

# A Speaker's Guide

## To Painless and Successful Public Speaking

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<http://knowledge.ncsa.uiuc.edu/guidebooks.html>

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# It's a Process!

- Successful public speaking is a process:
  - Writing your speech
  - Delivering it
  - Refining your content and style



# Six Steps to Master Orator

- Writing the Speech
- Speech Time
- Improving Your Public Speaking
- Technical Considerations
- Posters
- Checklist



# Step 1: Writing the Speech

- Focusing Your Thoughts
- Tailoring
- Introduction/Catch
- The Body
- The Conclusion



# Focusing Your Thoughts

- Your Theme / Message (Why are you walking up to that podium?) Telling them something or asking them to believe in something?
- You have lots of ideas, but you need to focus them around one central core.
- *“if you can't write your idea on the back of my calling card, you don't have a clear idea”*  
(David Belasco)



# Tailoring

- Speaking TO your audience, not AT them!
- Does the audience share your background in the topic?
- Some points may resonate better with one audience than another.



# Introduction / Catch

- First 10 seconds are the most important. Start off with *catch* to reel your audience in: famous quotes, memorable anecdotes, or surprising findings
- Once you have lost your audience it is hard to get them back, but once you catch them, they are likely to listen through to the end



# Introduction / Catch – Part 2

- If your speech is informational, you are done with introduction.
- But, what if you are asking your audience to AGREE with a viewpoint? Asking your audience to join you means you have to help them join you. HOW to participate, WHEN to get involved, WHAT they can do?



# Introduction / Catch – Part 3

- Eloquence emotional appeals can be **POWERFUL** for asking your audience to join you. Draw in famous figures and movements that they know and relate to.
- *“they may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”*  
(Carl W. Buechner)



# The Speech Body

- Outline \*
- Humor (Differs by audience)
- Associate with Audience
- Rationality \*
- Examples
- Imagery (People remember vivid imagery)
- Conversational Language (Not a thesaurus competition)
- Leave Precise Values to the Paper (90%, not 90.12311%)
- Keep Background Section Positive (Conference Literature Reviews)



# Outline

- A speech is a small paper.
- Start off with a set of bullets of your core points and then iteratively build into an outline.
- Flesh each outline bullet out into a few sentences and then glue them together.
- Use Word 2003's "Document Map" feature.



# Rationality

- Even political speeches have a concrete base, such as adding jobs or improving education, upon which the grandstanding and fiery monologue builds.
- Need to infuse your speech with strong pragmatism to which the audience can relate and understand your suggestions.
- Don't just say "the world should be like X", tell the audience WHY!



# The Conclusion

- *“Many speakers need no introduction; what they need are conclusions.”*  
(Anonymous)
- MOST IMPORTANT part of your speech. This is what the audience remembers when they leave.
- Don't summarize your speech, leave them with the one core theme or thought.



# Step 2: Speech Time!

- → Writing and giving a speech are very different!
- Queuing / Walking to the Stage
- Delivering the Speech
- Dealing with Nervousness
- Things to Keep in Mind on Stage
- Brevity and Keeping on Time
- Focus On and Ignore Your Audience
- Questions and Answers



# Preparing

- Few people are afraid of writing words on paper, but speaking them in front of a crowd of strangers brings a fluttering heartbeat like no other.
- Find an empty lecture hall / conference room and practice! Helps a LOT to get used to the size of the room!
- Prep rooms at conferences.



# Queuing / Walking to the Stage

- First impressions are the most important
- Starts when you walk into room, not when you open your mouth.
- Stride towards stage with confidence!  
Hold notes / laptop in non-dominant hand.
- Stage makeup (for men too!)



# Delivering the Speech

- Practice Practice Practice!
- Prepared Remarks (great for beginners and for eloquence / emotional speeches)
- Preempt Technology Troubles (arrive early and test!)
- Focus Inwardly (forget about the audience)
- **TURN YOUR CELLPHONE OFF!**



# Dealing with Nervousness

- *“There are only two types of speakers in the world: 1) The nervous and 2) Liars”* (Mark Twain)
- EVERYBODY gets nervous. Have to channel that nervousness into confidence.
- You can be a complete wreck while sitting in the audience, but when you stride across the stage you need to radiate confidence and comfort.



# Dealing with Nervousness - 2

- Unchecked, can wreak havoc on your onstage persona.
- Realize that for good or bad, you are here to give a speech and that nothing you do at this point will change the outcome.
- If you focus on your nervousness, it will manifest itself and lead to a self-perpetuating situation where you make mistakes, become more nervous, and spiral downward.



# Dealing with Nervousness - 3

- Realize that this audience is here to listen to you and that they know you are going to do well, or else they wouldn't be here. I like to subconsciously convince myself as I walk up on stage that everyone in the room is an old friend of mine and they are all just happy to hear me talk no matter what I say or do, and in an instant my nervousness is gone.



# Dealing with Nervousness - 4

- Prepared remarks make it easier: there is no worry about forgetting your lines and you have the comfort of your notes
- Always bad audience members, but focus on the good ones, the ones that are looking right at you and smiling or nodding in agreement.
- Once you become very comfortable with public speaking, you will find that your nervousness becomes excitement and you look forward to, rather than dread, stepping out in front of a large crowd of people.



# Keep in Mind on Stage

- Eye Contact
- Steady Voice
- Speak at a Conversational Pace
- Keep Going After Mistakes
- Avoid Silence-Fillers (um... er...uh...)
- Ask Rhetorical Questions
- Be Animated
- Move Your Hands, Not Your Body
- Stand Upright, Don't Lean on Podium
- Move, Don't Pace
- Take Everything in Stride
- Don't Apologize



# Brevity and Keeping on Time

- Keep watch on podium to track your time
- With prepared remarks, note in margin what time you should hit each heading, and speed up / slow down to keep on time.
- Powerpoint's auto slide advance feature



# Brevity and Keeping on Time - 2

- *“when a sermon at length comes to an end, people rise and praise God, and they feel the same way after many other speeches.”* (John Andrew Holmes)
- Brevity: Why do we love quotations?
- *“the most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do”* (Thomas Jefferson )



# Focus On And Ignore Your Audience

- Eye contact is CRUCIAL!
- Sweep around room, looking at general points within the audience to make sure to connect with each and every person.
- When reading from prepared remarks, look up each sentence to a different point in the room.
- Ignore troublesome audience members



# Questions and Answers

- Never Lose Poise
- Minimal Detail (answer the question concisely)
- Encourage Questions (*Boy this sure is a quiet group! Does anyone have questions about the way I presented X?*)



# Questions and Answers - 2

- *I can't recall the specifics of that particular project off the top of my head, but thank you for mentioning it, I will definitely take a look at it when I get back.*
- *Again, thanks for bringing that up, and I will certainly take a look at it in more detail when I get back and I'd be more than happy to talk with you offline about it*



# Step 3: Improving Your Public Speaking

- Improving Your Content
- Improving Your Style



# Improving Your Content

- Look for speech archives of famous figures like politicians on their websites
- Write up a rough draft and send to friends for thoughts



# Improving Your Style

- Energy, delivery stance, silence-fillers, and confidence all play crucial roles in how an audience perceives your message. They remember the **WAY** you gave the speech, not always its **CONTENT**
- Video tape yourself speaking.
- Watch videos on YouTube of political and other famous speeches for ideas



# Step 4: Technical Considerations

- Whose Laptop? (Bring your own, or have to use theirs?)
- Where's the Laptop? (Front or back of room?)
- Slide Remotes.
- Internet Available?
- DVI or VGA?
- Configured for Projection (Have you ever used your laptop with a projector before?)
- Split Screen vs Mirroring.
- Bring Multiple Copies (CD/USB/Web)
- Be Wary of Video
- Be Wary of Sound
- Is There Light? (enough light to read at podium when house lights are turned down?)



# Step 5: Posters

- Designing the Poster
- Printing the Poster
- Shipping the Poster
- Presenting the Poster
- Takeaway



# Designing the Poster

- Interesting Background (gradient / PowerPoint slide background)
- Positioning of Elements (balanced)
- Text Size
- Amount of Text
- Lots of Images



# Printing / Shipping

- Convert to PDF before bringing to printshop. Also prints faster!
- Acrobat Pro can break a big poster into 8.5x11" pages automatically if you can't afford poster printing.
- Don't pack in luggage: UPS/FedEX and also plan how to ship HOME!



# Presenting / Takeaway

- Don't ask people if they'd like to hear about your poster, just start talking to anyone that glances in your direction.
- Don't feel bad about people coming and going, just keep talking.
- *Interactive and Interruptions*
- Electronics like video or slideshows draw people in.
- Handouts with your URL to give to people.



# Step 6: Checklist

- Last page of the guidebook is a handy checklist for your next speech! Print it off and keep with you!



# Thank You!

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Thank you for having me!



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