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## Complete an “Education” Presentation

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### Speech Tips

#### **1. I am so scared of giving my speech. How do I get over my nervousness?**

Nervousness is natural. Think of it as a friend rather than an enemy. You need your nervousness to do well in your speech. Your body prepares you to give a speech by delivering chemicals to your system, like adrenalin, to help you respond appropriately to the occasion. It's called the fight or flight response. The physical reactions to these hormones vary, but among them are shortness of breath, dry mouth, sweaty palms and butterflies in your stomach. Athletes, actors, people faced with sudden startling events, and public speakers all face the feelings that come from the fight or flight response. The difference between seasoned performers and students new to public speaking is their attitude about those feelings. Performers are accustomed to the nervous feelings and know how to channel their energy toward doing a good job. In fact, they may get worried if they **DON'T** feel nervous. You can get used to your nervousness too, and make it work to your advantage. To gain mastery over your fight or flight response, remember that nervousness is normal. Everybody feels it. To help calm yourself, breathe deeply. Visualize yourself doing a good job. Most important, prepare your speech well. If your speech is well-researched and organized, and you've practiced it out loud at least five times, you are likely to do a good job and to feel more relaxed and confident.

#### **2. I don't know what to talk about. What is a good topic?**

Choose a topic that you care about, have experience with, or wish to learn more about. Why spend time researching and talking about a subject that doesn't interest you? The more enthusiastic you are about your topic, the better you will communicate to your audience.

#### **3. What is the difference between an informative and persuasive speech?**

Be sure you know the general purpose of your speech. Are you *informing* your audience, or *persuading* them? In an informative speech, your role is as a teacher, giving information. In a persuasive speech, you are acting as an advocate. Very often, when students first begin to think of topics for an informative speech, they come up with great ideas for *persuasive* speeches. When we think of topics we care about, often we think about issues first, and that leads us to consider a topic that involves arguing for change. That's persuasive! If this has happened to you, don't worry. Just set the topic aside for your persuasive speech assignment, and then consider other possibilities for informative topics.

#### **4. I'm afraid my audience will be bored.**

Consider what will interest your audience. We all like to learn new things. Can you teach the class something new? We also like to hear about issues that are important to us. Look around at the people in your classroom and think about what their concerns are, and what issues they struggle with every day. For example, if you have any ideas about saving money, or staying healthy, or how to get better grades, chances are good that other people in your class will be interested in your insights. Whether the topic is familiar or unusual, you can make it interesting if you find a way to relate it to the audience's needs. In fact, even more important than the topic is the way you choose to relate the topic to your audience. There are problems to avoid in selecting a topic. For example, if your subject is very technical, you either have to make it accessible to your audience or choose something less technical. Ask yourself, what does my audience already know about this topic? Don't assume they know as much as you do. But if they are unfamiliar with your subject, it doesn't mean that you should

choose something else; only that you need to define terms and give background so that the audience can follow your ideas. Look at your textbook chapter on selecting a topic to review other problems areas in selecting a topic.

### **5. What's the difference between a specific purpose and a central idea?**

The specific purpose and central idea are **TOOLS** to help you in your thinking about your speech. The specific purpose defines your action in the speech, what you want to accomplish. The central idea is like a thesis statement in an essay; it is a statement of your main points.

**SPECIFIC PURPOSE:** The specific purpose begins with either the phrase, to inform or the phrase to persuade. That's because the specific purpose defines what you will accomplish, either To inform my audience, or To persuade my audience. The words my audience are included to help you to remember whom your speech is for; in this case, your peers. It's called a specific purpose because the topic has to be narrowed to fit the time limit.

**CENTRAL IDEA:** Usually you can't decide what your main points will be until you do some research and develop your ideas with the audience in mind. Sometimes you may start with a central idea that changes after you've done some research. That's fine! It means your ideas are developing. Remember that the specific purpose and central idea are tools to help you clarify your thinking about your topic, which in turn will help you communicate more clearly to the audience.

### **6. I have to do research? Where do I get research materials?**

The library, the internet, books, magazines, newspapers, reference materials and interviews all are sources of research. Research takes time. Once you learn how to do it, you will gain a powerful learning tool. You will gain confidence in your abilities. The only way to learn it is to do it. Go to the library, ask for help, use the computer.

### **7. There are no research materials for my topic. What should I do?**

There's a reason they call this the information age. You can find research materials for anything. Use your imagination in seeking sources (this doesn't mean **MAKE UP** sources!). If you feel you don't need research because you already know about the topic, then ask yourself, How did I learn about this topic? If your knowledge comes from personal experience, ask yourself, How would someone who knows nothing about this topic learn about it on his or her own? Remember that you can help your listeners by providing them with resources so they can learn more. That's one of the benefits of using research in your speech. Research also strengthens your presentation by providing you with examples, testimony and statistics; in other words, your supporting evidence. Why should the audience believe what you say, unless you tell us where you learned it? Citing your sources enhances your credibility. Use the library resources to find research materials, look on the internet, ask friends or faculty for suggestions. Be a detective. The answers are out there; you just have to follow the trail.

### **8. The web page for my topic gives me all the information I need. Can I just use this for my outline?**

You probably already know that the answer to this is **NO**. Why? Because it's plagiarism. An instructor can spot it in half a second. In any case, web pages are usually crammed with more detail and more main points than you should use in a speech. You can use the information on the web page, but pick and choose according to what

you've decided the audience needs to know. Another point: do your best to make sure the web page is legitimate. There is no guarantee that information you find on the web is accurate. Its value depends on the organization or person hosting the page.

### **9. There aren't any visual aids that go with my topic. What should I do?**

Every topic has some idea that can be represented visually. Don't limit yourself to thinking of objects or photographs; charts of all kinds can be used. Think of the most important ideas you want to reinforce in your audience, close your eyes and picture what you want them to see. Even if it's just a few large words on a poster, that's a start.

### **10. How should I start my speech?**

The introduction of your speech is very important. Don't take your audience's attention for granted. You must prepare them to hear what you have to say. There are some variations on what to do, but the general approach is: Capture attention by asking a question, telling a story, using a thought-provoking quote or startling statistic and/or using your visual aid. Whatever you say should be firmly related to your topic. Tell us why it's important to listen. Tell us why we should listen to you (your experience and research). Tell us what the speech will be about (your purpose and main points).

### **11. How should I end my speech?**

Signal the end of your speech. Remember that an audience can't read what you're saying; they don't know you're at the end of your talk unless you tell them. Summarize your speech, then end with a final statement that leaves the audience with a strong feeling about the content of your speech.

### **12. I don't know what my main points are. Can you help me?**

Main points are best decided based on a plan of organization. The choice of organization derives from the type of speech you're giving. Is your topic about an object? A process? A concept? An event? If the topic is about a process or an event, chronological (time) order works well. Other organizational patterns are spatial (space), topical (by topic), cause and effect, and problem-solution. Another way to decide about your main points is to ask yourself, What does my audience need to know to understand my speech? Begin by defining your terms and giving general background so that the audience has a context for the details you give later on. If you're really stuck, another strategy is to write an essay about your topic, then look at each paragraph in the essay. The first sentence--or whatever is your topic sentence in the paragraph--is a main point.

### **13. Can I just write down the key words for my outline, or do I have to write full sentences?**

Each instructor decides what format she or he wants students to use. Some instructors ask for full sentence outlines; others accept a key word outline. Find out what your instructor wants. The differences between instructors come from differences in opinion about how to achieve good speech delivery. Whatever preparation format you use, you are responsible in your speech delivery for correct grammar and pronunciation, proper citing of sources within the speech, having an introduction, body, conclusion, and transitions between your ideas. The more time you spend on your preparation outline, the more likely you will accomplish all these tasks.

### **14. What is the difference between a preparation outline and a speaking outline?**

A preparation outline contains all the words you plan to say in outline format, with bibliography. A speaking outline is what you prepare for the actual delivery of the speech. It can be a key word outline, or a full sentence outline highlighted and with comments on the side to remind yourself to pause or show the visual aid at certain points in the speech. It's like a script that you can use to direct yourself while you're giving the speech. Some

people like to use note cards, others lay out their page in ways that they can follow easily. Once again, be sure you know what your instructor's requirements are regarding your speaking outline. Extemporaneous delivery requires the use of notes; don't try to give your speech without them!

**15. I don't have to practice my speech once I write it, do I?**

You're joking, right? No matter how much research you've done, no matter how well you've written the speech, no matter how beautiful your visual aids are, you **MUST** practice your speech, out loud, using your notes and your visual aids, and timing yourself. You should practice your speech **AT LEAST FIVE TIMES** before you deliver it in class.

**16. My speech is over the time limit. What should I do?**

Cut something. Don't try to talk really fast and get under the limit. Consider what you can take out, but make sure the speech still makes sense. Maybe you have an example that is too long. Maybe a part of your introduction is unnecessary. Read through the speech and make sure all the ideas follow each other. Perhaps you have some extraneous information. Remember the purpose of your speech and what the audience is supposed to get from it. Are you doing what you set out to do? Finally, if you still can't find anything to cut, ask for advice. Once you've cut something, practice the speech again, and this time, try to pick up the pace. Maybe you need more energy in your delivery, or you need to cut out some of your vocalized pauses (umm, you know, ahhh, like).

**17. I have trouble making eye contact. What should I do?**

Practice your speech many times. Don't practice looking at the page--look up at the wall of the room where you're working. Once you're comfortable looking up and down at the page when you need to, start visualizing a room full of people, and move your head as you speak to include everyone in the room. Remember that the audience wants to hear your speech and wants you to do well. When it's time to give your speech, forget about your self-consciousness by putting your audience first. Focus on what your speech will bring to the audience when they hear about your topic. Reach out to your classmates with your voice, your enthusiasm, and with the focus of your eyes. Relax and believe in yourself. Once you've done your speech preparation, you have something to say, and we want to listen.

**Sample Outline for a Speech**  
Include your speech title here

Your Name  
Date of Presentation

TEMPLATE

Purpose: (Why are you giving this talk?)

Thesis: (What is it you want your audience to understand?)

**I. Introduction**

- A. Attention Getter
- C. Thesis Statement
- B. Need to Know Statement (Why should audience care about this topic, what's in it for them?)
- D. Preview of Main Points (Points 1, 2, 3)

*Transition: "So, let's begin with...."*

**II. Body**

**A. Main Point #1**

- 1. Subordinate Point (e.g., "According to")
  - a. Support (e.g., example, statistic, visual, testimonial)
  - b. Support
- 2. Subordinate Point (e.g., "According to")
  - a. Support
  - b. Support

*Transition/Signpost: "Now, that we have already learned that..., let's look at...."*

**B. Main Point #2**

- 1. Subordinate Point (e.g., "According to")
  - a. Support
  - b. Support
- 2. Subordinate Point (e.g., "According to")
  - a. Support
  - b. Support

*Transition/Signpost: "So, we have already learned that.... and that..., Finally, let's look at...."*

**C. Main Point #3**

- 1. Subordinate Point (e.g., "According to")
  - a. Support
  - b. Support
- 2. Subordinate Point (e.g., "According to")
  - a. Support
  - b. Support

*Transition: "In conclusion, we can see that (review main points)"*

**III. Conclusion**

- A. Restate purpose of speech and your thesis
- B. Memorable statement for closing



Independent Living Program  
Take Home Activity

**Independent Living Program Activity Card**

**Category: EDUCATION**

**Activity: Complete an "Education" Presentation**

**Proficiency  
Certificate  
Eligible**

**Description:** The objective of this assignment is to help you develop public speaking skills by doing a presentation at an ILP workshop. The presentation can be on anything you choose related to the "Education" subject. **You will need to turn in a one-page outline of your presentation to an ILP Coordinator prior to your presentation.**

Total Dollars Earned:

  (ILP Use Only)
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You may earn \$25.00 ILP dollars for completing this assignment.
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Youth Signature	_____ Group Home (If Applicable)
_____ Print Name (Youth)	

<b>Receipt</b>
(ILP Use Only)