

# CREATING AN INTRODUCTION



The Better  
Speaker Series



WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE



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The Better Speaker Series

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Item 277A



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**

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# THE BETTER SPEAKER SERIES

Toastmasters International's *The Better Speaker Series* is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

Presentations in *The Better Speaker Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

## CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

"Creating an Introduction" focuses on the need for effective speech introductions and the process of creating them. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation

### In Your Own Words

*The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.*

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance.

In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
- ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in the online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.

## BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

By giving this presentation, you will be helping your club build excellence and move toward the possibility of becoming a Distinguished club--or reaching an even greater Distinguished status.

While this is an outlined presentation, it still provides a good opportunity for you to further practice speaking and build your presentation skills.

# CREATING AN INTRODUCTION

## Introducing the Presenter

### TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Creating an Introduction” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* in *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

# CREATING AN INTRODUCTION

## Outline

### INTRODUCTION

Not everyone is comfortable with the concept of a speech introduction. An inaccurate or unexpected introduction can fluster even the most prepared speaker. While speech introductions can be challenging to organize and present, they are also a very necessary part of our Toastmasters meetings.

V1

### THE IMPORTANCE OF AN INTRODUCTION

A well-crafted introduction enhances a presentation by providing the following:

- ▶ **Smooth transition** – When members of your club or audience get up to speak, they are about to take on a new role. An introduction defines that role and prepares the audience for a shift from previous activities by refocusing their interest.
- ▶ **Proper mindset** – Audience members are more likely to appreciate a speech if they are given some background information about the speaker and the topic to be discussed. A skillful introduction can do this as well as set a desired mood or tone.
- ▶ **Speaker authority** – A good introduction helps establish the speaker's expertise or background in the subject. If the topic is education, for example, the introduction should inform us if the speaker has three school-aged children or is a member of the local school board.

V2

### GENERAL ESSENTIALS

Since a speech introduction must be brief, it should be exceptionally well planned. If you have been assigned to present an introduction, your primary consideration is to inform the audience of three essential points:

- ▶ **Speaker's name** – Always say the speaker's name distinctly and clearly, especially at the very end of the introduction. If the name has a tricky pronunciation, confirm the correct way, and then write it out phonetically for yourself.
- ▶ **Speech topic** – Relate the speaker's background and credentials to the speech topic. Then tell how the topic will benefit the audience. Ask yourself why this subject is appropriate for this particular audience.
- ▶ **Speech title** – The speech's title is typically mentioned at the end of the introduction. Like the speaker's name, it needs to be given special emphasis.

V3

### TOASTMASTERS ESSENTIALS

If you are introducing a fellow Toastmaster at a club meeting, your introduction should also include three crucial elements:

- ▶ **Speech assignment** – Tell the audience which project the speaker is completing in the Pathways learning experience.

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- ▶ **Speech objectives** – State the assignment's main objectives and the personal objectives of the speaker.
  - ▶ **Delivery time** – Mention to the audience the time the speech is meant to take. Inform the person operating the timing lights of the timing parameters.

V4

## DRAFTING THE INTRODUCTION

Aside from relating practical information, introductions create a friendly environment for the speaker and a sense of anticipation for the audience. As you draft an introduction, imagine yourself in the position of the speaker.

- ▶ **Approach** – As speaker, what manner would make you feel appreciated and welcome?
- ▶ **Length** – Generally, a 30- to 45-second introduction is about right for most Toastmasters manual speeches. Longer speeches may accommodate introductions lasting up to two minutes. Remember, your audience members are waiting to hear the speaker.
- ▶ **Delivery** – Rehearse. A polished delivery will engage the audience's interest and curiosity.
- ▶ **Clarification** – Always ask the speaker what should be included in the introduction, and make an effort to use words and ideas suggested by the speaker.

V5

## APPLYING RESTRAINT

The primary purpose of a speech's introduction is to lead the listener into the speaker's presentation. Unless you seek a reputation for verbosity, this is not the time to embellish or prolong the suspense of the audience. When planning an introduction, heed the following "don'ts":

- ▶ **Don't upstage the speaker.** Your task is to turn attention to the speaker – not to yourself. This means eliminating any anecdotes about your experiences, attitudes, and opinions.
- ▶ **Don't reveal any details of the speech.** An introduction should invite anticipation of the upcoming speech. The contents of a speech should never be previewed in an introduction.
- ▶ **Don't surprise the speaker.** Never include information that might embarrass or in some way distract from the speaker's message. As the introducer, you are there to support the speaker and make that person's transition to the lectern as smooth as possible.
- ▶ **Don't praise the speaker's skills.** Generous compliments can encourage unreasonable expectations. Let the audience decide the skill of the speaker.
- ▶ **Don't rely on clichés.** Your time is much too valuable to clutter it with trite phrases, such as, "This speaker needs no introduction." Other worn-out expressions to avoid include, "We have with us tonight..." "Without further ado..." and "It gives me great pleasure to present..."
- ▶ **Don't save the speaker's name until last.** Unless you are introducing a mystery guest, don't create false anticipation. Since audiences are usually aware of who will be speaking, incorporating the person's name once or twice before pronouncing it a final time is a far more natural approach.

V6

## SPEAKERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Far from being a solo assignment, the creation of a good introduction is actually a two-way effort between the speaker and the person introducing the speaker. For the benefit of the overall presentation, the speaker has the following responsibilities:

- ▶ **Be available to offer speech-related information.** An introducer may have pertinent questions for the speaker. Beginning speakers are often apprehensive about contributing to their own introductions for fear of being considered conceited for speaking highly of themselves. It is important that the speaker is available to answer relevant questions.
- ▶ **Inform the introducer of any special considerations.** For example, if a question-and-answer period is to be included at the end of the speech, this information needs to be incorporated into the introduction.

## LECTERN ETIQUETTE

Writing a good introduction is only half of the job. The other half includes a relaxed, professional delivery that creates a friendly atmosphere between both speaker and audience. To create a pleasant ambiance, the proper etiquette should be followed:

- ▶ **Speak to the audience.** Primary eye contact should be with the audience members until the speaker's name is mentioned for the final time.
- ▶ **Lead the applause.** When the speaker's name is stated for the last time, begin applauding. The audience members take their cues from those who have demonstrated authority at the lectern.
- ▶ **Shake hands.** Once the speaker has reached the lectern, the introducer shakes the speaker's hand.
- ▶ **Leave the lectern.** The introducer does not cross in front of or behind the speaker. Instead, return to your seat by moving in a direction away from the speaker.
- ▶ **Show interest.** Continue to show interest and involvement throughout the speech presentation, especially if you remain in view of the audience.

## INTRODUCTIONS ARE ONLY THE BEGINNING

When the speech has concluded and the introducer is back at the lectern, the introducer may add about 30 seconds worth of summary comments. These summary comments generally include brief references to the following:

- ▶ The speech's ideas
- ▶ Points of entertainment
- ▶ How the speech helped or enlightened the audience
- ▶ Words of thanks and appreciation

## CONCLUSION

Presenting a complete yet to-the-point introduction can be deceptively challenging. Deciding what to leave out is just as important as what to include. Once you have mastered the art of the introduction, you will have taken your speaking abilities yet another step forward and earned the gratitude of both speaker and audience members.

V7

V8

V9

## Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series* and the presentation itself?
  
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
  
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
  
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
  
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
  
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
  
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own speeches?
  
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
  
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



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