

THE 4 P's - PLAN, PREPARE, PRACTICE AND PRESENT YOUR SPEECH

PLANNING YOUR SPEECH

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE SPEECH:

- Decide what you wish to speak about
- Decide what is the primary purpose of the speech.
Do you wish to:
 - (a) instruct and inform
 - (b) convince, persuade, influence or motivate, or
 - (c) amuse and entertain
- What are you trying to achieve
- What are the objectives of your speech
- Know your audience (see separate topic below)
- Know the venue (see separate topic below)

PREPARING YOUR SPEECH

2. THEME:

- In one sentence, write down the object of your speech. This sentence will become the criterion against which all material is to be judged whether to be included or not.
- If there are a number of points to be dealt with, establish a theme, a central idea or concept which gives unity, direction and coherence to the presentation as a whole.
- List the main points to be covered and arrange them in a logical sequence.

Your speech should be structured into 3 distinct parts - Opening, Body and Conclusion

3. OPENING or INTRODUCTION:

- The introduction is most important as your audience will accept your message in the first 30 - 90 seconds, or they will switch off and ignore the rest of the speech.
- In the introduction you (a) introduce the theme (b) set the scene (c) establish a direction (d) gain the attention of the audience and get them involved.
- The introduction should be short, positive, easy to handle, generate interest and expectancy and you must feel comfortable with it. It should create a vivid image and possibly an image that the audience can identify with.
- DO NOT repeat the title, read the introduction, apologize, explain, complain or make excuses.
- Ideas for an attention gaining opening:
 - Use a question related to audience need.
 - Pay a sincere compliment
 - Use a quotation. This reinforces your opinion. Remember to state the author.

4. BODY:

- The body should flow naturally from the introduction and lead the audience to the conclusion you wish to accept.
- Be sure to stick to your theme.
- DO NOT try to cover too much ground - three or four main points are sufficient.
- Use stories, anecdotes, examples to keep the audience interested.
- Pause after each major point, example or illustration for effect and to allow the audience to consider your point.
- Remember the audience likes to be entertained as well as informed, convinced or motivated. Try to include some humour, if appropriate to the topic.

5. CONCLUSION:

- The conclusion should re-state the essential message. Keep it short and simple
- Memorize the conclusion and the opening.
- Refer back to the points in the introduction to round off the speech. The conclusion should always link back to the opening.
- DO NOT introduce any new information to round off the speech.
- DO NOT just fade off.
- DO NOT thank the audience at the end of the speech.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

When speaking you need to know something about the audience and what they expect of you.

When speaking before an audience you need to know:

- General age of audience
- General gender of audience
- General educational standards
- General social status
- General interests
- General qualifications
- General expectations

You need to know:

- How you will be seen to them (i.e. an entertainer, a superior, a teacher, young, old, an outsider, patronizing, condescending etc).
- How long will you be talking to them? What is the venue like? Is there a microphone? Is there an overhead projector? Will you need to use visual aids?
- Fit your speech to the audience (i.e. there is no point in speaking to a senior citizens group about taking up boogie boarding. Teenagers are unlikely to be interested in house maintenance.)
- Dress appropriately (i.e. teenagers will accept jeans rather than a dinner suit.) If in doubt dress slightly better than the audience will.
- Adjust your speech to the group's interests. Use examples and anecdotes that the audience will understand. Use jokes that the age groups will understand and appreciate.
- Limit statistics and avoid jargon. Explain unfamiliar concepts in ways the audience will understand.
- Use vocal variety, gestures, voice, and visual aids to enhance your presentation. Be sure you are sincere, enthusiastic and have knowledge of the subject.
- Adjust your language to the audience.
- Be sure you are punctual for any assignment.
- Check for yourself that all visual aids work.

DO NOT:

- Do not appear to be unprepared
- Apologise
- Explain
- Complain
- Ramble
- Read directly from your notes
- Exceed time limits
- Use distracting mannerisms
- Appear patronising.

KNOW THE VENUE

When planning your presentation you need to know:

- Size of the venue
- Size of the audience
- Effects of a large hall and a small audience
- Arrangements of seating - fixed or movable
- Obstacles between audience and speaker

Where will you speak:

- If speaking from platform note height above audience or distance from audience
- Note presence or absence of a lectern.

What is the lighting like:

- Is it adequate for visual aids
- Is it adequate for reading notes
- Is it easily controlled for slides/films.

What are the distractions:

- Large windows
- Traffic noise
- Air-conditioning noise
- Construction work
- Temperature of room
- Drafts (eg overhead fan could cause notes to blow off lectern)

Test the acoustics:

- Is the sound good
- Are you competing with other noises like air conditioners
- Is there a microphone and does it work properly
- Does ALL the equipment work.

What size is your audience and does the venue allow you to encourage:

- Audience participation
- Question time
- Presentation of opinions.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Practice until you are very familiar with the speech

Practice helps to reduce nerves

Practice:

- In front of family
- To gain feedback
- Using a tape recorder
- A strong opening
- To ensure logical flow
- Credible evidence
- To identify distracting mannerisms
- To ensure your speech is within the allocated time period

PRESENT YOUR SPEECH

Rely on the fundamentals:

- Own your subject
- Feel positive about your speech

Make positive first impression:

- Establish eye contact
- Confident body language
- Be relaxed and well groomed

Build rapport with your audience:

- Be sincere and be yourself
- Say "we" not "you"
- Talk in terms of your audience's interests
- Involve your audience

Hold the attention of the audience:

- Be enthusiastic
- Use vivid words
- Express yourself clearly and concisely
- Have an upbeat voice

Close your presentation to make a favourable and lasting impression

REMEMBER:

**The audience is entitled to your best PREPARATION,
your PUNCTUALITY, your keeping to TIME and your SINCERITY**