

In a written speech, you're stuck. There is no flexibility. You can't stop and fix anything if you feel you're losing your audience. God forbid that you stray away from the text and try to improvise! Finding your way back in as you fumble through the paragraphs is a disaster, and when you do get back in, you'll usually find that you've already just said some of the text, and differently. You're thrown off your pace, have blown your cool, and feel like an exposed clod.

The Use of Language Is Different

The spoken word uses much shorter sentences. Because you see your audience as you speak, the tendency is to be much more informal and conversational, using simpler words more commonly used. You also know, subconsciously, that you can rely on the vocal, physical and performance aspects of communicating to help deliver and explain your message.

Writing is a much more formal means of communicating. What's called to mind when you write a speech is explicit textbook language (a little dry and long-winded) and formal phrases (a little stiff), as well as the professional shorthand language used most often in written memos from above. When you write, rather than thinking of the most direct, simple way to say something, the tendency is to fall into pattern and cliché based on what you think sounds professional and smart as you read it.

The Effect of Written Speeches on the Audience

Marching up, speech in hand, and plunking it down on the lectern to read brings forth to audiences mainly negative images. The usual effects of reading a speech are that:

- It creates a conditioned reflex born of all the boring, professorial, or sermonizing orations your audience has ever heard.
- The authorship can be suspect; who actually wrote it? Since most written speeches are devoid of personal touches, nothing feels like your particular hallmark.
- Your natural conversational style is altered into a more formal, removed, and stilted one. This presents *you* as formal, removed, and stilted, too.
- Seamless delivery without faltering or looking for a word, neither backtracking nor trying another explanation, is not how you, or