Introduction to Public Speaking

In this chapter, you will:

- 1. Explain the benefits people get from engaging in public speaking.
- 2. Explore four types of public speaking in everyday life: informative, descriptive, argumentative, and persuasive.
- 3. Identify strategies for making information clear and interesting to your speaking audience.

What is public speaking?

Public speaking is the process or act of performing a face-to-face speech of a single person by effectively addressing a group of live audience. Whether it is in front of a group of people you already know or a crowd of complete strangers, your ability to communicate to them with clarity and confidence is known as your public speaking skills. The basic difference between a casual talk and public speaking is that the latter is more purposeful and meant to inform, to describe, to argue or to persuade. Additionally, differing methods, structures, and rules can be utilized according to the speaking situation. It is a fact that the most successful and most powerful people over the centuries have mastered the ability to communicate effectively. In fact, the skill of public speaking is so important that it has been formally taught for thousands of years.

The Importance of Public Speaking

Let us understand the meaning of public speaking with the help of a very simple example:

Tim was the managing director of XYZ industries. Tim wanted to circulate the company policies to all his employees and everyone directly or indirectly associated with his firm. Neither he wanted to send an email nor had he the time to call all his employees and explain the rules and regulations individually. He finally decided to call all his employees on a common platform and address them. This act of speaking to a large group of people with an intention of informing them about something is called as public speaking. Public speaking helps you communicate directly with your target audience at a single time.

Good public speaking skills can have a huge impact on your career for the following reasons:

• **Demonstrates your knowledge**. You are always at your best when you can articulate your thoughts clearly and effectively. After all, the true worth of the knowledge you possess can only be realized when you can show and apply it.

- Developing critical thinking skills. For example, when preparing a persuasive speech, you will have to think through real problems affecting your campus, community, or the world and provide possible solutions to those problems. You will also have to think about the positive and negative consequences of your solutions and then communicate your ideas to others.
- **Demonstrates your confidence**. Not only does public speaking increase your knowledge during the process of preparation but it also develops and demonstrates your confidence. Whether you are interviewing for a job or hoping for a promotion, your confidence is what will make you stand out among other candidates.
- **Fine-tuning verbal and nonverbal skills.** Whether you competed in public speaking in high school or this is your first time speaking in front of an audience, having the opportunity to actively practice communication skills and receive professional feedback will help you become a better overall communicator.
- **Helps you lead better**. The higher you climb up the career ladder, the greater will be the number of people you shall have to lead. As a result, the need for public speaking skills and the confidence pertinent to it also increases, making it one of the determining characteristic when considering someone for promotion.

Speaking in a Small Group

When more than two persons exchange their information face to face, it is called small group communication. It is one type of internal communication. A small group is generally defined as a group that consists of at least three members and at the maximum around twelve to fifteen members. A group that has just two members or more than fifteen members would not come in the category of a small group.

This small group is generally formed to solve a particular problem, make decisions, determine policies and submit reports. Personnel committee, audit committee, report committee, grievance committee are the example of small groups. Since it may be an informal communication, the group may or may not have any assigned leader. Every member can influence and can be influenced for performing their task. This generally takes place in a context that mixes interpersonal interactions with social clustering.

Understand the functions of a small group;

• Know skills to encourage member contribution, maximize individual participations, enhance motivation and assure commitment to the decisions reached.

- Handle problem behaviors and problems effectively.
- Manage the complex dynamics of small groups such as communication, hidden agendas, consensus decision making, change and conflict.
- Each team member has specific skills and knowledge that must be utilized and imparted to other members in the course of the work.
- Any questions or issues about the project must be broached and shared in order to resolve them.
- Any decisions taken must be imparted to all the members.

The great thing about speaking and communicating in a small group is that all the people on the group know each other by name. Working in a small group becomes an intimate working experience, and personalities are taken very much into consideration when managers create them. When obstacles or problems develop within a small group, the working environment can get a little more than tense. Solutions are often times presented to the whole group, as everyone on a small team usually knows from communicating to one another what is happening. But how is communicating any different in a large group?

Speaking in a Large Group

Similar to small groups there is no set limit on how many people make up a large group, but most consider a large group to be more than 12 people. Unlike smaller groups, many times people in large groups may not be familiar with others in their group. Speaking in a large group can become less frequent in a workplace, relying more on memos, network communication, instant messaging, emails and morning meetings. But, at the end of the day, when it comes to successfully communicating in either a small or large team, each person counts.

Speaking on Special Occasion

Public speaking is the process of designing and delivering a message to an audience. There are various different types of speeches when it comes to public speaking, and they all depend on the occasions that the speeches are meant to be delivered. Special occasion speeches are a type of category in public speaking that is contextual to a special occasion that requires a public speech. They are usually shorter than informative or persuasive speeches. Special occasion speeches are usually less than ten minutes long, which demonstrates that their purpose is different than other types of speeches delivered at a conference or political rally.

Types of Special Occasion Speeches

There are many special occasions that require particular attention. From informative speech ideas that deal with certain subject and help your audience understand facts and ideas to acceptance speeches, there are rules that should be followed to leave professional impression.

- Commemorative Speech and Tribute is ceremonial speech because it aims at paying a tribute and praise a person, an organization, institution, special occasion, great idea, or a group of people who did something special.
- Commencement Speech is for college or university students who graduate. During such an occasion, degrees and diplomas are being presented students, so it can include special definitions or talk of achievements. It usually concerns past, present, or assumptions towards future.
- Acceptance Speech is given when someone is accepting praise, being honored or receives an award. So, it is advisable to speak of those who have made it possible with a special tribute and give words of thanks. Free your emotions!
- Farewell Speech sometimes also called retirement, refers to an individual that leaves position or place. It is often addressed to public figures or educators. What has to be mentioned are career achievements and even reasons a person may have had for leaving. Ensure that no privacy or sensitive issues are violated.

Special Occasion Speech Outline Example

An Awards and Tribute Speech Mrs. Laila - More Than an English Teacher

Introduction and the main thesis (underlined)

Why do I consider myself a good writer? I believe that it takes a good English teacher to inspire and teach a student how to write. Mrs. Laila, a wonderful lady with the kind eyes and a soft-spoken voice, is the one who walked an extra mile to inspire me because you cannot guide a student if he or she is not inspired. As I receive the writer's award, it is her award and I want to pay a tribute to a wonderful person, Mrs. Laila Othman. She is a sum of empathy, care, courage, and professionalism that started by making sure that you are interested and motivated before you start to learn. Thanks to her, I learned not only how to write, but how to feel total responsibility for what I write and why.

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

Main Idea 1 She always started the lessons by asking the students about how they felt and if they could relate to the task.

Supporting Details She never discriminated the students by the level of skills and

knowledge. She always told of her own life and frequently read

aloud to make students listen.

Main Idea 2 Checking our assignments, she actually discussed the flaws

with students, providing criticism but never hurting our

feelings.

Supporting Details As a result, I learned how to be outspoken and sincere.

Main Idea 3 As I started to write professionally, she still treated me the

same, always remembering each of my childhood question and

concern.

Supporting Details Her attitude made me feel confident about my skills. Most of

all, she has always been a true friend and a genuine supporter.

Conclusion

I am truly and forever indebted to Mrs. Laila. Everything that I have got today, my skills in writing, the sincerity of my works, and my strength are all from the support that I have gained from Mrs. Laila throughout these years.

Genres of Public Speaking

When it comes to being a public speaker, the type of speech to give depends on what you are trying to accomplish. The different types of public speaking are:

- Speaking to Inform (informative, argumentative speeches)
- Speaking to Persuade, Motivate, or Take Action (persuasive, argumentative speeches)
- Speaking to Entertain (special occasion speeches)

Informative Speech

Informative speech is a means for the delivery of knowledge. In informative speaking, we avoid expressing opinion. A good informative speech conveys accurate information to the audience in a way that is clear and that keeps the listener interested in the topic. Achieving all three of these goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to your effectiveness as a speaker. If information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience. There are a number of principles to keep in mind as a speaker to make the information you present clear and interesting for your audience.

- To provide listeners with information so that they can make up their own minds about an issue.
- To make sure the information shared must be accurate, clear, and interesting for the listener.

To adjust the complexity of your information to the audience; avoiding jargon, creating
concrete images, limiting information only to what is most relevant, linking information
to what the audience already knows, and making information memorable through
language or personalization.

When presenting an informative speech, it is important to have proper supporting material to enhance your audience's understanding of your topic. Some forms of support include:

- Examples It is difficult to listen to someone speaking about an abstract idea with which you have little familiarity. As a listener in this situation, you are forced to do a lot of mental work and you may or may not fully grasp what the speaker is trying to say. It is a whole different experience when the speaker uses an example that illustrates the abstract idea. For example, a speaker might be talking about poor economic conditions in a certain area of the country. Rather than just leaving the concept of a "poor economy" as an idea, they should speak about the specific struggles of real live people with names and anecdotes.
- Statistics People tend to avoid statistics in a speech because they are afraid that people will find them boring. To the contrary, statistics can be interesting and informative if used correctly. The key is to pick statistics that are particularly startling or shocking. As long as the statistics add to the quality of the speech, and they do not misrepresent the situation, they can be used liberally.
- Facts A good informative speech is filled with facts. A "fact" is any bit of information that be verified as being "true". Whenever you present facts in a speech, you should cite the source of those facts so that the audience believes them (and you) to be credible.
- Expert Opinion An informative speech is not the time for your personal opinion, as that time will come on the persuasive speech. Expert opinion, however, can and should be used in an informative speech. Expert opinion involves using excerpts and quotations from people who are highly respected in the field about which you are speaking. It is important to state the credentials of the person whom you are quoting, if the audience is not familiar with this person. Otherwise, your quote will not have much impact.

Whatever forms of support you may be using in your informative speech, it is important to select those sources carefully. Make sure that you are using up-to-date information which is unbiased.

Outline of an Informative Speech

Introduction and the main thesis

The introduction should compel the audience to listen through the use of an attention-getter. It should provide a very brief summary of the topic you will be covering. The introduction should also have a strong and easily identifiable thesis statement; a brief overview of the main points.

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

The informative speech should contain three to four main points. Remember main points are key ideas about your topic that you will be focusing on. It should be organized in a way that helps the audience make sense of the message (topical, chronological, cause-effect, etc...). Each main point should be followed by evidence that supports that main point (supporting points which include things like facts, statistics, examples, explanations, definitions, testimonies).

Conclusion

All informative speeches should include a clear conclusion with a brief summary of the main points. No new information should be given to the audience in the conclusion. Keep in mind that an effective conclusion leaves the audience thinking about the speaker's message.

Outline Format

Introduction and the main thesis

- i. Attention-Getter:
- ii. Establishment of credibility
- iii. Background:

Thesis Statement: preview all main points

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

Number of Supporting Points/Sub-Supporting Points will vary. Supporting points include statistics, facts, explanations, examples, testimonies, definitions, comparisons, etc.)

Main Idea 1

Supporting Details

- i. Sub supporting Details 1
- ii. Sub supporting Details 2

Main Idea 2

Supporting Details

- i. Sub supporting Details 1
- ii. Sub supporting Details 2

Main Idea 3

Supporting Details

i. Sub supporting Details 1

ii. Sub supporting Details 2

Conclusion

- i. Summarize overall theme:
- ii. Review (each main point):
- iii. Creative concluding thought (end with impact):

Descriptive speech

The purpose of a descriptive speech is to capture one moment in time and recreate it by describing the essential elements of the moment in a manner that clearly reveals the essence of the experience. Your descriptive speech will focus on portraying a person, a place or a memory. You might describe an experience or an object. Focus your descriptive speech on anything you can perceive or experience. Your goal is to describe an object that your audience will visualize in rich detail. Your emotions and feelings are the star performers as you prepare for your descriptive speech. Use your senses as you write your speech. There are a number of steps to keep in mind in presenting clear and interesting description for your audience.

- Plan your descriptive speech by stating who or what you are going to describe.
- Think about what qualities will be the focus of your speech, and why are you giving this description.
- Make a simple outline of these points to organize your thoughts.
- Give your audience a vivid experience by focusing on the five senses: touch, taste, sight, sound and smell.

Outline of a Descriptive Speech

Introduction and the main thesis

The introduction serves to introduce your subject to the audience and give them enough context to fully understand your work—but keep it brief and interesting. When learning how to deliver a descriptive essay introduction, remember – the first paragraph is the part that can make your descriptive speech stand out from the others.

- Hook Sentence: Although the entire speech should be full of exciting and vivid descriptions, grabbing the audience's attention from the very beginning is ideal.
- Context/Background Information: Tell the audience what you are about to describe and explain why it is crucial to you. Give them a brief context for your speech.
- Thesis Statement: The descriptive speech thesis should be a short yet concise summary of the description. It must include the subject of your description, and your purpose for describing it.

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

There are usually three body paragraphs or more in a descriptive speech. They cover three different points or arguments. How many body paragraphs to include in your descriptive speech is entirely up to you.

- Start with a topic sentence. e.g. The orange looks familiar; it is a round citrus fruit whose colour matches its name.
- Add sensory details when describing the orange, appeal to relatable senses.
- Include actual details always include descriptive information within your body paragraphs.
- Finish a body paragraph by introducing the next. Transition sentences are essential because they create immersion within your speech.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should be a summary of all of the main points in the body text. It is a good idea to restate the main ideas of your speech. Try to incorporate the following into your conclusion:

- The first thing to do at the end is to reflect on the initial purpose of the speech.
- Signify the Importance of the Details: Give a summary of what you have covered, and prepare the audience for the clincher statement.
- Clincher Statement: The clincher is the final sentence that reinforces your speech's overall purpose or leaves your audience with an intriguing thought, question, or quote.

Argumentative Speech

The argumentative speech is one which is used to present an argument surrounding two side of any particular issue. The speech can be presented as a way of presenting both sides of the argument as equal or it might be presented with one side taking preference over the other. This would be done when you have a specific opinion on the topic. The main aim of an argumentative presentation is to change the opinions that the audience already has on a certain issue. Argumentative presentations are mostly based on current controversial issues.

Many students make the mistake of thinking that a persuasive and an argumentative speeches are the same thing. This misunderstanding is so common and largely rooted in the fact that persuasive and argumentative speeches are similar. Both types of speeches do attempt to convince the audience of something. However, they have some different functions;

• A persuasive speech uses facts combined with emotion in an attempt to get the reader to agree with the speaker's specific viewpoint. For instance, a persuasive speech might

- argue, "child abuse should be eradicated as it is one of the saddest evils of our time. It represents violence towards some of the most vulnerable, innocent and defenceless members of society."
- On the other hand, an argumentative speech selects a particular side of an issue and supports it. The overall goal of an argumentative speech is to use facts and logic to force the audience to recognize the validity of their overall argument. Hence, an argumentative speech might state, "child abuse should be eradicated because it causes well-documented physical and psychological harm to the child along with emotional scarring that can impede their ability to develop into healthy adults."
- Persuasive speeches have a more emotionally intense tone to the overall work. On the other hand, an argumentative speech is much calmer, relying on facts and a solid rationale to provoke the listener to acknowledge the soundness of the points made. An argumentative speech is made up of facts, details, and clear explanations to convincingly demonstrate that the speaker has points that are of much weight. All of these details and explanations are connected to logic.
- In every argumentative speech, there is an acknowledgement of opposing claims.
 However, the strength of an argumentative speech is that it is able to acknowledge those opposing claims, yet show why they are not as valid. This acknowledgement helps to strengthen the overall argument.

Elements of an Argumentative Speech

- **Position:** It is essential to determine which side of the argument you are taking. For example, you may be arguing that tobacco products or cannabis should be made illegal. Make a point to express why you took your initial position. For example, you may provide exact reasons to show how tobacco products may be damaging people's health.
- Evidence: This is where you should provide factual substantiation for your reasons from outside resources. It is very important to give citations and references for where you gathered your evidence. If there is no proof, the evidence may not be taken into account. For example, you could cite health studies or scientific papers related to the effects of tobacco products on peoples' health to prove your statement.

• **Counterarguments:** This is where you need to present the other side of the issue. Provide the opposing argument from your point of view. After stating these counterarguments, you should state why they are false, weak, or ineffective by presenting further evidence.

Outline of an Argumentative Speech

Introduction and the main thesis

The purpose of the introduction is to set up and state your claim. It should be one to two paragraphs at most. The introduction contains the following elements:

- It should be interesting in order to draw the attention of your audience.
- It should have some background information that will help the audience understand your claim.
- It should state the author and title when presenting about a literary work.
- You should provide a brief explanation of your theory if you are arguing about a theory.
- You should state your claim at the end of your paragraph.

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

These can include three or four paragraphs which purpose is to prove your argument. They entail:

- **Topic sentences**. This is a fact or detail that you can tell your audience to help them understand your presentation's topic better.
- **Explanation** for the topic sentences.
- Evidence. Introduce your evidence either in a few words or in a full sentence.
- **Explain evidence.** Make the audience understand how they should interpret the evidence that you have provided. Show how the evidence proves the point that you are bringing across.

Counterargument Paragraph

The purpose of this paragraph is to make you sound more objective and reasonable. It helps anticipate the objections of your audience. Include arguments that your audience might pose against your argument and refute them. End the paragraph with a concluding sentence that reasserts your paper's claim as a whole.

Conclusion

The purpose of the conclusion is to remind your audience of your argument and supporting evidence. Your conclusion should also illustrate that you have thought critically about the topic. It restates your presentation's overall claim and supporting evidence.

Your conclusion should:

- Not talk about the same exact thing as your introduction since this will prove that you have not done enough critical thinking.
- Tell your audience why they should care about your presentation.
- Create a sense of movement to a more complex understanding of your presentation's subject.
- Serve as your presentation's climax.

Outline Format

Introduction and the main thesis

- Background information: basic information about the issue and the position being argued.
- Thesis statement: states the position to be argued in the speech.

Body Paragraphs

• Reasons that support the thesis statement

Reason / Argument 1 (Main Point 1)

- Supporting Evidence
- Supporting Evidence

Reason / Argument 2 (Main Point 1)

- Supporting Evidence
- Supporting Evidence

Reason / Argument 3 (Main Point 1)

- Supporting Evidence
- Supporting Evidence

Counter Arguments and Responses to Them

- Mention the arguments from the other side of the issue if there could be an opposing interpretation.
- Briefly refute the other side's arguments.

Conclusion

Persuasive Speech

A persuasive speech is a speech that is given with the intention of convincing the audience to believe or do something. This could be virtually anything - voting, organ donation, recycling, and so on. The speech is arranged in such a way as to hopefully cause the audience to accept all or part of the expressed view. The success of a persuasive speech is often measured by the audience's willingness to consider the speaker's argument.

Methods of Persuasion

The Greek Philosopher Aristotle was considered to be one of the most articulate speakers. His ideas are as relevant today as they were around 300 B.C. According to him, there were three forms of rhetoric to influence people: ethos, pathos and logos.

- Ethos (*Credibility*): When giving a speech, it is essential for the speaker to exude an aura of knowledge showing people that the speaker knows exactly what he or she wishes to communicate.
- **Pathos** (*Emotional Appeal*): This is a major component of persuasive speech, followed by the most eloquent speakers. Many a time people do things because of a "feeling" or an appeal to their emotions. These emotions could be based on compassion or fear. It is important to make that emotional appeal to persuade the audience.
- Logos (*Logical Appeal*): It is important to provide evidence and reasons to support the appeal. Just like in court, where every appeal is combined with appropriate reasoning and evidence.

Outline of a Persuasive Speech

Introduction and the main thesis

- **Attention Grabber:** (Statement to wake the audience up/ make sure they are listening!)
- **Thesis:** (Tell listeners what action you want them to take—OR—how you want them to think.)
- Qualification: (Tell listeners your personal experience with your topic, making you qualified to affect their opinions about it.)
- **Thesis Statement**: the last sentence or two of your introduction should be your thesis statement, which is the central idea behind your presentation.

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

- **Reason 1:** (Tell one reason why listeners should act or think the way your thesis suggests.)
 - **i. Example 1**—Support for reason given above.
 - ii. Example 2—Support for reason given above.
 - **iii. Example 3**—Support for reason given above.

TRANSITION SENTENCE: (Smoothly connect Reason 1 with Reason 2)

- **Reason 2:** (Give listeners a second reason why they should act or think as you want them to.)
 - **i. Example 1**—Support for reason given above.
 - ii. Example 2—Support for reason given above.
 - **iii. Example 3**—Support for reason given above.

TRANSITION SENTENCE: (Smoothly connect Reason 2 with Reason 3.)

• **Reason 3:** (This should be your STRONGEST argument. Tell listeners the most important reason why they should act or think the way you want them to.)

- **i. Example 1**—Support for reason given above.
- ii. Example 2—Support for reason given above.
- **iii. Example 3**—Support for reason given above.

SIGNAL THE WRAP UP! (Move smoothly from Reason 3 to the conclusion of your speech.

Conclusion

- **Summary:** (Briefly remind listeners why they should agree with your position.)
- **Memorable Ending/Audience Challenge:** (End with a powerful closing thought or recommended course of action.)
- Thank Audience for Listening!

Sample Persuasive Speech

Please Help Keep the World Safe

Introduction and the main thesis

- **SP**: I want to actuate you to support banning guns.
- **Thesis**: We should oppose gun ownership because guns are a weapon of violence and they increase the number of children who die each year which in turn makes people blind to the fact they are killing their own children.

Introduction: Question: How many of you think guns are necessary to protect yourself? Would you feel the same way if you knew how often guns kill children? I don't think so! Magazines usually tell people how beautiful and powerful guns are, and never mention how many children get hurt by guns everyday. But I am here to ask all of you to oppose gun ownership because the fact is that guns are a weapon of violence, they take more lives away every year, and they make people blind to the fact they are killing their own children.

Body Paragraphs (Main Topic Sentences)

1. **Reason one**: Having guns around the house creates the opportunity for lethal violence.

People with guns who have unstable feelings or tempers can lead to violent consequence very easily.

My experience in a Chinese restaurant. (Explain)

A friend of my father shot his wife because of a simple argument.

2. **Reason two**: Guns pose such a significant risk to children.

Thousands of children dying by the gunfire each year.

Statistic: Eight children every day; and more than 50 children every week were killed by the gunfire. And every year, at least 4 to 5 times as many kids and teens

suffer from non-fatal firearm injuries. (Children's Defense Fund and National Center for Health Statistics)

Do we really need guns in our society?

3. **Reason three**: Guns create more family tragedies. Life can be taken very easily by improper use of firearms.

Quote: "Kalie was my baby sister, she loved pink. We were playing with her dolls. I found a gun in the drawer. It went off. I made Kalie go away. I hate me." (Atwan, America Now, 2003. Page 260)

People might think that they can keep their weapons properly, but if there are no guns at all, there would be no chance of any gun-related accidents.

Just think of Columbine High School and the senseless shootings there and all the families impacted by that tragedy.

Conclusion

Bullets cannot be taken back, and the profit of firearm businesses cannot buy the lives that have been taken by firearms; therefore, we need to oppose gun ownership. I challenge you, the audience, to oppose gun ownership and save a life!

Practice

Direction: Use the format of outline forms discussed earlier to exercise your brainstorming skills based on the topics provided below. You can choose one for every type of speech. Next, try presenting your speech in front of a small group.

- 1. Cybercrime and ways it is causing problems in the modern world.
- 2. The education system is changing.
- 3. Overcoming pressure in college.
- 4. Describe one of your happiest memories.
- 5. Describe one of your saddest memories.
- 6. Describe a time that you felt scared.
- 7. Describe one of your most embarrassing moments.
- 8. Are the Web Filters at Your School Too Restrictive?
- 9. Does Technology Make Us More Alone?
- 10. Do Apps Help You or Just Waste Your Time?
- 11. Do You Spend Too Much Time on Smart Phones Playing 'Stupid Games'?
- 12. Has Facebook Lost Its Edge?
- 13. What Should the Punishment Be for Acts of Cyberbullying?

- 14. Is Online Learning as Good as Face-to-Face Learning?
- 15. Can Cellphones Be Educational Tools?
- 16. The client is never right
- 17. McDonald's as the least favorite restaurant
- 18. When the clothes are everything that makes the man