



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

Speechwriting and Delivery

Many people are scared to speak in public. It's a very natural phenomenon. Most professional speakers (politicians, TV news anchors, etc.) take years of classes to become experts. Jerry Seinfeld has a skit in which he says that a survey revealed more people are afraid of public speaking than are afraid of death. So, Seinfeld says, when you go to a funeral you can figure that more people attending the funeral would rather be in the coffin than giving the eulogy.

Now that may be an exaggeration, but it is true that many people are afraid to speak in public. Sweaty palms. Racing heart. Dry throat. Most of us have been there.

In a world where “ums,” “ahs,” “ya knows” and “whatevers” pass in conversation, we who speak on behalf of DAV need to strive for robust vocabulary and elocution.

Communication theorists say, that to be effective, the sender strives to encode the message using words, tone and body

language that the receiver will decode in a manner that allows the receiver to understand the message as the sender intended. That is theory. In Speechwriting and Delivery this is where theory meets reality.

One has to hone the ability to choose the best words, phrases, metaphors, and other elements that enhance the receiver's understanding of the message. Public speaking ability is developed. Well developed speaking ability will be an important tool in your toolkit as a DAV representative. You will have ample opportunity to speak. In fact, you will have an obligation to speak on your experience as a veteran, to speak on behalf of your Chapter, to speak on behalf of your Department and to speak on behalf DAV as a whole.

This lesson provides an opportunity to learn and use some public speaking techniques to improve your public speaking ability.



Types of Speeches

The basic speech construction will serve as your default speech format and will serve you well. The format is sometimes referred to as “Tell ‘em what you’re going to tell ‘em. Tell ‘em. Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.” In his autobiography, Colin Powell recounts an episode where he defaulted to this style when he served as National Security Advisor as an Army brigadier general in the White House. Powell had just completed negotiations with the Soviets for a treaty to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear force missiles. He went to California to brief President Reagan at his ranch on the successful agreement with the Soviets. Afterward, Powell was to brief the news media at the traveling White House press briefing room in a Santa Barbara hotel. Powell writes:

“The White House press corps can be a carnivorous lot, and I braced myself for this first exposure by relying on the techniques drilled into me thirty years before at the Fort Benning Infantry School instructors course—how to stand, move, use the hands and the voice ...How to organize your thoughts—tell ‘em what you’re gonna tell ‘em, tell ‘em, then tell ‘em what you just told ‘em.”

Pay particular attention to the construction portion of this lesson. **Sometimes simple is effective.**

There are four types of speech presentations.

1. **Impromptu:** A speech given with little or no prior notice, practice or preparation. This type of speech sounds the most natural because you deliver it based on what is in your head. Even without preparing ahead of time, your audience deserves an impromptu speech that is organized and coherent, presented clearly and concisely.
2. **Memorized:** A speech delivered word-for-word from memory. This is a particularly challenging type of speech. The speaker must work to not mix up words or paragraphs, and sound spontaneous not scripted. Actors are adept at this form of delivery.

3. **Manuscript:** A speech written out in either word-for-word, traditional outline, or key-word outline (notes), format for ease of reference during presentation. Manuscript speeches are valuable when communicating through translators to international audiences because they support accuracy in translation.
4. **Extemporaneous:** A speech prepared in advance, but delivered without “apparent” reliance on notes or manuscript.

There are five commonly used purposes of a speech.

- **To inform:** All speeches are to inform. Informative speeches are the staple of contemporary speech making; it is a fundamental purpose. When my speech is over, I want my listener to know...
- **To stimulate:** The pure speech to stimulate seeks only to reinforce and intensify feelings that are already resident in the listener. Times of war and unrest offer good examples of effective speaking to stimulate. When my speech is over, I want my listeners to feel...



The scope, size and demographical make up of your audience will play a role in what type of speech you use.

Types of Speeches (cont'd)

- **To persuade:** The speech to persuade expresses a viewpoint and works to prove it. Be blatant in expressing your viewpoint; implying it is much less effective. Persuading is more than informing. Persuasion is usually a task of overcoming the resistance of other ideas and old habits, not merely a task of supplying new information. When my speech is over, I want my listeners to **believe...**
- **To activate:** The speech to activate wants people to do something. This is not the same as persuading. It is more. The speech to activate takes the additional step of telling the listener “Now that you’re convinced, do this...” When I finish my speech, I want my listeners to **do the following...**
- **To entertain:** Speeches to entertain are usually humorous from start to finish. They differ from joke telling in the same way playing baseball differs from batting practice. In both you try to hit the ball. In the game it’s one part of a larger effort. When I finish my speech, I want my listeners to be **amused, entertained and happy.**

The most effective way to influence the human mind is to communicate with it in its basic programming language: **a story.**

The types and purposes together are critical to shaping the speech you want to deliver, but this is not all there is to the process.

As you move forward with speech writing and delivery, recognize that speeches are another form of communication with their own unique elements.

The most effective way to influence the human mind is to communicate with it in its basic programming language: a story.

The route to generating people’s understanding, commitment and ultimately action is to impact not just their thinking, but their emotions.

Now that you know the types and different purposes of a speech, let’s examine speech considerations—things you need to think about in advance of preparing and delivering a speech.



An extemporaneous speech requires a lot of practice, but it can allow the audience to feel a close connection to the speaker.

Considerations

There are a variety of considerations that must be assessed when giving a speech.

Environmental considerations

The environment where you give your speech will have a lot to do with whether your speech is heard and your audience understands it. Take the following into consideration:

- **Noise** (telephones, glassware, jackhammers): For example, in a banquet setting, waiters clearing tables are a killer.
- **Temperature:** Outside or inside, a thermostat or a thermometer should be consulted.
- **Glare** (from sunlight or lights): Check the room so you are not backlit (you'll appear as a silhouette.)
- **Uncomfortable seating:** Bleachers are bad.
- **Malfunctioning audio/visual equipment:** Have a backup microphone, have an audio/video technician standing by, and/or know where the mic and master controls are in the event you have to troubleshoot yourself.

Audience considerations

Have you ever listened to someone give a speech and when it was over, you can't remember what the topic was? It is very possible the speaker didn't know who the audience was and the speech didn't apply to the people who were there to hear it. Your audience should be your first consideration when writing and delivering a speech.

- Why are they there? Are they members of a sponsoring organization and want to listen to something that relates to their group's purpose?
- Did an influential person (like the Adjutant) tell them to be there?
- Are they there because they were attracted by the speaker's topic or reputation?
- What do they expect to take away or learn from the speech?
- How much do they know about the subject and the speaker?

- What do they care about in the context of the speech subject?
- How do they think as a group? For example, will you be speaking to an organization of potential donors, fellow veterans, your local community or a school? You need to be intimate with our organization's mission.

Specific considerations should be given when a communicator is supporting another DAV leader speaking at an event. Some considerations are:

1. What has the Chapter or Department Commander or other leadership said to this group in the past? Leadership is often asked to speak annually to the same group.
2. Will there be any VIPs or other Distinguished Visitors (DV) in the group to identify at the beginning? What is their position on the topic? This can be especially important in places like the Washington, D.C. area or other high-profile locations.
3. Are there potential secondary audiences? Assume remarks and statements will be recorded and used online. Will the speaker's comments resonate with or irritate other audiences?
4. Who else is speaking at the event? Coordinate with other speakers to de-conflict opposing or reused material that might confuse or lose the audience. The speech might be great, but it won't be if the speaker right before or after you says the same thing.
5. Consider the potential of fatigue for the speaker. Also, is he or she an early morning person or a night owl? If he or she is scheduled during that time, make remarks brief or more familiar as they may be more relaxed and at ease.

Physical considerations

There are physiological considerations, like:

- **Hearing impairments:** Are you giving your speech near an airport or construction area? A senior citizen care facility? If your audience can't hear you, they will struggle to stay interested.

Considerations (cont'd)

- **Fatigue:** Is it the end of the work day/week? After lunch? Early in the morning?
- **Hunger:** This is the reason for “after dinner” speakers.
- **Delivery support:** Pay attention to mechanics of delivering a speech:
 1. Is a teleprompter available; are you or the speaker you're supporting familiar with its use?
 2. Lectern for speech binder or is the script on a tablet, such as an iPad?
 3. How will you be mic'd up? Lavalier microphone (sometimes known as the lav, lapel mic, clip mic or personal mic), handheld, or podium mic? Check connections and power supply.
 4. Who will introduce you? Often, the host of the event may provide an introduction or you may have to work your own in your preparation.
 5. What happens after the speech, such as audience Q&A or media availability, which is time specifically for journalists to ask questions?

Writing for the ear

1. We spend our lives being taught writing for the eye to read and little to no time writing for the ear.
2. It is crucial to read aloud while writing. Use alliteration and action verbs. Don't be afraid to turn a phrase and create a poetic moment from the prose.
3. Read aloud while writing and editing on a printed page.
 - a) Print draft, practice delivery and edit.
 - b) If you are the speaker, it's your voice, but if you are ever writing for someone else, edit while impersonating the person's delivery (pitch, cadence, non-verbals, etc). If it doesn't sound like something he or she would say, change it.
 - c) Revise on paper while impersonating first, then revise on the computer, reprint, rehearse and edit, repeat.

We just covered some of the environmental, audience and physical considerations when giving a speech. Now let's look at how to construct a speech.



Location can have a significant impact on how your speech is received by the audience.

Structure

Speech structure starts with a topic. Your job, hobby or life experiences and interests are all possible sources for topic ideas. A wide range of sample speeches that may give you topic ideas are available at local libraries and on the Internet. Various books of quotations are a good source for ideas, such as Bartlett's Dictionary of Familiar Quotations. These books are cross-indexed by subject and name so you may easily locate quotes appropriate for a wide range of speech topics. Current events, newspapers and magazines may also be valuable sources of information when choosing a topic and when preparing your speech.

Remember, when gathering material for your speech, the material should help support or highlight a point you're making in the speech. Attribute the material that is not your own by citing the sources you have used on a reference page at the end of your manuscript.

You must also be sure to provide attribution in the text and during delivery as appropriate. An example might be: "as Mark Twain said," and continue with the quote. Or, "According to the American Heart association Web site,..."

You must take great care to avoid plagiarism. Webster's New World College Dictionary defines plagiarizing: "to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and pass them off as one's own." The act of plagiarism may result in significant professional and personal damage to the speaker and DAV.

Speech structure is critical, so speeches consist of organized, clear, succinct information delivered with as much spontaneity as possible.

A good model for speech structure is:

1. **Goal setting:** determine your objective. What action do you want your audience to take regarding your idea, proposal, or organization?
2. **First step:** establish your storyline. To generate the action you want, what is the "big picture" or vision of a positive future you want your audience to understand?
3. **Second step:** develop your storyline in three chapters that target your audience's agenda. What are this particular audience's needs, wants and goals? What are the three most important ways in which this audience's agenda will be fulfilled?

4. **Third step:** call your audience to action. Ask for a commitment or first step toward the action you want. Once you have an idea of what you want to write a speech about now you can move on to developing a thesis statement.

The thesis statement

Thesis. This is your central idea.

- a) If you were to summarize the speech in one sentence, this is it.
- b) Recall the purpose of a speech and use this along with the subject and audience to develop a thesis statement.
- c) Write this declarative sentence using active voice.
- d) Notice that the thesis and purpose are distinct. When you make them separate and clear it is much easier for you to organize your work.

Three main points

Each of these main points must clearly support the thesis.

- a) While each can be a stand-alone element, they must be logically related to and support—but not overshadow—the thesis itself.
- b) You must be able to support each main point with research that includes examples or quotations other than your own personal knowledge.
- c) Write these sentences using active voice.

Now, let's take a look at the parts of a speech.

Opening the speech

A thesis statement is just a part of the process. Next we will look at the specific format you will use to construct a logical speech based on audience needs and expectations.

Writing a speech opening is as simple as One...Two...Three.

1. **Attention:** First, you must get your listener's attention. First impressions are the most important. This is particularly true in public speaking. An audience begins to evaluate any speaker's credibility before he actually steps in front of an audience. It could be a previous perception gleaned from broadcast or print media or a particular position one had or now holds.

Structure (cont'd)

It also could be something in the written program or by the introduction given about the speaker on the platform. Given that, an effective speaker must send a clear and deliberate message, both visually and verbally, that the speech will be worth the audience's time.

Through the careful use of humor, an anecdote that fits the occasion or speech, tone, volume or any of a nearly infinite list of methods, the speaker must gain the attention of the audience from the start of the presentation. Once gained, that attention must be maintained. Regardless of the method used, the speaker should put that "attention gainer" together with the thesis (or purpose) of the speech and make a personal connection between the members of the audience and the topic of the speech.

2. **Credibility:** If no one introduces you, introduce yourself and establish your credentials with the audience. The credibility statement is much more than a simple list of your accomplishments. More specifically, the credibility you establish tells the audience member why you are an expert at whatever your speech topic is. For instance, if you are discussing treatment options for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with veterans returning from war, the audience members might listen to you more intently if you are a have received treatment yourself for PTSD or have data from mental health professionals.
3. **Motivate the audience to listen:** Before the audience will listen intently to an entire speech, it must be motivated to do so. While it's easy to think of an audience as a single entity, speechwriters and speakers must remember that audiences are made up of individuals, each with personal concerns and reasons for attending the presentation. In order to motivate the entire audience, you must clearly communicate how the subject relates to each member of the audience individually. In other words, tell the audience members what's in it for them to listen to you. What are they personally going to get out of it?

4. **Thesis/purpose statement:** The purpose statement, or thesis, is the foundation upon which the body of your speech is built. An audience that understands the purpose of a speech early in the presentation will be more likely to give the speaker its full attention.

5. **Overview:** This step lays out the road map for the speech when you explicitly say what three main points you are going to cover.

- a) State what your main points are. This is not a summary, more of a list.
- b) Ensure the points you specify here match the main points in the body and the review of main points when you re-state the purpose and thesis.

6. **Transitions:** Transitions are required between the opening and body, between key points, and between the body and closing.

Use "clear" transitions, which enable you to maintain the audience's attention as you move from key point to key point.

Transitions should make it clear that you have concluded your discussion of one key point and will now move on to the next. **Make them seamless.**

Example: *"Now that you know how this problem started, let's consider the potential impact on our community..."*

Avoid phrases such as: "My second point is..." "My third point is..."

If appropriate, phrases such as: "Let's move to step two..." or "Let's break down step three..." will help move your speech along and sound natural.

Other techniques to help an audience follow complex speeches are internal previews and summaries.

Internal previews let the audience know what the speaker will discuss next, but they are more detailed than transitions.

Internal summaries are the reverse of internal previews. Rather than letting listeners know what is coming next, internal summaries remind listeners of what they have just heard.

Structure (cont'd)

The body of the speech

The body must present a logical sequence of points, presented in a way that will make sense and is easy for the ear to follow. Remember, a listener can't go back and re-read your manuscript if they get lost along the way.

If the purpose statement represents the final destination, then the main points are the stops along the way. Each main point should build on the preceding point and take the audience closer to a clear understanding of the speaker's original purpose.

- Each main point must directly support the thesis.
- Each main point must be fully developed.
- Each main point must be clearly communicated and maintain audience motivation. A personal link between the audience and the topic of the speech must be maintained throughout the presentation.

Closing the speech

While closing your speech, remember: Don't introduce new information. The speaker has already presented each of his or her key points to the audience in the body of the speech. No new ideas should be given to the audience during the conclusion of the presentation. The closing should be presented in three steps:

1. **Restate the thesis/purpose statement and three main points:** Restate the thesis by re-emphasizing the purpose. A well-written and presented speech will draw the audience to an understanding of the speaker's thoughts and ideas.

Summarize the main points. A clear summary of the three key points during the conclusion draws the key points back to the audience's minds and further draws its thoughts toward the speaker's purpose.

The purpose of the speech should be confidently and clearly restated so the audience recognizes the thesis of the speech and understands how the key points support it.

2. **Re-motivate the audience.** Remind the audience members again why the topic of the speech was important to them.
3. **Let the audience know the speech has come to an end.** Making a short, clear, closing statement assures the audience the speech is over and helps everyone avoid the awkwardness that occurs when people are unsure if you're done.

Potential pitfalls

Following the above format will go a long way toward helping you organize your speech. But, be aware, there are some potential pitfalls to look out for while you're writing your speech.

1. **Avoid vague language:** Words such as "this, that, those, they" may seem easier to say, but those words don't carry the impact of a specific reference.

Example:

Wrong: *"This is something we will long remember..."*

Right: *"We will long remember our community day..."*

2. **Avoid passive voice:** The easiest way to tell if you are using passive voice is if you see a version of the "to be" verb combined with an "-ed" action verb.

Examples:

Wrong: *"The thief was arrested by the policeman."*

Right: *"The policeman arrested the thief."*

Delivery

Delivery Considerations

Practice. Regardless of the type of speech (impromptu, manuscript, extemporaneous, memorized), effective practice is a key to success.

1. You need to be thoroughly familiar with the manuscript.
 - a) This often means reading it silently and aloud several times.
 - b) Writing for the ear must be heard. Read the speech aloud to write, edit, and practice.
2. Along with voice, you need to practice movements, gestures and expressions.

Delivery tempo.

1. A common pace for native English speakers is to speak at 120–150 words per minute. It is common to speak more quickly during delivery. Keep this in mind as you practice.

Pauses. Closely related to tempo, pauses help the audience process what the speaker delivers.

1. Effective pauses allow the listener to process what the speaker is saying.
 2. Use them throughout the speech for effect and to allow the audience to process information.
- Once the speech is written, it's time to consider some elements of the delivery of the speech:

- **Eyes:** You should maintain frequent eye contact with the audience, especially at the beginning. Try to maintain a smooth transition between looking from the script to the audience. (Especially avoid reading from your script during the introduction and closing.)
- **Gestures:** Use movements that match tone and content. Avoid using unnatural, nervous, inappropriate or distracting gestures. Don't follow along the manuscript with your finger, excessively grasp the podium, or otherwise prevent yourself from gesturing naturally. Your gestures should be natural and supportive. Someone who normally speaks with his or her hands should find this easy; just communicate. Those who

seldom emphasize parts of a conversation with gestures may need to practice.

- a) Observe others who gesture naturally and attempt to emulate them.
- b) Do not force gestures to the point of looking robotic. The bottom line is communicating.

- **Body:** Movement and gestures should appear natural and purposeful. Appropriate facial expressions support the speech's meaning.

If, by chance, you misspeak, simply recover and move on. Don't let your facial expressions confirm your mistake to the audience. They might have missed it—and usually do! Audiences judge you based on how you look, how you are dressed, how you move, how you carry yourself. Consciously face each section of the audience, pacing your movement throughout the speech. You may move away from the lectern. Your movement should align with the speech content and compliment your manner of speaking.

- **Voice:**
 - ▶ Pay attention to clarity and volume. You should be loud and clear enough to be heard throughout the room.
 - ▶ Pay attention to enunciation and pronunciation. Research and practice the proper way to say difficult words or names.
 - ▶ Avoid verbal distracters: These include filler sounds and/or words such as “um” and “ah,” as well as extraneous words and phrases such as, “What I'd like to tell you is...” “like...,” “in order to...” etc.
 - ▶ Vary pitch and pace. To maintain the attention of the audience, be sure to vary the pitch and pace of delivery throughout the presentation.
- **Bearing:** The speaker maintains an appropriate demeanor while delivering the speech, displays impeccable presence, maintains composure and is able to work through and ignore minor distractions.

Conclusion

You've now learned the basics about how to write a speech and how to deliver a speech. Communications skills are often one of the most visible—and valuable—skills you bring to DAV. Speeches are a very personal form of public communication, both for the speaker and the audience. Your ability to draft and deliver speeches is important because of the many opportunities you will have to connect with a variety of audiences on many topics.

Now that you have completed this lesson you should be prepared to write and deliver a speech.

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