



APSU Writing Center

Preparing a Speech

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Preparing a speech can be easy if you set out small tasks in a logical order. Take each task one at a time.

- The following sequence will help a speaker in preparing a speech:
 1. Select and focus on the topic.
 2. Find material to make the speech clear and interesting.
 3. Design the speech so that it fits together. Create an outline.
 4. After you complete an outline, highlight keywords and transfer them to note cards. Include reminders such as “pause here” or “talk slowly” on the cards.
 5. Practice the presentation. The most effective way to practice is extemporaneous, meaning that your speech is carefully prepared and practiced but not completely written out or memorized.
- When you find material to use in your speech, make sure the sources are relevant and reliable.
- Here are some questions to ask when **testing source material**:
 - Does the article contain relevant or useful information?
 - Does it cite experts that are quotable in the speech?
 - Are there interesting examples that add clarity?
 - Are there stories that will bring the topic to life?
 - Is the source reliable, creditable, thorough, recent, or precise?
- There are several ways to organize or design your speech. Here are some traditional **speech designs**:
 - **Sequential**: best for an informative speech that moves steps in a process through time.
 - **Chronological**: organizing a sequence of important events relating to the history of a subject or predicting its future.
 - **Categorical or Topical**: organizing a speech around the natural or traditional divisions of a subject.
 - **Causation or Cause and Effect**: shows how one condition generates, or is generated by another.
 - **Problem-solution**: a persuasive speech pattern where a problem is presented to the audience and then they are shown how to solve it.
 - **Compare-contrast**: informative design that points out the similarities and differences between subjects; generally used to relate an unfamiliar subject to something the audience already knows and understands



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- Create **identification** with your audience. Identification is a feeling of sharing and understanding that may develop between speakers and listeners.

- Here are some ways to establish identification:
 - Tell stories and use examples.
 - Add appropriate touches of humor.
 - Use gestures, language, and facial expressions that are natural.
 - Gain credibility: Use different kinds of testimony (such as expert, from professionals; lay, from ordinary citizens to appeal to emotions; or prestige, associating the message with a respected public figure).
 - Include narratives, hypothetical examples, and analogies in your speeches to relate to your listener.
 - Use personal pronouns like “we,” “us,” and “our.”
 - Make eye contact.