing the reasons to plan, the means by which to plan, and what it really looks like to lead a time-managed lifestyle, I hope you will go out and add some more freedom through structure to your daily schedule.

C. **Call to Action (Clincher)**: Do not think of planning as yet another commitment, but as something that will free up time to do the things you want to do. "You do what you have to do so you can do what you want to do"—The Great Debaters.

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APPENDIX A: SPEECH GRADING RUBRICS FOR COMM-101

Instructor Evaluation Speech 1: Speech to Inform

Student:			**Section #:**
SPEECH FORMAT (35)			**COMMENTS**
Introduction (10)			
Gain Attention	2		
Give Audience incentive to listen	2		
Establish speaker credibility	2		
Assert Central Idea	1		
Preview Main Points	2		
Transition to Body	1		
Body (20)			
Clear, well-developed organization	5		
Sufficient support material	5		
Related main point to audience	4		
Transitions between main points	2		
Oral Footnote #1:	2		
Oral Footnote #2:	2		
Conclusion (5)			
Signal Ending	1		
Restate Central Idea; recap main points	2		

Clincher	2		
DELIVERY (15)			
Eye Contact: Looked at everyone in audience and held eye contact	6		
Notes: Used to jog memory; did not read	4		
Vocal/Verbal: Volume, rate, fluency	3		
Appearance: Appropriate attire/posture	2		
Subtotal			
Speech Time:			
Time Penalty			
TOTAL POINTS (out of 50)			

Instructor Evaluation Speech 2: Speech to Inform with Visuals

Student:			**Section #:**
SPEECH FORMAT (55)			**COMMENTS**
Introduction (10)			
Gain Attention	2		
Give Audience incentive to listen	2		
Establish speaker credibility	2		
Assert Central Idea	1		
Preview Main Points	2		
Transition to Body	1		
Body (40)			
Clear, well-developed organization	7		
Sufficient support material	7		
Related main point to audience	5		
Transition between main points	6		
Oral Footnote #1:	5		
Oral Footnote #2:	5		
Oral Footnote #3:	5		
Conclusion (5)			
Signal Ending	1		

Restate Central Idea; recap main points	2		
Clincher	2		
DELIVERY (25)			
Eye Contact: Looked at everyone in audience and held eye contact	10		
Notes: Used to jog memory; did not read	6		
Vocal/Verbal: Volume, rate, fluency	5		
Gestures: Natural, appropriate	2		
Appearance: Appropriate attire/posture	2		
VISUAL AIDS (15)			
Professional Design	6		
Purposeful	6		
Set up; used appropriately	3		
QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD (5)	5		
Subtotal			
Speech Time:			
Time Penalty			
TOTAL POINTS (out of 100)			

Instructor Evaluation Speech 3: Speech to Motivate Action

Student:			**Section #:**
SPEECH FORMAT (80)			**COMMENTS**
I. Attention (15)			
Gain Attention	3		
Relate to Audience	3		
Relate to Self	3		
Assert Central Idea	3		
Preview Main Points	2		
Transition to Need Step	1		
II. Need (20)			
Clear problem established/ supported	10		
Related problem to this audience	8		
Transition to Satisfaction Step	2		
III. Satisfaction (15)			
Audience-centered plan/ solution offered	5		
Plan meets this audience's needs	5		
Satisfy possible objections	3		
Transition to Visualization Step	2		
Oral Citations (15)			

Oral Footnote #1:	5		
Oral Footnote #2:	5		
Oral Footnote #3:	5		
IV. Visualization (10)			
Relate benefits to audience	5		
Vivid mental image of aud. involvement	5		
V. Call to Action (5)			
Signal Ending	1		
Restate Central Idea; recap main points	2		
Call to action/clincher	2		
DELIVERY (50)			
Eye Contact: Looked at everyone in audience and held eye contact	15		
Notes: Used to jog memory; did not read	10		
Vocal/Verbal: Volume, rate, fluency	10		
Language: Adapted to audience/context	5		
Nonverbal: Movement/ gestures, posture, appearance	10		
VISUAL AIDS (18)			

Design	6		
Purposeful	6		
Implementation	6		
QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD (2)	2		
Subtotal			
Speech Time:			
Time Penalty			
TOTAL POINTS (out of 150)			

APPENDIX B: COMMUNICATION ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE

Communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal, are essential to success, sustainability, and upward progression in the workplace. Beyond the workplace, competence in communication is an integral component of relationships as well as positive local and global community citizenship. Good communication skills are unfailingly ranked as one of the most important attributes sought after by the business community.

This program offers students an opportunity to develop and refine communication skills in a variety of professional and personal contexts which are critical to success in the job market. The flexibility of the communication certificate. as well as the range of classes offered, will allow students to hone their communication abilities in areas specific to their needs and desired career path. Few assets are more valuable to career or community than a basic understanding of the dynamics of communication. This program applies toward the requirements for an associate degree in Communication.

Program Requirements

Select four of the following:		12
COMM-101	Fundamentals of Oral Communication	
COMM-103	Oral Interpretation	
COMM-111	Interview Techniques	
COMM-207	Dynamics of Social Media	
COMM-209	Argumentation	
COMM-212	Nonverbal Communication	
COMM-220	Introduction to Intercultural Communication	
COMM-233	Interpersonal Communication	
COMM-236	Small Group Communication	
COMJ-140	Mass Media in a Free Society	
Total Credits		**12**

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain foundational communication theories and processes.
- Select, demonstrate, and adapt appropriate forms of verbal, nonverbal, and mediated expression that support and enhance the meaning of messages across a variety of contexts.
- Monitor and present oneself to others across a variety of contexts.

Questions? Email the Communication Department at commdept@nic.edu.

APPENDIX C: NORTH IDAHO COLLEGE COMMUNICATION COURSE OFFERINGS

Communication courses involve much more than public speaking! Remember, businesses consistently rank one's ability to communicate effectively one of the most important skills they consider when hiring a person. Good communication skills complement any career choice or relationship, and since most students must round out their studies at North Idaho College with electives, why not receive some additional communication training that could pay off dividends? Here's a brief description of other communication courses North Idaho College offers:

Oral Interpretation

COMM-103: 3 credits

This course makes literature come alive through effective reading and interpreting is the goal of this course. Students will

learn to select, analyze, and perform literary pieces including stories, plays, poems, and famous orations.

Interviewing Techniques

COMM-111: 2 credits

This course provides practical experience in the development of interviewing techniques for a variety of settings and career applications. The process is analyzed and practiced, including setting up, conducting, and assessing the interview. Students learn to design and carry out effective interviews through study and practice of the practical "do's and don'ts" for several types of interviews. Skills gained are helpful to those pursuing careers in journalism, communications, law enforcement, psychology, oral history, and counseling.

Dynamics of Social Media

COMM-207: 3 credits

This course explores emerging and established social media communication platforms and their impact on human interaction. Topics discussed and explored include social media history, structure, and functions; virality; and persuasion and marketing via new media.

Argumentation

COMM-209: 3 credits

Arguments are all around us. Learning how to use and refute arguments will be beneficial to anyone's career and personal life. This class will equip you with critical thinking skills which will help you create and evaluate arguments. While argumentation involves debate, this class is much more, as it is an exercise in deciphering and delivering arguments in spoken, written, and visual form.

Nonverbal Communication

COMM-212: 3 credits

75% or more of all communication messages are nonverbal! So, what you don't know about what you are not saying could hurt you! This course introduces you to the basic concepts of body language, symbols, and various means of communicating without using the spoken language.

Introduction to Intercultural Communication

COMM-220: 3 credits

We live in a shrinking world, and our contact with other cultures is inevitable. This may be the only course you can take

in college that addresses the crucial issues of communicating successfully with other cultures. (GEM 5 course)

Interpersonal Communication

COMM-233: 3 credits

This course deals primarily with understanding one's own communication in relationships, and how to improve relationships through better communication. It is an excellent course for developing skills necessary in everyday life and living where relationships must be developed and maintained. It is impossible not to personally benefit from this course! (GEM 6 course)

Small Group Communication

COMM-236: 3 credits

This is an interactive and practical course that teaches you how to become a more effective and productive member of a small group/career team. As more organizations use small groups to solve problems and conduct business, acquiring team leadership skills can be an asset on any resume. This course includes service-learning projects in our community.

Mass Media in a Free Society

COMJ-140: 3 credits

This course examines the development, successes, and failures of today's American media. Students will learn to become media-literate consumers of books, magazines, newspapers, film, television, the internet, and other modern formats. Media theories, public relations, and advertising will also be discussed. (GEM 6 course)

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Please—no names!

Directions: Circle the appropriate answers.

Enrollment: Full-time student Part-time student

Type: Transfer/General Studies Professional-Technical Dual Credit

Major: General Studies Business Education Communication

Pre-Medical-Related Psychology

Other:_____

1. **Age**:
    a. 19 and younger
    b. 20–24
    c. 25–39
    d. 40 and older
2. **Sex**:
    a. Female
    b. Male
3. **Marital status**:

   a. single
   b. committed relationship
   c. married
   d. separated
   e. divorced
   f. widowed
4. **Number of Children**:
   a. no children
   b. one child
   c. more than one child
5. **Religious preference**:
   a. Atheist/Agnostic
   b. Christian
   c. Jewish
   d. Muslim
   e. Buddhist
   f. Other:_____
6. **Political Affiliation**:
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent
   d. Supporter of a third party (Libertarian, Green, Socialist, etc.)
   e. Non-Political
7. **Personal/family income**:
   a. $10,000 or below
   b. $10,001–15,000

   c. $15,001–30,000
   d. $30,001–60,000
   e. over $60,000

8. **I am from**:
   a. the country
   b. a small town
   c. a medium-sized town
   d. a city
   e. a big city

9. **My financial support mainly comes from** (circle all that apply):
   a. parents, spouse, or other family member
   b. full-time job
   c. part-time or summer job
   d. savings
   e. scholarships/grants/loans

10. **I currently live**:
   a. at home with parents/family
   b. in a rental room/apartment/house
   c. in the residence hall
   d. in a home I own
   e. Other:_____

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE AUDIENCE ANALYSIS— INFORMATIVE SPEECH

Name: Sally Student

Topic: Developments of the personal computer

3 Main Points:

I. Origins
II. Current and emerging technology
III. Computers of the future

1. **Rate your interest in learning about the PC, where 1 represents "Uninterested" and 5 represents "Very Interested."** (circle number)

   1 2 3 4 5

2. **How often do you use a computer at home?** (select one)
   A. Never/Seldom
   B. Once or twice a week
   C. 3–5 times a week

D. Daily

3. **How do you use your computer?** (check all that apply)

... Browsing

... Research

... Email

... Instant messaging

... Games

... Word processing

... Databases

... Spreadsheets

... Other:_____

4. **Have you ever used a tablet?** Yes No

5. **Do you find that user interface (e.g., Start menus in Windows) could be improved in a way that the machine would be easier to use?** Yes No

6. **What feature or function would you most like to have in future computers?**

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE AUDIENCE ANALYSIS—PERSUASIVE SPEECH

Problem: *Big Box Store* hurts local economies, uses cheap overseas labor and corrupt and discriminatory business practices

1. **What is your position on this problem?** (circle one)

Unaware Aware/Opposed Aware/Neutral Aware/Agree

2. **How urgent of a problem is this issue in your life, with 1 representing "Not urgent at all" and 5 representing "Very Urgent"**? (circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5

3. **How frequently do you shop at *Big Box Store*?** (select one)
   A. Never
   B. Once a week

C. More than once a week
D. Every day

Explain why you shop/don't shop at *Big Box Store* with that frequency.

4. **Are you aware of the charges of corruption/ discrimination that have been brought against *Big Box Store*?** Yes No
5. **Does *Big Box Store* have a union in America?** Yes No
6. **Where are most of *Big Box Store's* labor and products outsourced?** (select one)
   A. Japan
   B. Mexico
   C. China
   D. Other:_____
7. **What is the average yearly income of a *Big Box Store* employee?** (select one)
   A. Less than $20,000
   B. $20,000–$30,000
   C. $30,000–$40,000
   D. Less than $40,000
   E. I have no idea
8. ***Big Box Store* employees on tax-funded assistance**

programs cost taxpayers _____ per year. (select one)

A. $50 million
B. $500 million
C. $1.5 billion
D. I have no idea

APPENDIX G: SPEECH TOPIC IDEAS

How nuclear power works

Biography of someone you admire

How to make pizza

The history of comic books

How to change your car's oil

The story of how your school was founded

How to pick a bottle of wine

The history of your hometown

How to swing a golf club

Trends in the stock market

How to drive a stick-shift

History of a favorite product brand

How to shoot a basketball

Description of life in another country

How to weave a basket

The three branches of U.S. government

How to read a map

How roads are built

The Seven Wonders of the World

Disneyland

How to knit a scarf

Professional baseball stadiums
Local folklore
Roadside attractions
Chinese food
UFOs
Real-life vampires
Types of cheese
How to play chess
Key phrases in a foreign language
How to plan a wedding
How to tie various knots
Cruise vacations
Crazy laws
How to improve your health
Electric cars
Life in the future
How to throw a good party
Working in the fast-food industry
How to play the kazoo
Origins of superstitions
Lesser-known presidents
Computer viruses
Types of poetry
Evolution of video games
Raising pet snakes
Serial killers
Foreign TV shows

How to make a website
Civil War generals
Famous diplomats
All about your favorite vacation spot
Famous speeches
How to get good grades
How to write a resume
How to survive a job interview
Types of tropical fish
Dog shows
The newspaper business
All about a favorite radio show
How a computer works
How to organize a closet
U.S. territories
Voodoo
Comparison of different religions
Schools of painting
The latest discoveries in astronomy
Fringe political parties
How to find cheap airline tickets
Competitive horseback riding
How to make fishing lures
Labor Unions
Internet dating Cults
Dyslexia
Impact of media on society

Branches of the military
Famous advertising campaigns
Nursing homes
How to write a will
The United Nations
How to find your ancestors
Deep sea fishing
A particular period of architecture
How to construct an argument
Saving money on your income taxes
Sports card collecting
The history of the Bible
Book reviews for a particular author
How to avoid boredom
Sales tactics
Comparison of economic systems
Censorship in history
Psychological profiling
Picking a name for your children
America's fastest growing cities
How to improve your manners
How to improve your conversation skills
World War II heroes
The Miss America Pageant
Interesting cultures
How to raise rabbits
Exotic pets

Ballroom dancing
Euthanasia
Identity theft
Evolution of voting laws
Natural disasters
Breeds of dogs
Dream interpretation
Drinking problems
Drug problems
The FBI
Basic economic principles
Advances in education
Spies
Evolution of the English language
National Parks
Young billionaires
Former child stars
Obesity epidemic
How to be more romantic
Types of common plants
How to cook vegetarian
Muscle cars
Antique collecting
Dog training
Model railroading
How to perform a magic trick
The intelligence of dolphins

Multi-Level Marketing
Choosing a digital camera
Funny inventions
Stupid criminals
Code breaking
How to play poker
Child geniuses
Spoon collecting
Charitable organizations
Reincarnation
How to break bad habits
Weight lifting
How the circulatory system works
Origin of holidays
Interior decorating
Lie detecting
The Supreme Court
Learning styles
Life in jail
How to properly brush your teeth
How to set up an aquarium
Organized crime
Street gangs
How to make soup
The worst professional sports teams
How the telephone works
The U.S. Postal Service

How to apply makeup
Investment strategies
The lottery
The Industrial Revolution
Medicines from nature
Memory loss
Differences in male and female communication
Mental illnesses
The Middle Ages
How the brain works
Prohibition
Drug laws
Airplane stunts
The history of your favorite musical group
Useful websites
The Great Depression
Famous riots
How to play your favorite board or video game
Interesting world records
Different philosophical perspectives
The welfare system
City planning
Reality TV shows
Types of birth control
Choosing the right tires for your car
Diploma mills
The most dangerous jobs

The trucking industry
Basic first aid
Coin collecting
The British Royal Family
Ice cream making
How search engines work
Banned books
The worst trades in sports history
How galaxies are formed
Native American tribes
Exotic breeds of cats
How to make a cocktail
How to turkey-call
How bottled water is purified
Sports card collecting
The U.S. Post Office
How cellular phones work
Computers through the decades
Spring Break destinations
The rising cost of education
Early 20th-century film making
Unique websites
How to back up your DVDs
How to make candles
Hand-held PDAs
Famous robberies
Wedding traditions of other cultures

Robots now and in the future
Rock collecting
The career of a favorite musician
How to cure/prevent hangovers
Women in politics
The Great Lakes Conspiracy theories
Iraq war
Phobias
Immigrants in the USA
Stockholm syndrome
Military benefits
GMOs
Climate change
Strategies for healthy eating
E.S.P.
Famous golf courses
Gold rushes outside of California
U.S. immigration patterns through history
Code breaking
Submarines TV sitcoms
Landfills
Beekeeping
All-terrain vehicles
Satellite radio
Exotic fruits
What to look for in a new car
Firefighting

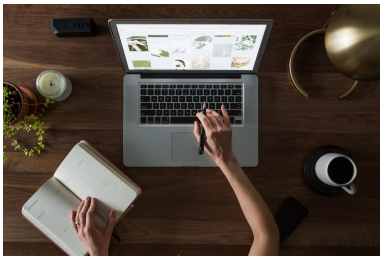
Canadian football
The sport of "curling"
The insurance industry
Famous comedy duos
Word origins
How chocolate is made
Bio-diesel
New technologies
Ghosts
How the Earth was formed
Overcoming conflict
The longest books ever written
How to ski
How to make beer
Fastest growing careers
Origins of clichés
Schizophrenia
Afghanistan war
Brainwashing
Bartering
Healthcare Cyber safety
Women in the media
Preventing elder abuse
Civil War history/lore
World Cup
Copyright violations online
Reality of a dream

Importance of vitamins and minerals
The origin of alphabets
The history of tobacco use
Human cadavers—history of, uses of DNA evidence
Women in the military
Herbs as medicine
The history of greyhound dogs
How to achieve goals
Albert Einstein's contributions to science
Being confident
Believing in yourself
Breaking bad habits
Being optimistic in life
Being a positive talker
Helen Keller's life
How self-motivation works
Handling responsibility
Importance of discipline
Importance of meditation
Life and works of Mahatma Gandhi
Life and works of Mother Teresa
People who changed the world
Powerful communication
Weight issues
What winners do to win
Why travel is beneficial to education
Near death experiences

How to start a good personal inventory
The beauty of wolves
Social networking
Funeral oration
Graduation checklist
Roadside attractions
How to adopt a dog
Allergies
School shootings
Toxic chemicals in food
Brain mapping and paralysis
Hypnosis
The many kinds of tea
The many kinds of coffee
The process of building any given product on the market
Anxiety and its effects
Human facial recognition
Different types of dreams
Resort vacations
World music
Teenage pregnancy
Indian culture or Bollywood
What to do on spring break
How to make an income while a student
The basics of financial aid
How to get along with your roommate
Some inexpensive places to take your date

How to get that great internship
Basics of getting a fellowship
What to do when a roommate moves out
How to survive freshman year
How to take the GRE
How get a student job on campus
Great vacation bargains for students
What to do in your senior year
Moving out of the dorm to an apartment off campus
Freebies and discounts for students
How to fill out a FAFSA

APPENDIX H: THE CRAAP TEST



The CRAAP Test provides a list of questions that help scholars evaluate the quality of the information they gather for use in academic papers, speeches/presentations, and more. Depending on the specific topic area, some questions will offer more critical data than others.

Evaluation Criteria

Currency: *How timely is the information?*

- When was the information created?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- If the topic requires up-to-date information, then will older sources work?

Relevance: *How important is the information?*

- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information presented at an appropriate academic level (i.e., not too basic and not too advanced)?
- Have several sources been reviewed before deciding that this one works best?

Authority: *Who created the information?*

- Who is the author/publisher/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or affiliations?
- Does the author possess the necessary qualifications to be write about the topic?
- Is there contact information for the author?

Accuracy: *How reliable and verifiable is the information?*

- How has the information been collected?
- Is there evidence to support assertions?
- Has the information been reviewed and verified by others?
- Is the language used relatively free of emotion and/or biased language or tone?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?

Purpose: *Why does this information exist?*

- Is the information presented in more of an

informational, persuasive, or entertaining manner?

- Did the author or authors clearly state their purpose?
- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
- Does the point of view seem impartial and objective?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, or other biases present?

SUBJECT INDEX