

## Informative Speech

### PURPOSE OF THE SPEECH TO INFORM

An **informative speech** provides information to an audience. The purpose of an informative speech is to help your audience understand and remember the information you are presenting. While no one can foretell accurately what kind of speeches you may be called upon to present in the future, it is a safe bet that you will speak many times to inform people. Because so many speeches are informative in nature, you are offered here the opportunity to become acquainted with the informative speech.

#### Explanation of the speech to inform

The speech to inform people provides them a clear understanding of the speaker's ideas on a subject. It also arouses interest in the subject because the material which is presented is relevant to the lives of those who hear it. It is important that the speaker provide this material while making it relevant and interesting to the audience. To accomplish the ends of informative speaking, it is necessary to select a subject of interest to himself and his listeners. This can be done by analyzing the audience – in this case your classmates. You as the speaker are charged further with the serious responsibility of knowing what you are talking about, knowing more about it, in fact, than anyone in your audience does. For this reason, your talk demands that you study not one but several sources of information.

#### How to Choose a Topic

Select something that interests you and that is appropriate to the audience you are to address. Be sure that you can find information about the topic you select. Do not put off choosing a topic. Always look carefully at your topic to see that you have limited it to a manageable size. If the topic is too broad, consider particular features or a specific perspective from which the topic can be examined.

#### How to Prepare a Speech to Inform

To prepare for this speech, you must know and follow certain fundamentals of preparation. These consist of the following steps:

1. Choose your subject.
2. Analyze the occasion.
3. Diagnose the audience.
4. Gather your material.
5. Organize and support your main points with evidence.
6. Word your speech by writing it out in full, in part, or by rehearsing it from an outline.
7. Practice aloud.

#### Organizing the Body of an Informative Speech

You can select from a variety of ways to organize the body of your informative speech. The following list gives specific suggestions about applying these methods to organize an informative speech.

1. **Chronological Order**- arranges details or events according to the order in which they occurred in time. Chronological order is often useful for speeches that present a history of something. It is also useful in speeches that explain procedures or events step by step.

2. **Topical Order**- A topic is broken down into its parts and then arranged in an order determined by the speaker and stated in the specific purpose. Topical order is also used for a process speech that addresses more than one main point. In this method of organization, the main points are arranged in topical order, and then their subdivisions are arranged chronologically.
3. **Spatial Order**-details are arranged according to their position in space. This arrangement is often used for descriptions.
4. **Climactic Order**-arranges items according to their order of importance, usually starting with the least important item of information and ending with the item of information that is the most important.
5. **Cause-and-Effect Order**-information is arranged to show causes or conditions and the effects or results of those causes or conditions.
6. **Comparison-and-Contrast Order**-items of information are arranged to show the similarities and differences between the items.

If you wish to organize your thoughts logically, you should decide early what objective you hope to attain and what reaction you want from this particular audience. Next, the information you present must be accurate. For accuracy of information, acceptable sources of information written by reliable and competent authorities must be consulted. Your audience should know where you get your material. What is more, you are the person to identify these sources and authorities. You are expected to go even further in this matter of giving information: you are expected to offer your conclusions and views and evaluations of your information.

The first law of good speaking is adequate preparation.

Preparing a good speech is like preparing to run a 100m race in a track meet. Each requires many trial runs before the event actually starts. To attempt a speech without preparation is just as foolhardy as to attempt a 400m race without preparing. The well-trained and conditioned runner makes it look easy, just as does the well-prepared speaker. To an uninformed person, both the speaker and the runner may appear to be performing effortlessly and impromptu, yet in most cases nothing could be farther from the truth. Only many hours of intense preparation make it possible for the good speaker and the good athlete to display great ability. If there is any doubt about this point in the mind of any reader they should ask the person who makes speeches or who runs.

There are several things which should be considered in order to explain good speech preparation. Here they are:

1. **YOUR SUBJECT**—Consider it.
  - A. You should be sure you can find sufficient material on your subject, otherwise your speech may be too short, and have no quantity or quality.
  - B. You should be sure the subject you plan to discuss is appropriate to you, your audience and the occasion. Any subject that does not fit **all these criteria** is inadequate.
  - C. You should be certain that your subject can be adequately discussed in the time allotted for your speech. Preliminary investigation, narrowing the subject, and a few “trial runs” will clear up doubts about this phase of preparation.
  - D. Since it takes time for ideas to grow and develop, you should weigh carefully the time you allow yourself for preparation, otherwise your speech may not be fully developed when time to present it.
  - E. The importance of selecting a suitable subject need not be stressed since it is so obvious, however, you should decide whether your topic is too technical, trivial, trite or broad. If it falls in any one of these categories then it must be altered accordingly or a new topic be chosen.
  - F. The title of your speech should be provocative, brief, relative to your subject, and interesting. It is one of the first things your audience will hear before you speak. A good title can add greatly to the initial interest in your speech.

## 2. THINK OF YOUR AUDIENCE

- A. To best adapt your material to your audience, you must understand the people in it. It is your obligation to find out what kind of people will likely come to hear you. How old will they be? What will their occupations be? What is their social standing? Their education? Their religion? Their prejudices and beliefs? Their wealth? What do they want from you? So long as you are taking the time of ten or fifteen persons, perhaps several hundred, you will be wise to give them a speech which is worth their time. You can be much surer you will do this if you analyze your audience. This isn't something to be done on a moment's notice. Rather it will require a definite investigation from you, but it will be well worth your efforts, provided you adapt your remarks to what you find out.

## 3. THE MECHANICS OF SPEECH PREPARATION

- A. Decide on the purpose of your speech, that is, what do you want to accomplish with your speech? What reaction do you want from the people who hear you? Do you want them to understand an idea better? To appreciate something more? To be thankful? To feel honored? To change their minds? To become stirred up and aroused about something? To perform an act, such as to vote for or against a candidate or contribute to a fund or join an organization? In your own mind it is absolutely essential that you know definitely what you want your speech to do to your listeners. If you don't have this point settled, then you really don't know why you are giving your speech or why you organized it the way you did or why you are telling your audience "thus and so." In reality you don't know what you want and nobody else does. You cannot expect your audience to get anything from your speech if you yourself don't know what you want them to get. One of the most pronounced causes of poor speaking lies in the fact that the speaker has nothing in mind that he wants to accomplish with his speech. This need not happen to you if you decide on a purpose and direct all your efforts towards achieving it.
- B. Your next step is to gather material for your speech. Having located various materials, you should take comprehensive notes on what you decide to use. Be sure to indicate your sources exactly and completely. This includes the specific names of the magazines or books the material was taken from, titles of articles, authors' full names, dates of publication, and chapters or pages where the material was found. If a source is a person, identify them completely by title, position, occupation, etc. These data, telling exactly where you got your material, will prove most beneficial when someone later asks where you found your material. The validity of your remarks will be no greater than the sources you use.
- C. Your third step is to organize the material in an orderly and logical sequence. This means that all examples, analogies, facts, quotations, and other evidence which you use to support main ideas must be in their proper place where they will do the most good. The best way to achieve organization that is understandable is to prepare a complete phrase outline of your speech. A complete phrase outline will assist you in formulating your complete thoughts prior to presenting the speech. Without this procedure you will discover it is very difficult to prepare and present a quality speech.
- D. Step number four is wording your speech. Here you must decide what words you will use when you expand your complete phrase outline into a full speech. One method for wording your speech is to read your phrase outline aloud several times to master the general ideas and the necessary details. After doing this, you should construct a set of very brief notes containing only the main ideas of your speech and rehearse aloud from them until you master the general wording and the order of the main points. Do not rehearse by mumbling or by "thinking about" your wording. It is permissible to memorize the introduction and conclusion, but not the body of your speech.

One of the best ways to rehearse a speech is to stand before a mirror so that you may observe your posture, bodily actions, and gestures. A few “trial runs” before a mirror will vastly improve most speeches and speakers.

- E. Step number five involves the development of a mental attitude of the speaker towards himself and the entire speaking situation. You will be wise to expect nervousness and stage fright during your first few speeches. You should realize that although your stage fright will largely disappear after a reasonably short while, your nervousness just before speaking probably will not. You should look upon it as a form of energy that will help your speech.

A few hints—

First, have only two or three main points to your speech. Buttress these well with examples, illustrations, analogies, and facts. Second, do not be afraid to inject humor and anecdotes into your thoughts to add interest. Be sure these additions are suited to your subject and audience. Third, be sure your speech moves ahead. Do not allow the speech to drag or become stalemated. And last, you should put plenty of effort toward an interesting introduction and effective conclusion.

### **QUESTIONS over Informative Speech Packet # 6**

#### **Answer on your own Paper Please**

1. What is the first Law of good speaking?
2. What six things should be considered when selecting the subject of your speech?
3. In considering your audience, what questions should you answer when analyzing your audience?
4. How does a person decide on the purpose of their speech?
5. Why should one decide on a purpose for their speech?
6. Describe how to gather material for a speech.
7. What must be included in reporting your sources? Describe in detail please.
8. How does one go about organizing speech material in an orderly sequence?
9. How should you decide on the wording of your speech?
10. What should the speaker’s mental attitude be toward themselves and the speaking situation?

#### **Further Notes to Consider ...**

Your Speech should be 2 to 4 minutes

Outline your speech and hand it to the teacher before speaking.

#### **Think about this...**

Everyone is a teacher. You act that role many times a day. If a friend calls up after school asking about an assignment, your answer teaches. If a stranger stops you and asks for directions, your reply instructs. If you give a report, you are again serving as a teacher.

No matter what your job when you leave school, you will spend much time teaching: a doctor gives instructions to his patients, a coach explains a difficult play to his team, a scientist makes recommendations to the board of directors, a mechanic tells his customer what is wrong with the engine.

Since so much of your life is spent teaching, you should learn to do it well. In other words, you need to study informative speaking, for that is what teaching is—giving information so the hearer can learn. Notice that when you speak to inform, your purpose is not to show off your knowledge, but to help others understand, remember, and apply ideas.

Think about yourself. When do you find learning the easiest? Isn't it when ideas are presented in a simple-to-follow way and when these ideas are related to material that interests you?

Carry these principles over to a speaking situation. When you give a speech to inform, your audience will learn if ideas are clear and interesting.

Clear. You achieve clarity in five ways:

Organize in a step-by-step procedure. Let your listener know where you are going and when you get there. If necessary as you move ahead, number the points: "Point one is..." or "The second thing to remember is..."

1. Reinforce your ideas through repetition. "Tell'em what you're gonna tell'em. Tell'em. Tell'em what you told 'em.
2. Compare the unknown to the known. If you are attempting to explain a papaya to your listeners, compare this unknown fruit to a peach, which your audience has seen and tasted and knows. Then papaya becomes understandable.
3. Be accurate. Don't teach lies. Check your ideas with authorities. Look to the experts for material. Compare sources to check truthfulness.
4. Be specific. Give exact examples, cite statistics, define terms, quote authorities. Use visual aids. Instead of telling about a water ski wet suit, bring one to class for all to see. Then the audience will specifically know what a wet suit is. Use concrete words. Instead of saying, "A little girl was hurt," say "Seven year old July Walker fell from her bike yesterday on the corner of main and Elm street and broke her left arm two inches above her wrist." That description makes the incident clear in your mind.

Interesting. When you motivate an audience in the introduction of your speech, you are giving them reasons for being interested in your subject. You will find that certain types of material seem always to attract listeners. Throughout your talk you can maintain audience interest by using a combination of the following attention factors:

1. Novelty. Use materials and examples that are new, different, unusual, or contrasting. All eyes are on the extremely short girl who walks down the hall with exceptionally tall boy, because the contrast of height is novel. In your speeches, tell the unusual aspects of your idea. Show the immensity of Alaska by listing the states that could fit into it. Show how one man can lift an engine that has the power of 10,000 horses.
2. Proximity. This refers to events and names that are close to the group. Mention the speech prior to yours; bring into your talk an incident that recently happened in school or in the town or in the class. All of this adds interest.
3. The Vital. Hit at the basic important things that concern your audience. Give information that will affect their lives, reputations, families, freedom, possessions, or jobs.
4. Activity. The more active your ideas the more interesting they are. Keep your speech moving from one point to the next. Use action verbs. "As soon as I vaulted onto the field I dynamited my way to the huddle. I felt as if I were alive with a thousand charges. I kicked the ball furiously, slamming it into the right guard's side," will keep the audience awake more than just saying, "As a replacement on the football field I hit the right guard's side when I kicked the ball hard."
5. Humor. A joke always gets attention, but be sure that the joke you tell specifically relates to your speech and that it is in good taste and will not offend or embarrass anyone, Also be sure you tell the joke fluently, remembering the punch line.

## How to Prepare

1. Prepare your speech by analyzing your audience and selecting a subject of interest to them and you. Narrow your topic so you can adequately explain it in 2 to 4 minutes.
2. Gather accurate, specific material from at least one source.
3. Clearly organize your speech. Be sure you provide a clear step-by-step pattern, that you reinforce with repetition, and compare the known to the unknown. Include in your speech at least two specific attention factors.
4. Write an outline of your speech.
5. Rehearse.
6. Check the evaluation sheet to see how you will be rated.

## How to Present

As you deliver your speech, be enthusiastic. Use gestures and as much eye contact as possible. Do not apologize for your speech. Just do the best you can. Remember to speak slowly enough to give your audience time to catch the ideas.

## STUDENT PREPARATION FOR A SPEAKING ASSIGNMENT

**STUDENT CHECKLIST:** As you prepare for your speaking assignment, check off the following preparations as you accomplish them.

- \_\_\_ 1. I have chosen a topic about which I could find adequate information.
- \_\_\_ 2. I have chosen a topic that will interest my audience.
- \_\_\_ 3. I have decided the specific purpose in giving my speaking assignment.
- \_\_\_ 4. I have studied my subject thoroughly through reading, interviewing, or through personal experience.
- \_\_\_ 5. I have prepared an introduction that will capture the attention of my audience.
- \_\_\_ 6. I have planned an explanation of all technical terms.
- \_\_\_ 7. I have checked pronunciation of unusual words.
- \_\_\_ 8. I have prepared a phrase outline to use in presenting my speech that CANNOT be read word for word but used to refer to.
- \_\_\_ 9. I have planned to avoid all nervous mannerisms such as scratching my head, moving my hair out of my eyes while speaking, playing with a pencil, adjusting my clothes, swaying back and forth, etc.
- \_\_\_ 10. I will speak loudly and distinctly.
- \_\_\_ 11. I have prepared a conclusion which restates my central theme or ideas.
- \_\_\_ 12. I have rehearsed my speech at least twice and am familiar with all my notes.