

## **WEEK 9 NOTES**

### **The Principles of Speech Writing**

To craft an effective and relevant speech, the following principles of speech writing can serve as your guide:

- audience profile
- choosing a topic
- sourcing information
- outlining and organizing the content
- logical organization
- duration
- word choice
- grammatical correctness

#### **1. Audience Profile**

Audience profile pertains to the important details about your audience that will help you plan your speech.

Audience analysis entails looking into the profile of your target audience. This is done so you can tailor-fit your speech content and delivery to your audience. The profile includes the following information.

- Demography (age range, male-female ratio, educational background and affiliations or degree program taken, nationality, economic status, academic or corporate designations).
- Situation (time, venue, occasion, and size/population).
- Psychology (values, beliefs, attitudes, preferences, cultural and racial ideologies, and needs).

Situation 1: An alumnus receives an invitation to speak before the graduating class of his elementary school. In planning his speech, he considers the age of his intended audience, which, in this case, are 12-to 13-year-old grade 6 pupils, included in the audience are the pupils' parents and loved ones who will come to witness a milestone in their children's education. As such, the alumnus decides to use language that both the graduates and their parents and older loved ones will understand and relate to

As shown in the situation above, the speaker considered the event, age, and previous knowledge of the audience. By doing so, he will be able to craft a speech that will be relevant to the pupils, their parents, and everyone else in attendance. The said speech will also be easy to understand

and relate to. In addition, the speaker may even consider the audience's gender, educational level, occupations, and religious affiliations in planning his speech. Taking such things into consideration will allow a speaker to come up with a speech that is relevant, understandable, relatable, and even enjoyable. Moreover, considering variables such as age, gender, and religious affiliations will allow a speaker to avoid offensive or biased remarks and/or topics.

It is also important that you have an idea on how big your audience will be since speaking in front of 10-20 people is very different from speaking in front of hundreds or even thousands of people. When you, for instance, speak to a smaller audience, you might use more intimate and casual language; but if you speak to a larger audience, you might be inclined to use formal language.

Knowing your audience profile or characteristics will help you plan your speech in terms of topic, word choice, examples, language, and duration.

## **2. Choosing a Topic**

If you are given the choice of topic for your speech, start with what you know or are interested to know. Then if you have something in mind already, ask yourself the following questions:

- a. Is the topic interesting to my audience?
- b. Is it timely and relevant?
- c. Are there available sources of information on it?

If your answer is "yes" to all the given questions, then you have a potentially good topic in mind. Note that the answers to questions 1 and 2 entail a knowledge of your audience profile.

## **3. Sourcing Information**

When you have decided on a topic and are set to start compiling information about it, think of the possible sources you can consult. If your speech is about basketball, consider if the history of the sport can be found online or if there are published books about it. If your speech is about origami, where will you get new patterns to follow? Do you know an origami expert you can interview?

With your topic in mind, list as many information sources as possible: video documentaries; textbooks; other print sources such as magazines, journals, and newspapers; surveys/questionnaires; microfilms; and other similar materials. Once you have determined your

possible sources, you can begin your research. Make sure, though, that you take note of each source and that you cite all of your sources when you deliver the speech. Failure to properly cite your sources is tantamount to plagiarism and that will compromise your credibility.

#### 4. Outlining and Organizing Speech Content

There is a common and effective practice of outlining and organizing a speech, and this practice referred to as the Ride of Three. Many great speakers can keep the focus of their speeches by limiting the ideas to expound on to three. For example, what are the three things about basketball that interest you the most or who are the three greatest basketball players you want to talk about? If your speech is on origami, what three benefits can one get from learning this art? Simply put, limiting your main points to three allows you to better organize your speech. In turn, a focused and well-organized speech is easy to comprehend and follow.

#### 5. Logical Organization

Your speech must follow a certain flow if you intend to communicate your ideas clearly and effectively. The following are some patterns which you may use in crafting your speech.

- a. **Categorical/Topical** - This is the most common pattern for organizing a speech. In this pattern, the categories help the speaker organize the message in a consistent manner. The goal of using this pattern is to create categories (or chunks) of information that go together to help support the main idea.
- b. **Comparison/Contrast** - This pattern is used to compare and contrast subjects or ideas
- c. **Spatial** - This pattern organizes information according to how things fit together in physical space. The spatial pattern is appropriate when your main points are oriented to various locations that can exist independently. This pattern is best used if your goal is to show that your main points have clear locations.
- d. **Chronological** - This pattern places the main idea in the time order in which items appear. Here, you present information in the order in which they happened.
- e. **Biographical** - This pattern is usually employed when a speaker wants to describe a person's life-either the speaker's own life (autobiographical), the life of someone they know personally, or the life of a famous person. A speech using this pattern is mainly informative or entertaining.
- f. **Causal** - This pattern is used to explain cause-and-effect relationships. When you use a causal speech pattern, your speech will have two main points: cause and effect. In the first main point, you will typically talk about the causes of a phenomenon; in the second main point, you will usually show how the causes lead to either a specific effect or a small set of effects.

- g. **Problem-Cause-Solution** - This pattern describes a problem, identifies what you believe is causing the problem, and then recommends a solution to correct the problem.
- h. **Psychological** - In this pattern, *a* leads to *b* and *b* leads to *c*. This speech format is often used in persuasive speeches as it is designed to follow a logical argument.

Each of the patterns mentioned is useful for a specific purpose or goal only; conversely, not all organizational patterns work for all speeches. For instance, the biographical pattern is useful only if you are sharing about the life of a person; if your purpose is to persuade, then the biographical pattern will not be useful. The challenge then is to identify the goal or purpose of your speech and then choose the pattern that will best serve your goal or purpose.

## 6. Duration

Time is important, and a speaker should always bear that in mind. As such, a speech must be just long enough to fulfill your speech goals but short enough to hold your audience's attention. For example, the president's State of the Nation Address (SONA) lasts between 30 and 90 minutes to allow the head of state time for a comprehensive delivery of relevant information. A very short SONA might not include all the details that the citizens might deem important. On the other hand, a very long SONA might bore the audience.

Another example is a toast speech, which is delivered on important occasions such as a birthday to honor a celebrant. In such a situation, the toast is expected to be short and sweet, so to speak-not long and winding. In many ways, such is the case for other speeches like welcome remarks and speaker or guest introductions.

## 7. Word Choice

As discussed already, your choice of words will depend primarily on the type of audience. Another consideration, though, is the situation, occasion, or event in which you will deliver the speech. As such, you should always keep in mind that there are appropriate words to say on specific occasions. Moreover, the formality of the language you will use will depend on the occasion. A graduation speech, for instance, often requires the use of formal language. A send-off speech, on the other hand, allows for more informal language.

## 8. Grammatical Correctness

Editing/Revising your written speech involves correcting errors in mechanics, such as grammar, punctuation, capitalization, unity, coherence, and others. You may use free, online grammar checkers or ask another person to check your work.

As a second language speaker of English, you are not expected to be perfectly proficient in it. Nevertheless, you should strive to learn and master the language so you can avoid grammatical lapses, especially the obvious ones. Lapses that are obvious and repetitive may make it difficult for your listeners to completely grasp the message you want to convey. Moreover, a discerning audience will notice your mistakes and may be less inclined to listen to you either because they cannot completely understand what you are trying to say, or they do not think you a credible speaker.

If you are to deliver a prepared speech, make time to edit it or have it edited for grammatical correctness. If you are to deliver an extemporaneous speech, practice thinking and expounding on ideas based on an outline. Record your practice speeches and listen to yourself. Better yet, have somebody listen to you speak and ask for feedback so you may avoid repeating the grammatical mistakes you are making.

Whatever the situation, keep in mind that learning and practicing the use of the English language will help you become a better speaker.