

► 6 – Constructing Your Speech

Executive Summary:

Construct a speech that is organized in a logical manner.

Objectives:

- To apply skills learned in preceding speeches.
- To organize in a logical manner.
- To research the facts, if needed, to support the speech.
- *TIME: 5 to 7 minutes - or - 6 to 8 minutes.*

Constructing Your Speech

The previous speech opportunities have strengthened your speaking skills! These skills include: 1) Convince the audience of earnest, sincerity, and conviction, 2) Organize with an opening, body, and closing, 3) Use body language [face, hands, arms, body] that is smooth and natural and items such as a fishing pole, hat, kerosene lantern, woodworking tool, etc., 4) Implement vocal variety [changes in volume, pitch, and rate],

Commonly the speech evaluation verbal comments, and written comments, provide insight from an audience's perspective. This is a good start to strengthen speaking skills!

Why Construct a Speech?

It is important that a speech is planned and arranged in an orderly fashion. The speech effectiveness could be lost if not constructed properly.

There are many ways to construct a speech. This organization may be dependent on the topic and speaking occasion. As mentioned in an earlier project, the basic three-fold structure includes, 1) Opening, 2) Body, and 3) Closing.

Within this basic structure are these approaches: 1) sales, 2) stimulate, 3) history, and 4) past / present / future. There may be others that are left to the discretion of the Speaker.

The first approach, Sales, is a common approach for salespeople. It can be applied to anything being sold. It could be selling ideas, objects, or actions. The AIDA outline is:

- 1) A: Win attention.
- 2) I: Arouse interest.
- 3) D: Create desire.
- 4) A: Stimulate action or agreement.

The second approach, Stimulate, represents the audience's reactions. The basics include:

- 1) Ho-Hum. The audience is expecting to be bored. A solid speech opening will catch the audience's attention that increases the odds they listen.
- 2) Why Bring That Up? Building a bridge to carry the audience shows this topic is important. It relates to their interests.

- 3) For Instance. Provide concrete evidence with illustrations, facts, and stories. This increases the odds that the audience activates thinking.
- 4) So What? The audience will comprehend the call for action. It is useful to be specific. The closing can strive to clarify the action.

The third approach is History. It could be your life, genealogy, or professional experiences.

- 1) Initially what happened.
- 2) Sequentially what happened.
- 3) End result.

The fourth approach is Past-Present-Future, such as changes in technology.

- 1) Past.
- 2) Present.
- 3) Future.

The common characteristic is leading the audience step by step through the sequences. The key phrase is “step by step.”

Preparing the Speech

It is easiest to select a topic you know well. Very little research is required if this is common knowledge to you. If some research is required, searching the Internet is not complicated.

Next, select the approach that works well with the topic: 1) sales, 2) stimulate, 3) history, and 4) past / present / future. Constructing a speech is simplified after a decision is made on the approach chosen.

It is important to avoid generalities. Include specifics with facts, stories, and / or examples. Lead the audience through the speech step-by-step. This adds credibility to the speech.

Avoid information overload. An excessive amount of information can make it difficult for the audience to understand the main points. It is common to provide a maximum of three points to the audience.

Presenting the Speech

Standard protocol is to start by addressing the Toastmaster for the Day and the audience: “Mr. (or Madam) Toastmaster, Ladies and Gentlemen”.

It is important that the speech opening captures the audience’s attention! This increases the odds that the audience will listen immediately. The opening statement is commonly followed by comments about the speech body contents. Keep the opening concise, with very few words.

It is best to not start with the speech title. The audience hears those words when you are introduced. It is best to use the speech title for the closing.

The speech body contains the foundation for the speech. It could contain facts, stories, and / or examples that follow one of the approaches: 1) sales, 2) stimulate, 3) history, and 4) past / present / future.

Leading the audience through the speech step-by-step will help the audience follow the sequence. This will help the audience comprehend the message.

An effective speech is commonly delivered with a desire to communicate. Using directness and vigor makes it clear to the audience that this topic is important.

If you prefer to use notes, keep the reminder words clear and concise (large font). This eliminates the temptation to read the speech.

The closing should summarize the body contents with very few words. Highlighting the main points can help the audience remember the speech.

End the speech by addressing the Toastmaster for the Day, then waiting for the Toastmaster for the Day to return to the lectern.

Your Evaluation

This project is a milestone. All the skills and knowledge gained from previous speeches will help you apply them to this speech.

The central focus is speech construction. In addition, the speech evaluator will consider speech delivery and the techniques that were covered in the previous speeches.

It is good to not become too involved with structure. It is important that the message is communicated to the audience.

Evaluation Guide for Constructing Your Speech

See last page for more evaluation guidelines.

--- Evaluate the Speech, not the Speaker!

Speech Title:

Speech Evaluator:

Date:

Note to the Speech Evaluator: This speech strives to incorporate sincerity, organization, body language, and vocal variety as was described in the previous speeches. In addition, the speech message implements an approach that helps the audience comprehend the topic contents. It is important for the Speech Evaluator to provide **many positive comments**, **one item** that could **strengthen the speech**, and **end with more positive comments!** In addition to the oral evaluation, provide answers to the questions below.

The purpose of the evaluation is to Encourage, Encourage, and Encourage!
Strive to have the Speaker look forward to giving another speech.

- As you listen to the speech, list the main points of the speech outline:
- Which outline form did the speaker use? (sales, stimulate, history, past / present / future)
- How well did the speech organization fit the outline?
- Were the main points of the speech factually supported? How?
- Did you receive the message of the speech clearly? How could the speaker improve the presentation of the message?
- List the major strengths and weaknesses of the speaker in the skills described in the first five projects.
- What is your personal opinion of the speaker's progress?

Handy Dandy Speech Evaluation Guidelines

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- Strive to start with **four or more positive** comments, **one constructive** comment, end with **more positive** comments. A constructive comment example, *"The speech could be strengthened by"*
- Focus on the **Speech**. Avoid: *"you could improve"*- better: *"the speech could be strengthened by"*.
- Avoid commenting on the Speaker's point of view or facts. Focus on the **presentation**.
- Use specifics. Avoid: *"opening was weak"*- better: *"starting with a question would strengthen the speech"*.
- Use a lot of **"I"** phrases **instead of "you"** phrases. Avoid: *"you did this"*- better: *"it appeared to me"*.
- Avoid judging. Avoid: *"the speech was good"*- better: *"I liked the speech"*.
- If it is difficult to identify something that could be strengthened, ask yourself the question, **"Is this the best speech I've ever heard?"** If it is not, try to determine what could make it the best.

Evaluator:

Speech Title:

Date:

C Opening: Address Audience? Get Attention?

O Lead Into Body?

N Body: Organized?

T Help Remember? Persuasive?

E Interesting? Support Material?

N Relevant? Appropriate?

T Effective? Clear? Inspirational?

Closing: Climax? Produce Results?

Tie It Together? What to Do?

D Physical Appearance: Appropriate? Posture?

E Professional? Shirt (men) with collar?

L Zoom: Hands visible? Eyes include webcam?

I Body Language: Eye Contact? Hands? Face?

V Natural? Spontaneous?

E Overuse / Underuse? Detracting / Adding?

R Deliberate? Precise? Appropriate?

Y Vocal Variety: Volume? Pitch? Rate? Quality?

Manner: Enthusiastic? Direct? Assured?

Presentation: Visuals? Humor?

L Word Use: Clear? Accurate/Correct?

A Colorful? Vivid? Appropriate?

N Precise? Simple/Complex?

G Dull/Exciting? Jargon? Slang?

U Always/Never/Everyone Knows?

A Grammar: Proper?

G Pronunciation / Enunciation?

E Vowel Sounds?
