

The Written Word

This is designed for delay: Delay between when the message is created and when it is received. Delay in how the message itself is taken in.

When words are read, the eye has the leisure to go back over the things it didn't understand, to reread and re-assimilate. Reading a written message, we take in information at *our* pace, not the writer's. Words alone create the sound of the author's voice.

You, as speech *writer*, rely on that process, too. You design your words to say it all. Then, you critique by reading and rereading them, testing to see if the words—as read—give the message.

But that's not how your audience will receive it. So you're analyzing a very different version of your speech than your audience will get.

The Spoken Word

Oral communication is instantaneous and doesn't rely on words alone. It depends on and is heightened by your delivery. Pace, rhythm, inflection, phrasing, pitch, facial expression all shape the message and define the author's "voice." The words serve only as *part* of what is communicated.

Oral communication cannot exist without the speaker.

Performance

Reading a written speech leaves little room for performance since the speaker must continually return to the printed page. This gives your message the quality of being extremely controlled and withheld.

Extemporaneous speaking from notes leaves the speaker free to move; to use different parts of the stage, to gesture spontaneously—all adding to the image of a live, fully committed performance given as a gift to the audience.

Flexibility

Extemporaneous speech is interactive, not one-way. This means you can see and "feel" your audience *at the moment* and know just how it's going—"too slow," "too big a bite," "need to go back again." Since you're creating at the moment, you're flexible. You can add, subtract, and explain again based on what's happening to that audience, right then. No guessing in advance about how much is enough.