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UPON COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

1. Demonstrate how developing public speaking skills helps you realize personal, professional, and societal goals
2. Explain the context of public speaking by listing and identifying the essential elements of communication
3. Assess and build your speechmaking confidence
4. Demonstrate your understanding of basic speechmaking by approaching public speaking systematically
5. Deliver your first speech
6. Score your first speech performance to establish a baseline on which to build your skills

A **playbook is a game plan**—a plan of action designed to help you become a peak performer.¹ We wrote this playbook to provide every public speaking student with a game plan—a set of easy to follow practical steps to success. Effective speakers prepare, practice, and present speeches that others judge to be of high quality. To rise to this level, adept speakers first master and then apply skills. And just like elite athletes and others who appear in public, they perform under pressure, either individually or as members of a team. They also practice consistently and assess their performance so that every one of their presentations is as good as or better than their last. With a game plan and practice, you can join their ranks. You can become comfortable with the idea of speaking in public. You can become a more accomplished communicator.

We place a high value on public speaking ability because it is such a vital means of **communication**. Today, people give speeches live as they have been for centuries. But they also present them as TED Talks,² upload them to YouTube, or deliver them via podcasts, which we then experience using our smartphones or other digital devices. No matter the forum or mode of delivery, the ability to speak in and to the public is a powerful skill to be honed. Audiences are drawn to the words of renowned speakers such as Abby Wambach, Oprah Winfrey, Deepak Chopra, Michelle and Barack Obama, and Jean Kilbourne because each has been able to inspire, reassure, convince, or simply reach out to audiences. Being able to speak in public without injecting vitriol, is similarly powerful. What will you do? You can be the smartest person in the room, but if deficient speaking skills keep others from understanding your ideas, being smart isn't enough. A class in public speaking gives you and your peers the opportunity to work together on improving your public speaking skills.

COACHING TIP

“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”

—Arthur Ashe

Merely reading and talking about public speaking won't make you a better speaker. Only involving yourself in the process and doing it will help you improve. The more you speak in public, the easier it will become and the more you will improve. Doing it builds confidence.

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1.1a Benefits for Your Personal Life**1.1b Benefits for Your Career****1.1c Benefits for Society**

Identify Speechmaking's Benefits

Becoming a skilled public speaker has benefits for the individual, both personal and professional, and for society as a whole.

1.1a Benefits for Your Personal Life

Speaking in public builds self-confidence and even can trigger self-discovery and creative self-expression. For instance, as a result of researching a topic, such as the problems faced by soldiers returning from a war zone, you might discover that you have the desire to engage in service learning by volunteering at a veteran's facility.

As a public speaker, you are expected to reflect on your interests, to explore where you stand on controversial issues, and to consider the needs and concerns of others. You would need to consider your position and how to best make your argument so that even those who disagreed with your stance initially would listen to and understand it.

Becoming a more confident speaker will also make you a more confident student. By developing the ability to speak in public, you develop your ability to speak up in class—any class.

At the same time, as you build speaking confidence, you might find yourself wanting to become more civically engaged, speaking up and sharing ideas beyond the classroom as well.

While mastering the material in a major field is necessary—whether your major is business, computer programming, nursing, or any other subject—unless you also can present information clearly and effectively, others may question your credibility and knowledge. By mastering the ability to communicate your ideas in public, you harness the power of speech. By being better able to control yourself and your ideas, you enhance your ability to control your environment.

1.1b Benefits for Your Career

Public speaking is a core skill needed to succeed in the 21st century.³ Most of the jobs of today and tomorrow will require us to speak up. We may present to a team, need to get a point across in a meeting, or answer questions posed by a panel. Success in public speaking helps us grow professionally. Our ability to attain professional success is related to our ability to communicate effectively both in writing and orally what we think, know, and can do. This is especially helpful in a job interview, since prospective employers favor candidates who

have communication skills, including the ability to work in a team and public speaking abilities.⁴

How far you advance in your career may well depend on how capable you are in addressing, impressing, and influencing others and in communicating your ideas clearly, creatively, and effectively.⁵ The executives and entrepreneurs of tomorrow need to be skilled public speakers—masters of the art of speaking before groups of all sizes, including the news media and online audiences.

1.1c Benefits for Society

Developing public speaking skills gives you a voice in influencing the direction of your college, community, and society as a whole. It gives you opportunities to let others know the issues you care about and want them to care about, too. By speaking up and listening to others who speak up, you exercise effective citizenship. Freedom of speech has always been viewed as an essential ingredient in a democracy. What does freedom of speech mean? It means

1. You can speak freely without fear of being punished for expressing your ideas
2. You can expose yourself freely to all sides of a controversial issue
3. You can debate freely all disputable questions of fact, value, or policy
4. You can make decisions freely based on your evaluation of the choices confronting you

Our political system depends on a commitment by citizens to speak openly and honestly free of government censorship and to listen freely and carefully to all sides of an issue—even those with which you vehemently disagree. It depends on our ability to think critically about what we listen to so that we are able to evaluate the speaker's goal and make informed decisions about our future. Democracy depends on our willingness to understand and respond to expressions of opinion, belief, and value that are different from our own.

section 1.2

1.2a Picture the Parts Working Together

1.2b Consider Audience Expectations

Discuss the Context of Public Speaking

Skilled public speakers have unique powers to influence. But like other forms of communication, public speaking is a circle of give-and-take between presenter and audience. The better you understand how communication works, the better your ability to make it work for you. The following elements are an integral part of the process:

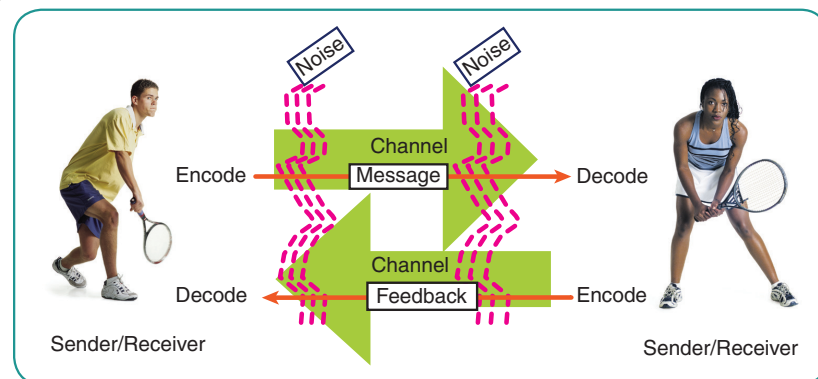
- The source
- The receiver
- The message
- The channel
- Noise
- Feedback
- Situational and cultural contexts

One way to study the interactions of these elements is with a model of the communication process in action (see Figure 1.1).

Look closely at the variables depicted in Figure 1.1 to identify how they relate to each other dynamically during public speaking. Both the speaker, or **source**, and the listener, or **receiver**, participate in communication. Each party simultaneously and continually performs both sending functions (giving out messages) and receiving functions (taking in messages). Neither sending nor receiving is the exclusive job of any person.

FIGURE 1.1

The Communication Process in Action



Between the source and receiver, **messages**—both verbal and nonverbal—are sent and received. The words and visuals we use to express our ideas and feelings, the sounds of our voices, and our body language (or nonverbal communication) make up the content of our communication and convey information. Everything we do as senders and receivers has potential message value for those observing us. If a speaker's voice quivers or a receiver checks his or her watch, it conveys a message.

Channels are pathways or media through which messages are carried. The auditory channel carries our spoken words; the visual channel carries our gestures, facial expressions, and postural cues; and the vocal channel carries cues such as rate, quality, volume, and pitch of speech. Communication is usually a multichannel event.

Noise is anything that interferes with our ability to send or receive a message. Noise need not be sound. Physical discomfort, a psychological state, intellectual ability, or the environment also can create noise. As the model in Figure 1.1 shows, noise can enter the communication event at any point; it can come from the context, the channel, the message, or the persons themselves. Different languages, translators, generational terms, jargon, and technical terms play a role in the day-to-day noise of communication in our diverse world.

The **situational/cultural context** is the setting or environment for communication. Because every message occurs in a situation with cultural and social meanings, conditions of place and time influence both behavior and the outcome of the communication event. The after-dinner speaker addressing a large number of people who have just eaten and are full will need to give a different kind of speech than the person whose task is to address the members of a union protesting a layoff.

Feedback is information we receive in response to a message we have sent. Feedback tells us how we are doing. Positive feedback, like applause, serves a reinforcing function and causes us to continue behaving as we are, whereas negative feedback, such as silent stares, serves a corrective function and leads us to eliminate any ineffective behaviors. Internal feedback is that which you give yourself (you laugh at a joke you tell); external feedback comes from others who are party to the communicative event (receivers laugh at your joke, too).

1.2a Picture the Parts Working Together

All parts of the communicative model continuously interact with and affect each other—they are interconnected and interdependent. When something happens to one variable, all the other variables in the process are affected. Communication is also cumulative; the communicative experiences we have add up and have the potential to alter our perceptions and behaviors. The **effects of communication** cannot be erased; they become part of the total field of experience we bring to the next communication event. Ultimately, our **field of experience**—the sum of all our experiences—influences our attitudes toward



Know your parts. As you put your presentation together, keep your eyes on your goal to create a more dynamic and influential speech.

the speech event and our receivers, affecting both our desire to communicate and the way we do it.

Your success as a source ultimately depends on your ability to

- Establish common ground with your receivers
- Encode or formulate a message effectively
- Adapt to cultural and situational differences
- Alleviate the effects of noise
- Understand and respond to the reactions of those with whom you are interacting

Your effectiveness depends not only on what you intend to communicate, but also on the meanings your receivers give to your message. A self-centered communicator is insensitive to the needs of receivers, which limits his or her effectiveness. It is better to be audience-centered and keep your eyes on your receivers and speaking goals, instead of focusing solely on yourself.

1.2b Consider Audience Expectations

Although being able to (a) organize ideas logically, (b) encode or express ideas clearly, and (c) analyze and adapt to receivers readily are skills every communicator needs, they are particularly important for public speakers.

Receivers usually have higher expectations for public speakers than for other communicators. For example, we expect public speakers to use more

COACHING TIP

"We live in an era where the best way to make a dent on the world may no longer be to write a letter to the editor or publish a book. It may be simply to stand up and say something . . . because both the words and the passion with which they are delivered can now spread across the world at warp speed."

—Chris Anderson, *TED TALKS: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*

Picture the model in Figure 1.1. Communication and understanding are key. Focus on your audience. Make it easy for those in it to understand you. You just might significantly affect their lives.

formal standards of grammar and usage, pay more attention to their presentation style and appearance, fit what they say into a specific time limit, and anticipate and then respond to questions their receivers will ask.

So when speaking in public, you will need to polish, formalize, and build on your basic conversational skills to reach your goal.

Do not copy, post, or distribute

1.3a Understand Public Speaking Anxiety

1.3b Address the Physical Effects of Speech Anxiety

1.3c Address the Mental Effects of Speech Anxiety

1.3d Use Skills Training

1.3e Anxiety Can Be Transformative

Assess and Build Your Speechmaking Confidence

You are in good company if the thought of speaking in public causes you some concern. Speakers are not alone in experiencing fear or feeling stressed at the thought of performing in public. Athletes, dancers, actors, and musicians also have to handle their fear and emotional stress, which, if not channeled effectively, can interfere with their ability to perform.⁶ When they control their fear, however, the stress becomes useful, helping them gain a competitive edge, boosting their energy, and readying them to deliver a peak performance. How does this happen? Quite simply, athletes and others who perform in public focus, face their fears, and train to handle pressure. And they do this gradually over time, not once, but regularly.⁷ You can, too. Start by confronting your feelings about giving a speech.

Self-Assessment: How Confident Are You About Public Speaking?

In the space before each of the following statements, enter the number in the rating scale that best represents your feelings about each statement:

Not at all concerned 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely concerned

1. ____ I will forget what I plan to say.
2. ____ My thoughts will confuse listeners.
3. ____ My words will offend listeners.
4. ____ Audience members will laugh at me when I don't mean to be funny.
5. ____ I'm going to embarrass myself.
6. ____ My ideas will have no impact.
7. ____ I will look foolish in front of my audience because I won't be able to look them in the eye and I won't know what to do with my hands.
8. ____ My voice and body will shake uncontrollably.
9. ____ I will bore my audience.
10. ____ Audience members will stare at me unresponsively.

TOTAL _____

To determine your score, add the numbers you selected:

41–50	You have speech anxiety.
31–40	You are very apprehensive.
21–30	You are concerned to a normal extent.
10–20	You are very confident.

Although this self-survey is by no means a scientific indicator of your oral communication confidence, it can help you face your concerns. This is your first step in gaining control of your excess energy and using it to elicit a strong public speaking performance.

1.3a Understand Public Speaking Anxiety

According to public speaking coach Viv Groskop, when it comes to giving a speech, “Feeling anxious is just a sign that you’re human.”⁸ **Public speaking anxiety**, also known as PSA, is a variant of communication anxiety that affects some 40 to 80 percent of all speakers.⁹ PSA has two dimensions, process anxiety and performance anxiety.

- **Process anxiety** is fear of preparing a speech. For example, when you experience process anxiety, you doubt your ability to select a topic, research it, and organize your ideas.
- **Performance anxiety** is fear of presenting a speech. It finds you stressful about delivering the speech, fearful that you’ll tremble, forget what you want to say, do something embarrassing, be unable to complete the speech, not make sense to receivers, or simply be assessed as a poor speaker.¹⁰

Why are some of us afraid to speak before a group? What makes us fear public speaking more than we fear snakes, heights, bee stings, or death?¹¹

Fear of Failure

We all fear failure.¹² If you choose not to take risks because you visualize yourself failing rather than succeeding, if you disagree with what you hear or read but choose to keep your thoughts to yourself, then you are probably letting your feelings of inferiority limit you.

Fear of the Unknown

Some fear what they do not know or have not had successful experience with. The unknown leaves much to the imagination—and far too frequently, we irrationally choose to imagine the worst thing that could happen when making a speech.

Fear of Evaluation

Some speechmakers also fear that others will judge their ideas, how they sound or look, or what they represent. When faced with such an option, we prefer not to be judged.

Fear of Being the Center of Attention

We may also fear being conspicuous or singled out. Audience members usually focus directly on a speaker. Some speakers interpret receivers' gazes as scrutinizing and hostile rather than as revealing a genuine interest in them.

Fear of Difference

Ethnocentricity—the belief that one's own group or culture is better than others—makes some speakers think they share nothing in common with the members of their audience. Feelings of difference make it harder to find common ground, which in turn increases the anxiety about making a speech.

Fear Imposed by Culture

Culture can influence attitudes toward speaking in public. For example, according to research, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, Israelis, and other Middle Eastern peoples are typically less apprehensive about public speaking than Americans.¹³ In these cultures, children are rewarded for merely trying, making judgment and communication anxiety a less intrusive force.¹⁴

1.3b Address the Physical Effects of Speech Anxiety

When we experience the physical effects of anxiety, adrenalin is released into our systems and our respiration rate and heart rate increase. When our anxiety levels get too high, we need to manage the physical effects of speech fright. For example, if we're runners, we could go for a run. If not, we could take a moment to stretch our limbs.

Another technique is systematic desensitization, a way to reduce the physical responses of apprehension.¹⁵ The principle behind systematic desensitization is that after being tensed, a muscle relaxes. Following are several methods you can try.

Tense/Relax

Tense your neck and shoulders. Count to 10. Relax. Continue by tensing and relaxing other parts of your body, including your hands, arms, legs, and feet. As you continue this process, you will find yourself growing calmer.

Strike a Powerful Pose

How we stand can affect our speaking success. Merely practicing a "power pose" in private before presenting a speech lowers speaker stress levels, thereby reducing outward signs of stress and enhancing confidence.¹⁶

- Stand tall.
- Stand tall and lean slightly forward.
- Stand tall and open your limbs expansively.
- Leaning slightly forward, stake out a broad surface with your hands.

Leaning slightly forward engages an audience. Opening the limbs expresses power. Staking out a broad surface conveys a sense of control. In contrast to power poses, low-power cues increase stress and decrease confidence. Adopting a close-bodied posture conveys powerlessness, touching your neck or face is a symptom of anxiety, and folding your arms comes off as defensive. Use power poses that convey authority instead. Doing so will boost confidence at the same time.

1.3c Address the Mental Effects of Speech Anxiety

Far too often, our **self-talk**—our internal communication—fans the flames of our fears instead of extinguishing them.¹⁷ We create a self-fulfilling prophecy, meaning that we form an expectation and adjust our behavior to match. As a result, the expectation we created becomes true. This can cause unnecessary problems if our thoughts are negative.

The goal is to use **thought stopping** to make self-talk work in your favor. Every time you find yourself thinking an upsetting or anxiety-producing thought, every time you visualize yourself experiencing failure instead of success, say to yourself, “Stop!” and tell yourself, “Calm.” Thought stopping is an example of **cognitive restructuring**, a technique that focuses attention on our thoughts rather than on our bodily reactions. Cognitive restructuring works by altering the beliefs people have about themselves and their abilities.

A second technique is **centering**.¹⁸ When centering, we direct our thoughts internally and we feel an inner calm. Instead of being consumed by negative self-talk, we learn to trust ourselves. Key in this procedure is the **centering breath**, designed to help us breathe like it matters so that we may focus on the task mentally. Try it. Take a deep breath. Follow it with a strong exhalation and muscle relaxation. This done, you’ll be better able to narrow your focus on the external task.

Using thought stopping and centering together allows you to gain control by diverting attention from thoughts that threaten your success to positive



COACHING TIP

“The mind is everything. What you think you become.”

—Buddha

Nerves are not your enemy. Face them, control them, and you transform normal anxiety into a positive. Harnessing the excess energy that accompanies any apprehension you feel energizes you and enhances your development as a speaker.

ones. They also aid you in developing a growth mindset—the idea that if you change your thinking and behavior and persist, you can succeed.¹⁹

1.3d Use Skills Training

We can combat both the physical and the mental effects of speech anxiety by making an effort to

- Speak on a topic about which we truly care
- Prepare thoroughly for the speechmaking event
- Keep in mind that our listeners are unlikely to perceive our signs of anxiety

Because you are just beginning your training to become a better speaker, it is reasonable to expect you may still feel anxious about speaking in public. As you increase your skill level by learning how to prepare and deliver speeches, you become consciously competent and aware of your competence. The idea of public speaking becomes less threatening.²⁰ By making your anxiety work for you, by converting it into positive energy, you learn to fear anxiety less, and you learn to like public speaking more.

1.3e Anxiety Can Be Transformative

Contrary to what you may think, as a speaker, you neither can nor should rid yourself of all speech anxiety. Rather, using your anxiety to perform more effectively is better than experiencing none at all.

In the book *Face of Emotion*, author Eric Finzi suggests that “putting on a happy face” not only erases a frown, it actually can lift your mood.²¹ Nonverbal communication expert Paul Ekman agrees, acknowledging the possibility that



GAME PLAN

Conquering Speech Anxiety

- ☐ I have assessed my own feelings and fears about giving a speech.
- ☐ I have chosen a topic that I know and about which I feel passionate.
- ☐ Last night, I practiced a powerful pose—I stood tall, I leaned forward, and opened my arms to the audience, staking out a broad surface with my hands.
- ☐ The morning before my speech, I went for a walk, a run, or a swim.
- ☐ Just before my speech, I took a moment to center my breathing and thoughts.
- ☐ I am ready to deliver my speech.

facial expressions can affect our moods.²² It follows then that changing any negative thoughts you have about giving a speech to positive ones can similarly influence your performance. With that in mind, prepare thoroughly and rehearse and visualize a positive experience.

Prepare Thoroughly and Rehearse

Preparation helps instill confidence. It includes everything you do between thinking up a topic and speech delivery. Prepared speakers are competent speakers.

Visualize a Positive Experience

Instead of focusing on your negative thoughts and fears, focus on the potential positives of your performance. Visualize yourself being successful from start to finish.

Remind Yourself That Receivers Usually Cannot See or Hear Your Fear

Although you may feel the flutters that speech anxiety causes, the audience generally cannot detect these in your performance. In fact, observers usually underestimate the amount of anxiety they believe a speaker is experiencing.²³

COACHING TIP

“Think you can or think you can’t; either way you will be right.”

—Henry Ford

It is important to believe in yourself. You can become a skilled, confident, and proficient public speaker. Do you believe in you?

**1.4a Select Your Topic****1.4b Develop, Support, and Organize Your Speech****1.4c Practice Delivery****1.4d Conduct a Post-Presentation Analysis**

Approach Giving a Speech Systematically

Before delivering your first speech, you need to complete three plays: (1) topic selection; (2) speech development, support and organization; and (3) practice and delivery. The fourth play, the post-presentation analysis, is completed immediately after you give the speech.

1.4a Select Your Topic

The first step in topic selection is to analyze your interests and use this information to select a general subject area—one you are knowledgeable about and comfortable with. In fact, one of the best means of controlling your fear and laying the groundwork for a successful speech is to choose a topic that is important to you, that you have some familiarity with, and about which you want to find out even more. Highly anxious speakers rarely do this. As a result, they spend far too much preparation time trying to interest themselves in or master a subject and far too little time rehearsing the presentation itself.²⁴ Use the topic selection techniques discussed here to find an appropriate subject.

Conduct a Life Overview

Whatever your age, divide your life into thirds—early life, midlife, more recent life. Compose a sentence to summarize your life during each stage, for example, “During high school, I lived in Norman, Oklahoma, where my dad worked for an oil company, and I went to Sooner football games.” Under each summary statement list your main interests and concerns during that life period. Examine your list. Which topics still interest or concern you?

Focus on This Moment in Time

Fold a sheet of paper in half. On the left side, list sensory experiences—whatever you are able to see, hear, taste, smell, or touch right now. On the right side, list topics suggested by each sensory experience. For example, if you wrote “balloon” on the left side, you might enter “party planning” on the right side.

Be Newsy

Peruse a newspaper, newsmagazine, or online news aggregator to find potential topics. Read a story and list topics suggested by it. For example, on March 14, 2018, Glassdoor.com featured an article titled “What Recruiters Look at When Stalking Your Social Media.”²⁵ Imagine the possible speech topics that an article like this suggests: how to use social media responsibly, what recruiters look at beyond your resume, how to create an online profile, and so on.

Use Technology

Explore websites such as About.com, eHow.com, or YouTube, searching for sample presentations. Additionally, the speech topic resources at edge.sagepub.com/gamblepsp3e can prove helpful.

► See **Chapter 5** for more information on selecting a topic.

While highly anxious speakers tend to be self-obsessed, more effective speakers focus their attention on their listeners. When you avoid focusing on your anxiety and concentrate on your audience instead, you shine the communication spotlight on those you are speaking to and you minimize your anxiety. Thus, an important move in topic selection is to adapt your general subject area to your audience and the occasion by conducting an audience analysis. Why? Because if you consider only your interests and don't take the needs and interests of your audience into account, audience members are more likely to experience boredom and become easily distracted. If this happens, you lose the attention of receivers, which prevents your message from getting through.

Pay attention to your audience, and they will pay attention to you. Consider how familiar audience members are with your selected topic area, what their attitudes toward it are, and what they would like to know about it. Take into account some of the demographic characteristics of the audience, such as their genders and ages, the cultures represented, their socioeconomic backgrounds. Think about how factors like these could influence how members of the audience feel about your topic and, consequently, how you should frame it. For example, if you decide to speak about student services for on-campus residents but your class is made up primarily of students who commute to campus, a substantial number of students could find your talk irrelevant.

Take the time needed to get to know your receivers. Talk to them, asking about their interests and concerns. For your first speaking assignment, chatting with three to five students should be sufficient. Ask them what they already know about your topic, whether it appeals to them, and what else they'd be interested in finding out about it. Their answers will help you narrow your subject and relate it more directly to them.

► **Chapter 4** will help you analyze your audience and adapt your presentation to them.

There are a number of other criteria aside from speaker and audience interests to consider when selecting a topic for your initial speech:

1. Avoid overused topics, unless you will be taking an unusual slant or offering a fresh perspective. Thus, rather than speaking on the legalization of marijuana, speak on how it helps deter the ill-effects of chemotherapy.
2. Select an appropriate topic—not one that will be alienating or that you or your receivers have no interest in learning more about. Make the effort to meet their needs and expectations.

3. Limit the scope of your topic so that it fits the time allotted for your speech. For example, speaking on The Story of My Life or The History of the Computer could be too broad, making it impossible for you to cover the topic in the time available.
4. Make sure you have access to the material you will need to prepare the speech.

It is of paramount importance that your selected topic speaks to your audience. Among the topics students have used for a first speech are

- My Favorite Ancestor
- The Significance of My Name
- What I Learned While Studying Abroad
- My Greatest Fear
- A Difficult Choice I Had to Make
- Why You Need a Mentor
- How Discrimination Affects Me
- How to Avoid Boredom
- The Dangers of Texting and Driving
- How to Get the Most Out of College

Which of these, if any, interests you? What topics would you like to hear about?

► **Chapters 4 and 5** will give you more strategies for selecting a topic that is appropriate for your audience.

1.4b Develop, Support, and Organize Your Speech

Once you have selected a topic, you need to

- Formulate your speech's purpose
- State your thesis
- Identify the main points of the speech
- Research and select materials to support the main points
- Outline your speech, integrating transitions and signposts

and

- Consider presentation aids

Let us move through these in turn.

The Specific Purpose

Your speech should have a **specific purpose**—a single sentence specifying your goal. For example, if your goal were to inform receivers about self-driving cars, your specific purpose might be “to inform my audience about three ways self-driving cars will impact society.” You then use the specific purpose to develop your central idea or thesis.

► **Chapter 5** will show you in more detail how to develop the general and specific purpose of your speech.

The Thesis Statement

Your speech should also contain a **thesis statement**. The thesis statement expresses the central theme of your speech in just one sentence. Here are three examples of thesis statements:

- Self-driving cars will change the way we live and get around in three ways: (1) by reducing accidents, (2) by permitting overnight travel, and (3) by fundamentally changing the taxicab and ride-sharing industries.
- Excessive personal debt is burdensome, inhibits a person’s quality of life, and also results in financial instability.
- Fears of an epidemic of birth defects due to the Zika virus and questions about how to respond are prevalent in society.

The thesis statement, along with the specific purpose, acts as a road map for building your speech. Your next move is to develop the main points that flesh out the thesis.

► **Chapter 5** will show you in more detail how to create an effective thesis statement.

The Main Points

If your specific purpose and thesis are clearly formulated, it will be easy for you to identify your speech’s **main points**—the blueprint for your speech containing those major ideas your speech will relay to receivers. Most of your speeches will contain two or three main points, with each main point supporting your expressed thesis. For example, let’s look at the last thesis statement identified in the previous section. Its two main points might read:

- I. There is fear of a surge in birth defects due to the Zika virus.
- II. There are questions about how to protect the population and prevent birth defects in the event that Zika becomes widespread.

We see the speaker plans to first confront the fears about Zika and then discuss questions about how to control and treat the disease if it develops into

a pandemic. Once you formulate the main points, your next move is to locate and select supporting materials.

► **Chapter 9** will help you to establish your main points.

Conduct Research, Gathering Supporting Materials

At this point, your attention turns to conducting research and gathering supporting materials for your speech. To develop your speech, for example, you will use personal experiences, examples and illustrations, definitions, expert testimony, statistics, and analogies. The better your research and selection of support, the more credible receivers will find your speech.

We can divide every speech into three major parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Develop the **body of the speech**, the part that elaborates on the main points, first. When it is done, you then bring it together with an **introduction** and a **conclusion**. In the introduction, orient the audience to your topic, pique their attention and interest, state your thesis, and preview your main points. In the conclusion, restate your thesis in a memorable way, remind receivers of how your main points supported it, and motivate them—leaving them thinking and/or ready to act.

Develop an Outline

An **outline** provides the skeleton upon which you hang your main ideas and support. Two principles guide its creation: **coordination** (the main points should be relatively equal in importance) and **subordination** (the support underlying your main points). The outline of your speech's body will look something like the following example.

INTRODUCTION

BODY

- I. Main Point 1
 - A. First level of subordination
 - 1. Second level of subordination
 - 2. Second level of subordination
- II. Main Point 2
 - A. First level of subordination
 - 1. Second level of subordination
 - 2. Second level of subordination
- III. Main Point 3
 - A. First level of subordination
 - 1. Second level of subordination
 - 2. Second level of subordination

CONCLUSION

When outlining your speech, you'll want to keep each of the speech's main sections in mind—paying careful attention to the components contained in the introduction, body, and conclusion. The first component in your introduction should be an attention getter, followed by your thesis statement, then a statement of what's in it for the audience (why they should care), a credibility enhancer for yourself (why they should listen to you), and a preview of your main points. Similarly, the outline of your conclusion should contain a summary of your main points and your "home run"—a move that clinches audience support for and belief in your message.

► **Chapters 8 and 9** will demonstrate how to organize and outline your speech.

Once the outline is complete, you'll want to create transitions that connect the parts. You can use signposts, such as "first," "next," and "finally," to let receivers know where you are in your speech, and brief statements, such as "most important," to help focus the audience's attention.

Then it's time to consider whether visual or audio aids, such as physical objects, drawings, charts, graphs, photographs, or sound recordings, will enhance the understanding and interest of receivers. Be sure to indicate in the outline when you will use such aids, if you choose to do so.

► **Chapter 14** will offer you tips on using presentation aids effectively.

1.4c Practice Delivery

How well you do in your first speech depends in part on how effectively you have prepared, practiced, and overcome any anxiety. Instead of reading a speech word for word or, worse, choosing to wing it, practice speaking in front of a mirror or friends. Make it a habit to plan and prepare the structure of your speech and all content including supporting materials and visuals. Then rehearse extensively so that on the day you present your speech, you are comfortable using your notes to remind yourself of its content.

You will want to become so familiar with the contents of your speech that you can deliver it seemingly effortlessly. Focus on the word *seemingly* for a moment. Preparing and presenting a speech requires real effort on your part. But if you work diligently and conscientiously, your audience will see only the end results—to them it will seem as if you are a natural.

When it comes to vocal cues, for example, you'll want to regulate your volume, rate, pitch, and vocal variety, being especially careful not to speak in a monotone, and being certain to use correct pronunciation and clear articulation, so you convey ideas accurately and clearly. Beyond words, you'll also want to use appropriate facial expressions, sustain the right amount of eye contact, and use gestures and movement in support of your message.

Practice delivering the speech at least four to six times, initially to a mirror, and then to a small audience of family and friends. Stand when you practice. Always say your speech aloud. Use a timer. Revise your words or presentation as needed. Replicate the same conditions you will have when delivering it for real. Practice from the speech's beginning to its end without stopping. You might even record a rehearsal to assess how you're doing.

► See **Chapters 12 and 13** for more help with the delivery of your speech.

When you've finished speaking, audience members may have questions to ask you. When prepping for your presentation, think about what you would ask if you were a member of the audience. Also solicit questions from the rehearsal audiences made up of family and friends.

► **Chapter 24** will prepare you for questions that the audience may ask about your speech.

You've prepared. You have rehearsed and revised, and now it's time to have fun! Harness any nervous energy and remember to use the confidence building techniques you learned earlier in this chapter. Visualize yourself succeeding!

1.4d Conduct a Post-Presentation Analysis

Like an athlete or any performer, you'll want to review and critique your own performance, comparing and contrasting your expectations with your actual experience. Try to learn as much as possible from the first speech so you can apply these lessons to your next one. Complete a self-assessment scorecard or checklist that you can compare to the one your professor and/or peers offer.

► **Chapter 3** will help you listen effectively in order to analyze your fellow students' speeches and assess your own presentation.

Use the accompanying preliminary scorecard to assess your performance. Score yourself on each item using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning not at all effective and 5 meaning extremely effective.

COACHING TIP

"A scorecard is a speaker's friend."

—Teri Gamble and Michael Gamble

How are you doing? Use a scorecard to track your progress. Needing to improve isn't a negative. It's a step on the road to mastery. It's time to measure up!

POST-PRESENTATION SCORECARD

Introduction: How Well Did I Do?

- Capturing attention _____
- Conveying my thesis _____
- Previewing my main points _____
- Relating the topic to my audience _____

Body: How Well Did I Do?

- Communicating each main point _____
- Transitioning between main points _____
- Integrating support for each main point _____

Conclusion: How Well Did I Do?

- Restating the thesis _____
- Summarizing my main points _____
- Motivating receivers to think and/or act _____

Delivery: How Well Did I Do?

- Using vocal cues to create interest and convey meaning _____
- Using eye contact to connect with receivers _____
- Using gestures and movement that were natural and appropriate _____

Overall, I would give myself _____ points out of 5.

I believe my strong points were _____

_____.

I believe I need to improve when it comes to _____

_____.

_____.

_____.

Based on this scorecard, I set the following goals for my next speech:



Exercises

GET A STRONG START

Becoming proficient at public speaking, like any other skill, is accomplished with practice. With introspection comes insight; with practice comes mastery. Take advantage of every opportunity to build your confidence and speaking skills.

1. Deliver a Tip on How to Enhance Confidence

For practice, customize a topic related to speech apprehension, such as “Taking the Fear Out of Public Speaking,” “The Uses of Hypnosis,” or “How to De-stress.” Once you select a topic, research it, and explain the guidelines given to reduce apprehension.

2. TED on Body Language

Watch either the TED Talk “Body Language Is in the Palm of Your Hands,” by Allan Pease, available on YouTube, or Amy Cuddy’s TED Talk about power poses, “Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are,” available at ted.com. Each presentation reveals how body language shapes assessments of a person. Based on what you learn, identify what you can do to help others judge you to be a “powerful” presenter.

3. The Opening

View the opening monologue of an afternoon or late-night TV show such as *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert, *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon, or *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Assess the host’s confidence delivering the opening monologue. What was the host’s topic? Did it appeal to the audience? Why? Did the host come across as knowledgeable? Why? Did she or he come across as confident? Why? What signs of anxiety, if any, did you see the host exhibit? Was the host’s focus on the audience or on him- or herself? How do you know? What three adjectives would you use to describe the host’s performance? What aspects of your analysis can you apply to your performance as a speaker?

4. Warm Up to Public Speaking

First, prepare a list of “do and don’t” suggestions for preparing a first speech. Include the speaker’s role in selecting a topic, formulating a goal, researching, thinking about his or her relationship to the audience, organizing ideas, preparing to present, and assessing the extent to which the speaker and the speech succeeded. Next, choose one of the following assignments and share your thoughts with your peers in a two- to three-minute presentation. Structure your presentation so it has a clear introduction, definite body, and strong conclusion.

- a. Interview another member of the class to identify a number of interesting facts about that person. Be as creative as possible in organizing and sharing what you discovered about your partner and what it has taught you.
- b. Describe a significant personal experience that challenged your sense of ethics.

- c. Based on a review of recent news stories, share a concern you have regarding the ability of members of society to respect one another and get along.
- d. Bring to class a picture, object, or brief literary or nonfiction selection that helps you express your feelings about a subject of importance to you. Share the selection with the class, discuss why you selected it, and explain how it helps you better understand yourself, others, or your relation to the subject.
- e. We often identify with our name. What does your name mean to you? Share your name's story with the class. Research your name by interviewing family members regarding how your name was chosen; exploring its meaning on name-related sites, such as Americannamesociety.org, Names.org, or Ancestry.com; and revealing any relevant facts, statistics, or interesting details/images connected with your name.

Finally, offer advice to a student whose task it is to critique this speech. What should he or she look for? How should he or she offer feedback?

5. Analyze This: A First Speech

Let's look at one student's first speech. (Comments or annotations on the speech are presented as side notes, or SN.) The topic was "My Hometown." As you read the speech, imagine it being delivered. Here are some questions for you to consider when evaluating it:

1. How do you think students in your class would respond to the speech? Would they, for example, find the topic as relevant and appealing as the speaker? Why or why not?
2. Is the speech organized effectively? What do you believe is its purpose? Can you identify the thesis? Does the speech have an introduction that captures your attention, a clear body, and a sound conclusion? Are there transitions to link ideas? Is there sufficient support for each of the speaker's points?
3. What changes, if any, would you suggest making to improve the speech? For example, would you add presentation aids?
4. What questions would you like to ask the speaker?

My Hometown

Good afternoon. I have learned a lot from all of you about your hometowns in the United States by listening to your speeches over the last few weeks. You've shared fascinating details that have helped me form mental pictures of many places I have never seen. Now I would like to take you to my hometown, the city of Shanghai, China.

Have you ever been to New York City? Did you know that Shanghai has almost twice as many skyscrapers as New York City and will soon have 1,000 more? It is one of the biggest and most modern cities in China, and 18 million people live there. Shanghai already has many elevated highways and a subway, and the

continued

SN 1 In the opening, the speaker relates the present speech to preceding ones. The use of the active verb "take" positions receivers to travel along imaginatively with the speaker. The speaker's use of a question is involving.

SN 2 The speaker builds rapport by comparing what receivers know about New York City with his own city of Shanghai.

SN 3 The speaker demonstrates a deep emotional connection to the topic. The sense of change is in the air. The speaker's use of narrative draws receivers into the body of the presentation.

SN 4 The speaker's use of description and sensory images resonate.

SN 5 The speaker changes tone to make clear the downside of modernization.

continued

government is building a new ship terminal. The city even has a high-speed train line, the fastest in the world, that brings visitors from Shanghai's international airport into the city. And there are thousands of cars, many of them taxicabs in bright gold, red, and blue.

There are big changes taking place in Shanghai today, and they are happening very fast, but first I want to tell you about the city the way I remember it. Try to picture it with me.

Over the past hundred years, many Chinese people were able to improve their lives by moving into "the city about the sea"—that's what the name Shanghai means, the city about the sea. Leaving the undeveloped countryside behind, they came to the city to work and live, and they made their homes in small apartment buildings near the Huangpu riverfront or at the northern and southern edges of the city. My parents came to the city when they were young, leaving their families behind in the countryside. They worked hard, riding bicycles to their jobs and saving as much as they could. For a long time, they didn't have very much.

I grew up in our two-room apartment on the third floor and knew everyone in our neighborhood. Everyone knew everyone, in fact! We lived on the western riverbank, near the famous Shanghai Bund, which is a thoroughfare about a mile long of historic old buildings in the Western style. Our own neighborhood was also old but crowded and full of busy apartment buildings. Our building was separated from the others by narrow lanes filled with bicycles and motorbikes, and there was laundry hanging everywhere to dry. I could often hear our neighbors laughing, arguing, or playing the radio, and the smell of food cooking was always in the air.

I walked or rode my bicycle to school, and my route took me past the open-air markets and street vendors selling all kinds of food. Sometimes, it was hard not to stop and buy something or to linger by the park where there was always a little crowd of people performing their morning tai chi exercises, but I would never want to shame my parents by being late for school.

Sometimes, when we had a school holiday, my friends and I would go to Nanjing Donglu. That is the big shopping area in the middle of Shanghai, where there are all kinds of stores. There are places to buy food of all kinds, like duck, sausages, fish, oysters, and shrimp, and of course tea, and you can also find tools, hardware, art, clothes, and even pets. My friends at home have told me that, because one part of it is now closed to cars, Nanjing Donglu has even more tourists than ever before. These are mostly Chinese tourists, from other parts of the country, who enjoy coming to Shanghai to see the sights.

There were still cars allowed in Nanjing Donglu when I was growing up in Shanghai, but as I said, there are many changes happening there. One of the biggest is the change in old neighborhoods like mine, which are being torn down

to make way for the new skyscrapers I told you about, and other developments like new ports, factories, shipyards, and parks and pavilions. The World Expo took place in Shanghai some years back, and the government was very anxious and worked really hard to make the city as modern and as developed as possible, and it did this very quickly at great cost. There are many people who worked to preserve as much of old, historic Shanghai as they could, but hundreds of people lost their homes in the old town and moved away into the suburbs.

Next time I return to the city, my neighborhood near the Bund will be the first place I visit. I want to see whether my old home and my neighbors are still there.²⁶

SN 6 In the conclusion, the speaker prompts continued interest by leaving the audience wondering what will happen when the speaker returns to Shanghai.

6. Approach the Speaker's Stand: Give Your First Speech

Use what you have learned about topic selection; speech development, support, and organization; presentation, practice, and delivery; and harnessing positive energy to prepare and give your first speech on a topic such as your hometown or another topic selected by your instructor. After delivering the speech, offer a self-assessment of your performance.

RECAP AND REVIEW

- 1. Demonstrate how developing public speaking skills can help you realize personal, professional, and societal goals.** Public speaking precipitates self-discovery and the art of creative self-expression. It enhances self-confidence and the ability to influence or control one's environment. In addition, prospective employers favor persons with public speaking abilities. And society benefits from people who are able to function as responsible citizens and participate in the exchange of ideas.
- 2. Explain the context of public speaking by listing and identifying the essential elements of communication.** The following elements are integral to communicating: the source formulates and delivers a message; the receiver interprets the source's message; the message is the content of the speech; the channel is the pathway that carries the message; noise is anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message; the cultural context is the environment in which communication occurs; feedback is information received in response to a sent message; effect is the outcome or exchange of influences occurring during communication; and the field of experience is the sum of all the experiences that a person carries with him or her when communicating.
- 3. Assess and build your speechmaking confidence.** Public speaking anxiety is composed of process

anxiety (the fear of preparing a speech) and performance anxiety (the fear of presenting a speech). It is important to acknowledge and face whatever fear you have so that you are able to harness the excess energy that accompanies it. Among the common sources of speechmaking anxiety are fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of evaluation, fear of being the center of attention, fear of difference, and fear imposed by culture. A variety of strategies can help you address both the physical and mental effects of speech anxiety. Practice tensing and relaxing your muscles, strike a powerful pose, focus on changing your own negative thoughts, and take comfort in honing your own competence by practicing and delivering speeches.

- 4. Approach public speaking systematically.** There are four basic plays in speechmaking: (1) topic selection; (2) speech development, support, and organization; (3) practice and delivery; and (4) post-presentation analysis. By working your way through all the plays step-by-step, you approach speechmaking systematically. Only by preparing and delivering a speech can you tell how well you understand and how effectively you are able to execute the plays involved. Like athletes, actors, and musicians, speakers review and critique their own performances, attempting to learn as much as possible from each experience so they can apply the lessons to future events.

KEY TERMS

Body of the speech 20

Centering 13

Centering breath 13

Channel 7

Cognitive restructuring 13

Communication 3

Conclusion 20

Coordination 20

Effects of communication 7

Ethnocentricity 12

Feedback 7

Field of experience 7

Introduction 20

Main points 19

Message 7

Noise 7

Outline 20

Performance anxiety 11

Process anxiety 11

Public speaking anxiety 11

Receiver 6

Self-talk 13

Situational/cultural context 7

Source 6

Specific purpose 19

Subordination 20

Thesis statement 19

Thought stopping 13



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