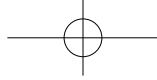




Part One

Guidelines for Public Speaking 演讲的基本原则

- i. Introduction: Speaking in Public Requires More than a Voice**
- ii. How to Write a Speech (I): Script Content**
- iii. How to Write a Speech (II): Script Preparation**
- iv. How to Deliver a Speech (I): Vocal Delivery**
- v. How to Deliver a Speech (II): Physical Delivery**
- vi. Impromptu Speaking**



i. Introduction: Speaking in Public Requires More than a Voice

These guidelines are written for university students who want to improve their public speaking skills through competition or otherwise. They indicate some of the proven skills required and briefly indicate how they may be achieved.

A prepared speech should be written before it is delivered. This allows speakers to ensure that they are making relevant and sensible comments in a logical order and using appropriate language. It is evident that preparation requires practice and rehearsal, but it also requires the written speech to be worked on so that notes can be used effectively. Guidance will be given as to how to do this.

When giving a speech or presentation, the “how” is as important as the “what”. It has been found that 70% of communication is visual rather than verbal. Therefore, the content alone may not be enough to hold the interest of an audience. Indeed, there are many potentially interesting and entertaining topics that are made boring because the speaker has not learnt how to deliver their ideas and information appropriately. Likewise, interesting content well delivered in visual terms can be destroyed by a flat monotone, a harsh harangue or a weak chatty voice.

Learning how to give a short speech for which there has not been time given for preparation is a useful skill. It enables people to practice thinking on their feet whilst at the same time organizing what they want to say into an understandable structure. Guidance is provided on how to deal with impromptu speeches.

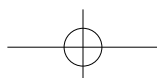
Guidance is therefore given in three sections:

- **How to write a speech – script content and script preparation**
- **How to deliver a speech – vocal delivery and physical delivery**
- **Impromptu speeches**

Note: Speaking competitions are sometimes judged under 3 headings: Manner (delivery), Matter (content) and Method (language). Method, the language element comes into both delivery (how you say something) and the content (what you say) so it has not been treated as a separate section in these guidelines.

ii. How to Write a Speech (I): Script Content

The English language requires the speaker or writer to make themselves clear. It is not up to the listener or reader to guess what is meant. Therefore it is important to be clear what you want to say and to choose the correct language. A collection of words without meaning (empty words) will not work. Nearly all effective public speakers will write their script in full and work on it before delivering their speech. It is known, for example, that Winston Churchill, one of Great Britain’s greatest orators, who



had an exceptional command of the English language worked late into the nights on his speeches. They may have sounded spontaneous, but were anything but!

Answering the following questions will help you get started on the right track.

1. What is the topic of your speech? If it has been given to you, then what does it mean?
2. Before starting to prepare a speech, think about who will be in your audience, what do they already know, what do they want to know, what will interest them?
3. Why are you giving the speech, what do you want to achieve, what is your message?
4. How long should you speak for? Where will you deliver your speech?
5. What are you going to say?

In order to answer number 5, brainstorm, think and discuss with friends, colleagues and teachers. Read and research your subject. Gather information and ideas. Make notes.

Also be brave! Be prepared, sometimes, to disagree with the sentiment in the statement or quotation but always give your reasons. Be careful about doing this with very well established ideas. They are well established because they have stood the test of time and have been challenged by many people before you. However, even if arguing for a point, be brave and look at the negative aspects. Few issues are black and white and discussing the negative may strengthen the positive. For example, if giving a speech on what you think is the greatest invention and you decide that it is “*eye glasses*”, describe what the world would be like without glasses: people bumping into each other, less cars on the road or more accidents; people unable to read, written instructions having to be in huge type, rather than describing what glasses can do for people.

Another approach is to challenge normally accepted ideas – disagree with them! For example, why is the Internet addictive? Is it? Maybe it isn't? Perhaps people just don't have anything else in their lives, are too lazy to find other forms of entertainment or have no imagination? What happened to books, music, art? Is reading addictive?

A good speech will have:

- A clear message and purpose
- Interest to the audience
- Adequate development of ideas
- A clear structure
- Logical flow – transitions and signposting
- An entertainment element – humor and/or word pictures



- The use of quotations and idioms

- Appropriate language

A clear message and purpose

- Many speakers are tempted to try to say everything they know about a topic in order to show that they have done their homework and to prove how clever and deep thinking they are. This is a mistake! A list of undeveloped ideas is useless. The audience doesn't have time to think about one idea before the next is spoken and even if they could, they can't mind-read what the speaker thinks or means.
- A good speech will have one clear message (especially true if it is a short speech) that the audience can find convincing. It will attempt to change people's perceptions, to provide a new or unusual way of looking at the topic or to provide entertainment. This is why it is necessary to research your topic to find interesting and relevant information.
- Generally, a speech should have few ideas but each idea should be developed in greater depth with more analysis than is often the case. (See "Adequate development of ideas" on Page 5.)

Interest to the audience

- There is no value in stating the obvious. It is not interesting to talk about how much you love your parents or grandparents since this is self-evident. 99% of people in the world love their family. What would be more interesting would be to explore why some people don't love their families, though for that, you may need a PhD in psychology and psychiatry to be able to talk with any authority! Speakers should not make self-evident statements as if they are profound thought. Indeed, they should not make self-evident statements in a public speech at all.
- Don't underestimate the intelligence of your audience. People won't find an idea or information interesting if they already know it or if it is obvious. For example, in one competition, the topic given for the prepared speech was "The Internet". Many speakers wasted time and annoyed their audience by describing the Internet. This was unnecessary since the audience, all university students and judges would already know what it is. Similarly, don't say "*When I was young, I learnt to walk and talk.*" That is obvious!
- In English, moralistic platitudes such as "*working hard for tomorrow*", "*striving to do one's best*", "*wanting to live a good life*" and "*hoping for a bright future*" are self-evident and therefore not interesting. Similarly, phrases, such as "*a bright future*", "*attaining my dream*", are clichéd and in English sound insincere. Don't say "*You should work hard and you will realize your dreams.*" That is nonsense! Many people work hard all their lives and don't realize their dreams because their dreams are unrealistic, or they don't have and can't learn the necessary skills, or they just don't get the lucky breaks. All intelligent people know that hard work is likely to bring some reward, and they don't have to be told so.

Adequate development of ideas

- a) Having decided how you will tackle the topic, it is important to then develop your ideas. This means looking below the surface of the obvious. Many potentially good ideas die for lack of development. Too often a speech is made up of a lot of disconnected sound-bites or obtuse sentences which relate to the topic but which cannot be understood without further development. The English language requires speakers and writers to be clear and not to leave room for multiple interpretations.
- b) Less is more! This means that rather than thinking of a lot of things to say about the topic of the speech, it is much better to take one point and develop that point. Educated people are expected to display a reasonably high degree of analysis when they stand before an audience. For example, instead of listing all the possible uses of the Internet in modern life – pick on one and show what effect it has. *“Children living in remote rural areas can be taught online. They can have access to teachers via email and get tutorial help on a one-to-one basis, even face to face where there is a video link. Money would be saved by not having to provide school buildings and children could live at home instead of having to board. Distance learning has been available to rural children in Australia for many years initially via radio links...”* By delving deeper, speakers look for interesting, unusual or little known perspectives and then explore them. This will help to make the speech interesting.
- c) When given a topic, don't think “What do I think about this?” Better is to explore the topic by thinking “What does this mean? What are the implications? What might other people in other societies think? How can I challenge this idea?” Exploring means following different paths to see where they might lead. You don't have to agree with or believe in any of them in order to use them.
- d) However, you do have to substantiate all assertions. In other words, give reasons for saying what you say. Analyze and think through the implications of what you are asserting. Give clear reasons and examples for anything that you state, otherwise why should anyone believe you? Provide hard evidence in the form of acceptable statistics, if possible.
- e) Make any description vivid by using appropriate adjectives and adverbs and word pictures. For example, *“Have you ever seen a tree that is growing plastic bags? Not a pretty sight is it? Our urban environment need not look like a rubbish dump if everyone stopped throwing their rubbish in the streets for other people to clean up or the wind to blow into the trees. Imagine if our cities were litter free. How much prettier they would look! How much healthier they would be!”*
- f) Keep any story very short and try to make them relevant to your audience. Don't tell long rambling story about a friend in your hometown who the audience can't know or care about. Remember you must convince your audience that what you are saying is worthy of their attention.
- g) Many people use their speech to give advice to the audience. This is boring and generally inappropriate especially from young people who lack experience. Instead of telling the audience how to live their lives, it would be better to analyze the topic and explore its meaning. The well mannered use of English language is generally more suggestive than prescriptive and most audiences prefer to have ideas described not forced upon them as the only correct way to think.



h) Similarly, exhorting the audience to “*try your best*” is fairly meaningless, pointless and rather arrogant. Again young people are not in a position to tell their peers to do anything. They may suggest that their audience consider doing something but they should be specific. It is self-evident that everything should be done to the best of one’s ability.

A clear structure

a) A clear structure is important for understanding. It is necessary to help your listeners to grasp the main points and to recognize why you are presenting these points, i.e. why they are important. The structure is like a map and as you follow your route across the “map” you provide verbal signposts for your audience so that they can follow you (see below). Of course, you need to ensure that the “route” is logical and is neither repetitious nor irrelevant. The structure requires an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

b) The introduction tells your listeners what you are going to speak about: how you are going to tackle the topic. It should be short and interesting. You need to capture your audience’s attention. A speaker will often begin a speech by saying, “*My topic is ... and first I’m going to tell you about AA and then I’ll talk about BB and finally I’ll conclude by summing up my ideas about A and B.*” This is a good introduction but in competition it can be very boring if every speaker starts in this way. It is not necessary in a short speech to actually say what the structure is, but there should be one.

c) In a short speech, it is better to start by making a few general comments relating to the topic then to develop those same comments in the body of the speech. The conclusion should emphasize your main argument and concisely repeat the main points and relate them back to the introduction to form a rounded structure which allows the main point(s) to be memorable.

d) Speakers should not give long lists of anything. If it is necessary, then classify the ideas, for example: individually, regionally, nationally and internationally. Lists are boring to listen to and no one will remember more than a couple of the items on the list so they are pointless.

Logical flow – transitions and signposting

a) Within the structure there must be a logical flow of words and ideas. Words will flow logically if they are presented in complete sentences. Ideas in a speech will flow logically if they are presented either deductively or inductively. This means that they can be developed from the general to the specific or vice versa. Probably the easiest way is to start with some general comments and become more specific and detailed as you progress through the speech. Some people may prefer to start with details and come to a general conclusion towards the end, this is often a better way when giving an impromptu speech where you have had little time to think through the evidence for the general statement you made.

b) Whichever structure you decide on, it is important to keep your audience with you and not to ramble. Do this through the use of transitions and signposting. The use of transitions such as “*therefore, however, on the other hand, similarly, also, firstly, secondly, thirdly, another point is,*

a good example of this is, I can illustrate this by...” will help both you and your audience to stay focused.

c) Signposting is a useful way of showing your audience where you are in your speech. For example, “*I’ve talked about Aids in Africa to illustrate my point about the need for public awareness and now I’ll tell you about the campaign in ...*” Obviously, transitions such as firstly, secondly are also useful aids to signposting.

d) A speech should flow. This means that sentences should be connected with linking words and phrases, such as “*therefore, because, on the other hand, as well as ...*”, and the sentences should relate to each other. Ask yourself after every sentence, does it make sense? Does it relate to the previous and following sentences? Is there a logical development of the idea?

An entertainment element – humor and/or word pictures

a) Not all topics are suitable for a humorous approach and not all speakers find it easy to be humorous. However, it is inescapable that well received speeches are usually the ones that make people laugh as well as think. Humor does not necessarily mean the telling of jokes, though if you know one relating to your topic which you can tell succinctly, it may be useful to use it.

b) It is possible to be humorous by the way you tackle the topic. Most human situations have their funny side – that is what makes them human – so try to find these and use them in your speech if appropriate. Delivering a sentence with a twinkle in your eye can make it lighter than it might otherwise be. Fun topics allow the speaker’s imagination to soar and treating a topic in a light-hearted way often provides entertainment. Many light or potentially exciting subjects are treated too seriously. For example, “*The greatest invention in my opinion is mascara / high heeled shoes / a football.*” These speeches must be entertaining. Without humor, they sound rather silly.

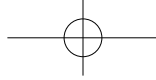
c) Another way to make a speech come alive and to be entertaining is through the use of word pictures. This is when a speaker describes a situation with such powerful language, that the audience can believe themselves involved, to be at the place described or to be able to see the situation for themselves. Care must be taken not to become overly sentimental or emotional however.

d) In contrast, serious subjects should be treated seriously and not made light of. It is considered in “bad taste” and is bad manners to make fun of distressing situations or disadvantaged people.

The use of quotations and idioms

a) The use of quotations, idioms and proverbs is to colour and help explain meaning. They must be relevant to the topic and to what has just been said and is about to be said. It is pointless to inject “*time is money*” into a speech about economic development unless the relevance is explained. The speaker needs to show why they are saying it. Another example, “*The Internet is a friend: a bridge over troubled waters.*” What “troubles”? How “a bridge”? Explain it or don’t use it!

b) Quotations must be correctly used. This requires knowledge of the original meaning and context. This may require research in order to check. For example, “*To be or not to be, that is the question.*”



This comes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* where the Prince is debating with himself about the meaning of "existence" and questioning whether it is better to live an unhappy life or to end it by committing suicide. Therefore it is a serious issue and should not be treated lightly.

c) If quotations, idioms or proverbs are being used by a speaker, they should be uncorrupted. In other words they should not be changed; they must be accurate. For example, it should be "*That's how the cookie crumbles*" not "*That's how the cookie comes*". It is necessary to research quotations on a reliable website or in a good anthology.

d) Similarly, idiomatic expressions should be complete. For example, "*There can be miracles when you believe*" – in what? It is necessary to say in what you believe in order that there can be miracles – and understanding!

e) Quotations, idioms and proverbs should not be overused. In a 3-minute speech, there is no room for more than 1 or 2.

f) Try to use idioms that are less well-known. For example, in competitions, there seems to be a fixation with "*every coin has two sides*". Apart from being boring, this often merely shows the speaker is missing the point because often the issues they are talking about have more than 2 or even 3 sides!

g) If the topic of the speech is a quotation or well-known saying of some kind, do not explain it. The task is to identify the issue that the quotation or saying is addressing and explore that, not the words of the quotation. For example, "*Hope brings success*". People understand what "hope" is; they don't need it to be described for them. What is needed, for example, is an exploration of how hope can sometimes lead to success but at other times may not, that without hope life would be dull but that hope alone without hard work and good luck is unlikely to lead to success in anything.

Appropriate language

a) Because a speaker has time to prepare a speech, it is expected that the speech will not only have some interesting content, but that it will have some interesting language. Part of the research that speakers do is to find useful words and phrases that will make their ideas more expressive and memorable. This does not mean that a speaker should sound like a walking dictionary, but because there is time to find just the right word, they should do so. A good English-English dictionary and Thesaurus are invaluable when preparing.

b) Beware of using jargon. Having considered who your audience will be before you started writing, it is obvious that you should adjust your language to what they will appreciate. For example, don't use technical language to an audience who are not sufficiently expert in the field. In competitions, try to find unusual analogies. In one competition, judges and audience heard nearly 100 speeches in which "*One click of the mouse*" was repeated in nearly every speech. This became very tedious. Whilst it was a relevant comment, its frequent use has become clichéd. Speakers should be aware that the use of clichés can sound insincere and uninteresting.

c) In a prepared speech there is no excuse for ungrammatical language since there has been plenty

of time to check and to practice. For example, “*knowledge*” not “*knowledges*”; and “*pop out the question*”, “*here comes my reason*” are Chinglish. It looks careless if grammar and pronunciation are incorrect as the speaker has had time to check and to practice.

d) Be aware that calling on God, as in “*Oh my God!*” could be very offensive to some people.

iii. How to Write a Speech (II): Script Preparation

a) Speakers who read their speech from an unprepared script will be very uninteresting to listen to. Reading a closely typed page of text will inevitably mean that their voice will drop and that the message will be lost. The speaker will be unable to have eye contact with their audience without losing their place and will therefore appear to lack conviction. It would be better that the audience be given the script to read for themselves!

b) Likewise, speakers who commit their speech to memory are unlikely to make a good job of delivering it. They may find themselves unable to remember exactly what they wanted to say or may speak too quickly in order to say it before they forget it. Often they are so busy trying not to forget what they want to say, they forget they have an audience.

c) When writing your speech, be aware that the language will be spoken; it is different from written language. For example, “*I answered with a smile*” is written language, not something that anyone would or should say. Check by reading your speech aloud. If it sounds odd, the reason may be that you are using written language.

Preparing a full script

Inexperienced speakers are likely to need the confidence of having a fully scripted speech in front of them. However, the script must be prepared so that it is easily referred to. The process of doing this will help the speaker to remember what they want to say and will also help them think about the delivery. They may not need to refer to it but it will provide some insurance in case their mind goes blank. The idea is to prepare the script of the speech so that if necessary, the speaker can refer to it without losing eye contact with their audience.

Preparing the full script entails:

- Double spacing the lines of type.
- Separating the main points by using numbers, bullet points, bold and colour.
- Highlighting words you want to emphasize.
- Marking where you are going to pause.