

	91-100% A-/A
Thorough analysis of elements of delivery style 25%	Concisely written paper, shows depth of thought in analysis, thesis is fully supported
Appropriate and extensive use of vocabulary from Chapter 13 30%	Throughout paper, vocabulary is used to describe speaking style and inform analysis
Analysis indicates understanding of concepts covered in class and readings. 25%	Analysis reflects full understanding of stylistic aspects of public speaking
Paper is carefully proofread for grammar, spelling, and syntax 20%	No proofreading errors

- *In this paper, analyze the delivery style (not content) of the speaker in youtube link*
- *Speaker is in front of a live audience and speaking extemporaneously.*
- *When writing utilize vocabulary, stylistic qualities and information from reading material in the entire PDF.*
- *Thesis of the essay: [Speaker X] was/was not an effective speaker when delivering [Speech Title/Date of Delivery]. Then, make your argument based on deliver style.*
- *Paper must be typed, at least one full page, double spaced, 12 pt font*
- **1 ½ - 3 pages long**
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgkTm-_lgdg



Using Language Accurately

Using language accurately is as vital to a speaker as using numbers accurately is to an accountant. One student learned about this the hard way. In a speech about the U.S. criminal justice system, he referred several times to evidence that would “collaborate” the guilt or innocence of a defendant. What he meant, of course, was “corroborate.” When this was pointed out to him afterward, he was noticeably embarrassed; worse, the error diminished his credibility and reduced the effectiveness of his speech.

Fortunately, such outright blunders are relatively rare among college students. However, we all commit more subtle errors—especially using one word when another will capture our ideas more precisely. Every word has shades of meaning that distinguish it from every other word. As Mark Twain said, “The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”

If you look in a **thesaurus**, you'll find the following words given as synonyms:

knowledge

expertise

education

All mean roughly the same thing—special grasp of a subject matter or skill. But all these words have different shades of meaning. See if you can fill in the best word to complete each of the following sentences:

1. Because he won a scholarship to a top university, Enrique received an excellent _____.
2. Sophia acquired her _____ of Chinese history by reading a number of books on the subject.
3. Jasmine's _____ as a business consultant comes from having worked with many clients over the years.

The best answers for the three statements are:

1. education 2. knowledge 3. expertise

Each of the words means something a little different from the others, and each says something special to listeners.

As you prepare your speeches, ask yourself constantly, “What do I *really* want to say? What do I *really* mean?” When in doubt, consult a dictionary or thesaurus to make sure you have the best words to express your ideas.

Using Language Clearly

People are different. What makes perfect sense to some may be gobbledygook to others. You cannot assume that what is clear to you is clear to your audience. Listeners, unlike readers, cannot turn to a dictionary or reread an author's words to discover their meaning. A speaker's meaning must be *immediately* comprehensible; it must be so clear that there is no chance of misunderstanding. You can ensure this by using familiar words, by choosing concrete words over abstract words, and by eliminating verbal clutter.

Use Familiar Words

One of the biggest barriers to clear speech is using big, bloated words where short, sharp ones will do the job better.² This is especially true when it comes to technical language that may be familiar to the speaker but not to the audience. Yet, if you work at it, you will almost always be able to translate even the most specialized topic into clear, familiar language.

Here, for instance, are two passages explaining the devastating effects of a pregnant woman's drinking on her unborn child. The first passage is technically accurate, but it contains too many obscure words.

The deleterious effects of alcohol on the unborn child are very serious. When a pregnant mother consumes alcohol, the ethanol in the bloodstream easily crosses the placenta from mother to child and invades the amniotic fluid. This can produce a number of abnormal birth syndromes, including central-nervoussystem dysfunctions, growth deficiencies, a cluster of facial aberrations, and variable major and minor malformations.

Well-informed listeners can probably figure out “deleterious effects,” “central-nervous-system dysfunctions,” and “facial aberrations.” But these terms don’t create sharp mental images of what the speaker is trying to say.

Here, in contrast, is the second passage. It is utterly clear and shows what can be done with work, imagination, and a healthy respect for everyday words:

When the expectant mother drinks, alcohol is absorbed into her bloodstream and distributed throughout her entire body. After a few beers or a couple of martinis, she begins to feel tipsy and decides to sober up. She grabs a cup of coffee, two aspirin, and takes a little nap. After a while she'll be fine.

But while she sleeps, the fetus is surrounded by the same alcoholic content as its mother had. After being drowned in alcohol, the fetus begins to feel the effect. But it can't sober up. It can't grab a cup of coffee. It can't grab a couple of aspirin. For the fetus's liver, the key organ in removing alcohol from the blood, is just not developed. The fetus is literally pickled in alcohol.³

This kind of plain talk is what listeners want. You cannot go wrong by following the advice of Winston Churchill to speak in “short, homely words of common usage.” If you think big words (or a lot of words) are needed to impress listeners, bear in mind that the

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Choose Concrete Words

Concrete words refer to tangible objects—people, places, and things. They differ from **abstract words**, which refer to general concepts, qualities, or attributes. “Carrot,” “pencil,” “nose,” and “door” are concrete words. “Humility,” “science,” “progress,” and “philosophy” are abstract words.

Of course, few words are completely abstract or concrete. “Apple pie” is concrete, but in the United States, the phrase also has abstract values of patriotism and conventional morals. Usually, the more specific a word, the more concrete it is. Let us say you are talking about basketball. Here are several words and phrases you might use:

physical activity	abstract/general
sports	
basketball	
professional basketball	
Stephen Curry	concrete/specific

As you move down the list, the words become less abstract and more concrete. You begin with a general concept (physical activity), descend to one type of activity (sports), to a particular sport (basketball), to a division of that sport (professional basketball), to one specific professional basketball player (Stephen Curry).

Although abstract words are necessary to express certain kinds of ideas, they are much easier to misinterpret than are concrete words. Also, concrete words are much more likely to claim your listeners’ attention. Suppose you make a speech about Asian carp, which are plaguing



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Although abstract words are necessary to express certain kinds of ideas, they are much easier to misinterpret than are concrete words. Also, concrete words are much more likely to claim your listeners’ attention. Suppose you make a speech about Asian carp, which are plaguing waterways in the United States from coast to coast. Here are two ways you could approach the subject—one featuring abstract words, the other concrete words:

Abstract Words

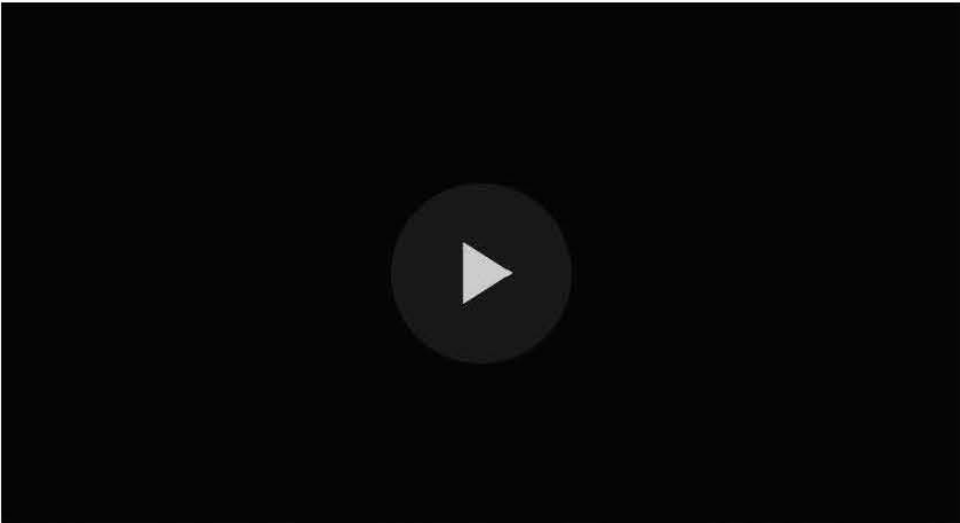
Asian carp have become a big problem. They can grow to an enormous size and eat a lot of food in the process. When that happens, other fish don’t have much to eat. Asian carp can now be found in rivers, lakes, and streams in a number of different states, some down South and others up North.

Concrete Words

Asian carp are one of the most destructive invasive species in the United States. These insatiable eaters can devour 20 percent of their body weight in plankton every day. Because they grow up to 100 pounds, their endless appetites are starving native fish of the food they need to survive.

Large and aggressive, Asian carp have taken over rivers, lakes, and streams from the Gulf Coast to the Canadian border. They now look poised to attack the Great Lakes, where they could decimate the existing ecosystem and destroy the fishing industry.

Federal and state governments have spent millions of dollars trying to contain Asian carp, but so far the invaders continue their relentless advance.



Eliminate Clutter

Cluttered speech has become a national epidemic. Whatever happened to such simple words as “before,” “if,” and “now”? When last seen they were being routed by their cluttered counterparts: “prior to,” “in the eventuality of,” and “at this point in time.” By the same token, why can’t politicians say “We have a crisis,” instead of saying “We are facing a difficult crisis situation that will be troublesome to successfully resolve”?

This type of **clutter** forces listeners to hack through a tangle of words to discover the meaning. When you make a speech, keep your language lean and lively. Beware of using several words where one or two will do. Avoid flabby phrases. Let your ideas emerge sharply and firmly. Above all, watch out for redundant adjectives and adverbs. Inexperienced speakers (and writers) tend to string together two or three synonymous adjectives, such as “a learned and educated person” or “a hot, steamy, torrid day.”

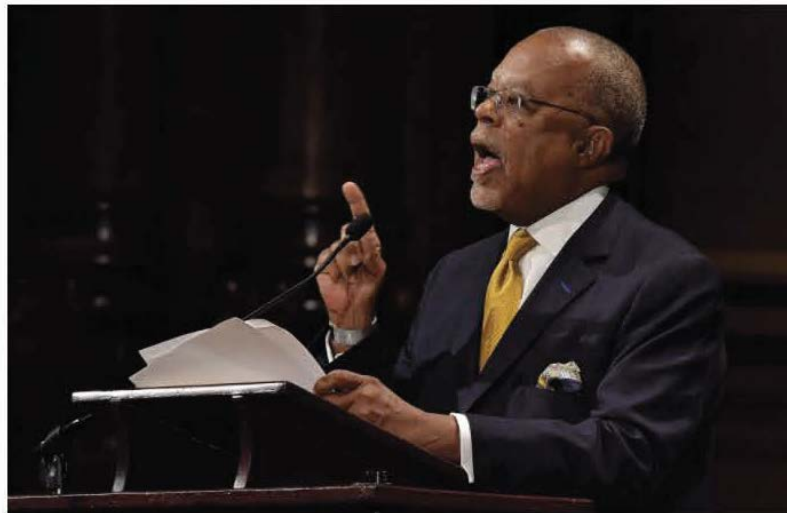
Here is part of a student speech that has been revised to eliminate clutter:

Sitting Bull was one of the most important ~~and significant of all~~ Native American leaders. He was born in ~~the year of~~ 1831 near Grand River, in ~~an area that is now part of the state of~~ South Dakota. A fearless ~~and courageous~~ warrior, he ~~ended up being~~ *was* elected chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux in 1867. In the following years, he also attracted a large ~~and numerous~~ following among the ~~tribes of the~~ Cheyenne and Arapaho. He is best known ~~to people in this day and age~~ *today* for his ~~instrumental~~ role in ~~helping to lead the defeat of~~ *defeating* General Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. Although eventually ~~required against his~~ *forced* ~~will~~ to live ~~his life~~ on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota, he never surrendered ~~to anyone~~ his dignity or his ~~personal~~ devotion to the Sioux way of life.

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Notice how much cleaner and easier to follow the revised version is. No longer are the speaker's ideas hidden in a thicket of wasted words.

This kind of pruning is easy once you get the knack of it. The hardest part—and it is often very hard—is recognizing clutter and forcing yourself to throw away the unnecessary words. Watch for clutter when you write your speech outlines. Be prepared to revise the outline until your ideas emerge clearly and crisply.



Even when discussing technical subjects, effective speakers such as renowned scholar Henry Louis Gates look for ways to communicate their ideas in clear, familiar language.

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You can also help eliminate clutter by practicing your speeches with a digital recorder. As you play back the speech, keep an ear out not just for flabby phrases but for verbal fillers such as “you know,” “like,” and “really.” Practice delivering the speech again, this time making a special effort to trim it of wasted or distracting words. This will not only make you a better public speaker, it will also help you present ideas more effectively in meetings, conversations, and group discussions.⁴



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Just as you can be accurate without being clear, so you can be both accurate and clear without being interesting. Here, for example, is how Barack Obama *might* have phrased part of his acclaimed presidential speech commemorating the 1965 civil rights march across Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama:

We are very proud of the people who acted in support of civil rights. They were brave, patriotic, and religious. They suffered greatly, but they remained committed to their principles.

Here is what Obama *actually* said:

We gather here to honor the courage of ordinary Americans willing to endure billy clubs and the chastening rod; tear gas and the trampling hoof; men and women who despite the gush of blood and splintered bone would stay true to their North Star and keep marching toward justice.

They did as Scripture instructed: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” And in the days to come, they went back again and again. When the trumpet call sounded for more to join, the people came—black and white, young and old, Christian and Jew, waving the American flag and singing the same anthems full of faith and hope.

Much more stirring, isn’t it? If you want to move people with your speeches, use vivid, animated language. Although there are several ways to do this, two of the most important are imagery and rhythm.

Imagery

One sign of a good novelist is the ability to create word pictures that let you “see” the haunted house, or “hear” the birds chirping on a warm spring morning, or “taste” the hot enchiladas at a Mexican restaurant.

Speakers can use **imagery** in much the same way to make their ideas come alive. Three ways to generate imagery are by using concrete words, simile, and metaphor

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Concrete Words

As we saw earlier in this chapter, choosing concrete words over abstract words is one way to enhance the clarity of your speeches. Concrete words are also the key to effective imagery. Consider the following excerpt from Ronald Reagan’s famous address commemorating the 40th anniversary of D-Day. Speaking at the scene of the battle, Reagan dramatically recounted the heroism of the U.S. Rangers who scaled the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc to help free Europe from Hitler’s stranglehold:

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon.

At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. . . . The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers—at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these

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At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 Rangers jumped on the beach landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. . . . The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers—at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up.

When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back, and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the continent of Europe.⁵

Concrete words call up mental impressions of sights, sounds, touch, smell, and taste. In Reagan's speech, we do not merely learn that the U.S. Rangers helped win the battle of D-Day. We visualize the Rangers landing at the foot of the cliffs. We see them fighting their way up the cliffs in the face of enemy grenades and machine guns. We hear the crack of rifle fire and the cries of the soldiers. The concrete words create images that pull us irresistibly into the speech.

Simile

Another way to create imagery is through the use of **simile**. Simile is an explicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common. It always contains the word “like” or “as.” Here are some examples from student speeches:

Walking into my grandparents' home when I was a child was like being wrapped in a giant security blanket.

With eyes glued on their phones, pedestrians walk the streets like zombies after the apocalypse.



Audience-oriented speakers put a premium on clear, vivid, uncluttered language. They give a great deal of thought to finding just the right words to express their ideas.

These are bright, fresh similes that clarify and vitalize ideas. Some similes, however, have become stale through overuse. Here are a few:

fresh as a daisy

hungry as a bear

fit as a fiddle

busy as a bee

strong as an ox

happy as a lark

Such **clichés** are fine in everyday conversation, but you should avoid them in speechmaking. Otherwise, you are likely to be “dull as dishwater” and to find your audience “sleeping like a log”!

Metaphor

You can also use **metaphor** to create imagery in your speeches. Metaphor is an implicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common. Unlike simile, metaphor does not contain the word “like” or “as”. For example:

Being a fish out of water is tough, but that's how you evolve. (Kumail Nanjiani)

America's cities are the windows through which the world looks at American society. (Henry Cisneros)

These are both brief metaphors. Sometimes, however, a speaker will develop a longer metaphor. Here is an excellent example, from Al Gore's speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to help the world deal with climate change:

The earth has a fever. And the fever is rising. The experts have told us it is not a passing affliction that will heal by itself. We asked for a second opinion. And a third. And a fourth. And the consistent conclusion, restated with increasing alarm, is that something basic is wrong.

When used effectively, metaphor—like simile—is an excellent way to bring color to a speech, to make abstract ideas concrete, to clarify the unknown, and to express feelings and emotions.⁶

Rhythm

Language has a **rhythm** created by the choice and arrangement of words. Speakers, like poets, sometimes seek to exploit the rhythm of language to enhance the impact of their words. Winston Churchill was a master at this. Here is a passage from one of his famous speeches during World War II. To emphasize its cadence, the passage has been printed as if it were poetry rather than prose:

We cannot tell what the course

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We cannot tell what the course
of this fell war will be. . . .
We cannot yet see
how deliverance will come,
or when it will come.
But nothing is more certain
than that every trace of Hitler’s footsteps,
every stain of his infected and corroding fingers,
will be sponged and purged
and, if need be,
blasted from the surface of the earth.

The impact of the passage was heightened by Churchill’s superb delivery; but even by themselves the words take on an emphatic rhythm that reinforces the message. You can see why one observer said that Churchill “mobilized the English language and sent it into battle.”⁷

A speech, however, is not a poem. You should never emphasize sound and rhythm at the expense of meaning. The aim is to think about ways you can use the rhythm and flow of language to enhance your meaning. Although you may never have paid much conscious attention to this subject, you can develop an ear for vocal rhythms by study and practice. What’s more, you can easily begin now to use four basic stylistic devices employed by Churchill and other fine speakers to improve the rhythm of their prose.

Parallelism

The first device is **parallelism**—the similar arrangement of a pair or series of related words, phrases, or sentences. For example:

Rich and poor; intelligent and ignorant, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious, man and woman—it is ever the same, each soul must depend wholly on itself. (Elizabeth Cady Stanton)

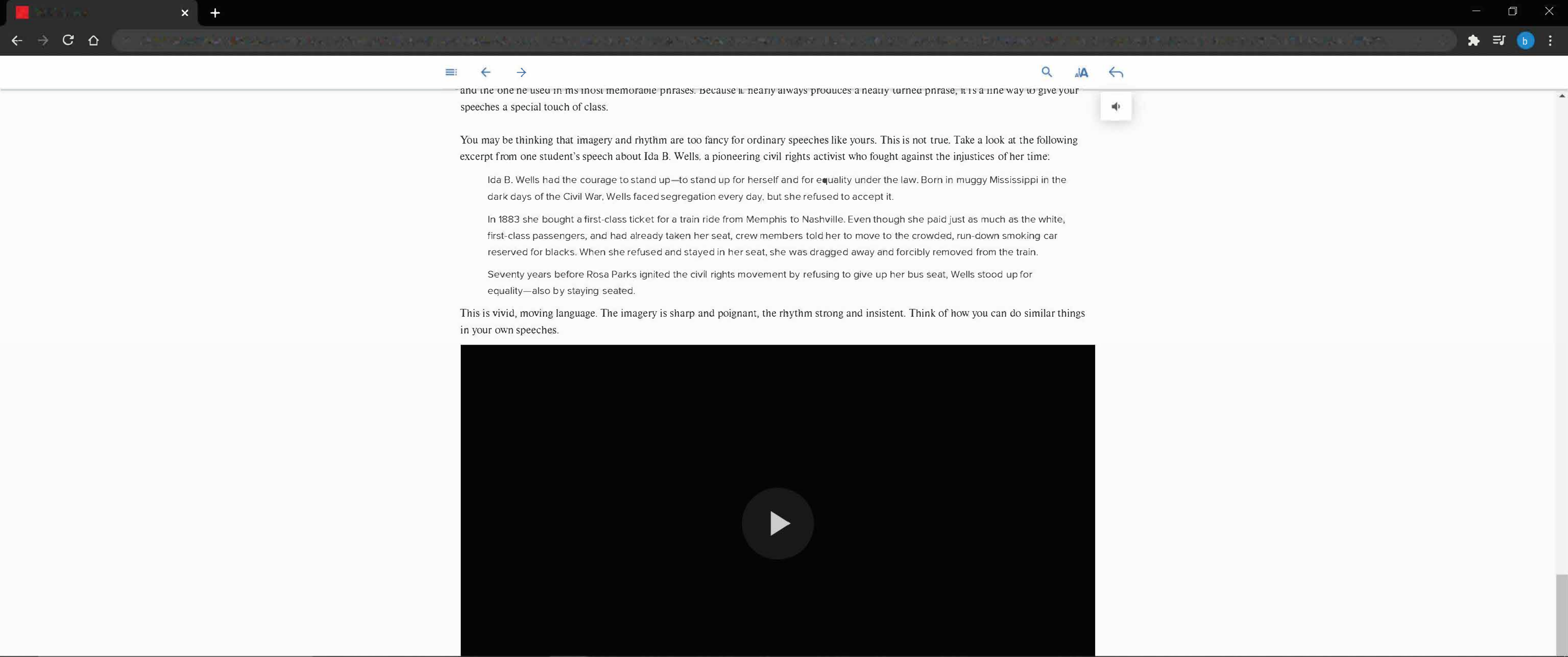
The effects of parallelism are perhaps best illustrated by seeing what happens when it is absent. For instance, compare this statement:

I speak as a Republican. I speak as a woman. I speak as a United States Senator. I speak as an American. (Margaret Chase Smith)





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Using Language Appropriately

Here is part of a famous oration given by John Hancock in 1774, during the American Revolution. Speaking of the British soldiers who killed five Americans in the Boston Massacre, Hancock exclaimed:

Ye dark designing knaves, ye murderers, parricides! How dare you tread upon the earth, which has drank in the blood of slaughtered innocents shed by your wicked hands? . . . Tell me, ye bloody butchers, ye villains high and low, ye wretches, do you not feel the goads and stings of conscious guilt pierce through your savage bosoms?

This is certainly vivid language—and Hancock’s audience loved it. But can you imagine speaking the same way today? In addition to being accurate, clear, and vivid, language should be appropriate—to the occasion, to the audience, to the topic, and to the speaker.



Language needs to be appropriate to a speaker’s topic, as well as to the audience. A speech on kitesurfing would use more action-oriented words than would a speech about theories of psychology.

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Appropriateness to the Occasion

Language that is appropriate for some occasions may not be appropriate for others. As a simple example, a coach might address the football team as “you guys” (or worse!), whereas the speaker in a more formal situation would begin with “distinguished guests.” Try reversing these two situations, and see how ridiculous it becomes. It’s only common sense to adjust your language to different occasions.

Appropriateness to the Audience

Appropriateness also depends on the audience. If you keep this in mind, it will help you greatly when dealing with technical topics. When

As the United States has become more diverse, our language has evolved to reflect that diversity. Regardless of the situation, audiences typically expect public speakers to use **inclusive language** that is respectful of the different groups that make up American society. They also expect speakers to avoid stereotypes based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other factors.

Today a number of principles for inclusive language have become so widespread that no aspiring speaker (or writer) can afford to ignore them. Here are a few of the most important.

Avoid the Generic “He”

Ineffective: Each time a surgeon walks into the operating room, *he* risks being sued for malpractice.

More Effective: Each time a surgeon walks into the operating room, *he or she* risks being sued for malpractice.

Often, a more graceful alternative is to pluralize. For example:

More Effective: Whenever surgeons walk into the operating room, *they* risk being sued for malpractice.

Avoid the Use of “Man” When Referring to Both Men and Women

Ineffective: If a large comet struck the Earth, it could destroy all of mankind.

More Effective: If a large comet struck the Earth, it could destroy all human life.

Avoid Stereotyping Jobs and Social Roles by Gender

Ineffective: Being a small businessman is not easy in any economic climate.

More Effective: Being a small businessperson is not easy in any economic climate.

Sometimes you can solve this problem with a simple change in language. For example:

More Effective: ●wning a small business is not easy in any economic climate.

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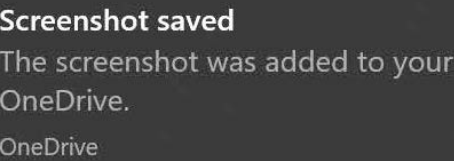
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Key Terms

denotative meaning (📄 214)

connotative meaning (📖 214)

thesaurus (📖 215)

concrete words ( 217)

abstract words ( 217)

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imagery (220)

simile (📄 220)

cliché ( 221)

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- 🔖 What Is Good Delivery?
- 🔖 Methods of Delivery
- 🔖 The Speaker's Voice
- 🔖 The Speaker's Body
- 🔖 Practicing Delivery
- 🔖 Answering Audience Questions

If you were to record one of Stephen Colbert's monologues, memorize it word for word, and stand up before your friends to recite it, would you get the same response Colbert does? Not very likely. And why not? Because you would not *deliver* the jokes as Colbert does. Of course, the jokes are basically funny. But Stephen Colbert brings something extra to the jokes—his manner of presentation, his vocal inflections, his perfectly timed pauses, his facial expressions, his gestures. All these are part of an expert delivery. It would take you years of practice—as it took Colbert—to duplicate his results.

No one expects your speech class to transform you into a multimillion-dollar talk show host. Still, this example demonstrates how important delivery can be to any public speaking situation. Even a mediocre speech will be more effective if it is presented well, whereas a wonderfully written speech can be ruined by poor delivery.

This does not mean dazzling delivery will turn a mindless string of nonsense into a triumphant oration. You cannot make a good speech without having something to say. But having something to say is not enough. You must also know *how* to say it.

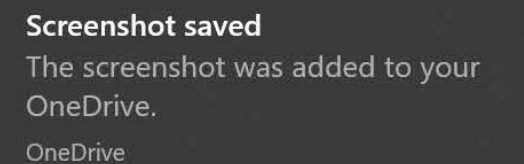
Speech delivery is a matter of **nonverbal communication**. It is based on how you use your voice and body to convey the message expressed by your words. There is a great deal of research showing that the impact of a speaker's words is powerfully influenced by his or her nonverbal communication. In this chapter, we will explain how you can use nonverbal communication to deliver your speeches effectively and to increase the impact of your verbal message.

Wendell Phillips was a leader in the movement to abolish slavery in the United States during the 1800s. Some people considered him the greatest speaker of his time. The following story suggests one reason why:

Good delivery does not call attention to itself. It conveys the speaker's ideas clearly, interestingly, and without distracting the audience. Most audiences prefer delivery that combines a certain degree of formality with the best attributes of good conversation—directness, spontaneity, animation, vocal and facial expressiveness, and a lively sense of communication.

Speech delivery is an art, not a science. What works for one speaker may fail for another. And what succeeds with today's audience may not with tomorrow's. You cannot become a skilled speaker just by following a set of rules in a textbook. In the long run, there is no substitute for experience. But take heart! A textbook *can* give you basic pointers to get you started in the right direction.

When you plan your first speech (or your second or third), you should concentrate on such basics as speaking intelligibly, avoiding distracting mannerisms, and establishing eye contact with your listeners. Once you get these elements under control and begin to feel fairly comfortable in front of an audience, you can work on polishing your delivery to enhance the impact of your ideas. Eventually, you may find yourself able to control the timing, rhythm, and momentum of a speech as skillfully as a conductor controls an orchestra.



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There are four basic methods of delivering a speech: (1) reading verbatim from a manuscript, (2) reciting a memorized text, (3) speaking impromptu, and (4) speaking extemporaneously. Let us look at each.

Reading from a Manuscript

Certain speeches *must* be delivered word for word, according to a meticulously prepared **manuscript**. Examples include a Pope’s religious proclamation, an engineer’s report to a professional meeting, or a president’s message to Congress. In such situations, absolute accuracy is essential. Every word of the speech will be analyzed by the press, by colleagues, perhaps by enemies. In the case of the president, a misstated phrase could cause an international incident.

Although it looks easy, delivering a speech from manuscript requires great skill. Some people do it well. Their words “come alive as if coined on the spot.”² Others ruin it every time. Instead of sounding vibrant and conversational, they come across as wooden and artificial. They falter over words, pause in the wrong places, read too quickly or too slowly, speak in a monotone, and march through the speech without even glancing at their audience. In short, they come across as *reading to* their listeners, rather than *talking with* them.

If you are in a situation where you must speak from a manuscript, practice aloud to make sure the speech sounds natural. Work on establishing eye contact with your listeners. Be certain the final manuscript is legible at a glance. Above all, reach out to your audience with the same directness and sincerity that you would if you were speaking extemporaneously.

Reciting from Memory

Among the feats of the legendary orators, none leaves us more in awe than their practice of presenting even the longest and most complex speeches entirely from memory. Nowadays it is no longer customary to memorize any but the shortest of speeches—toasts, congratulatory remarks, acceptance speeches, introductions, and the like.

If you are giving a speech of this kind and want to memorize it, by all means do so. However, be sure to memorize it so thoroughly that you will be able to concentrate on communicating with the audience, not on trying to remember the words. Speakers who gaze at the ceiling or stare out the window trying to recall what they have memorized are no better off than those who read dully from a manuscript.

Speaking Impromptu

An **impromptu speech** is delivered with little or no immediate preparation. Few people choose to speak impromptu, but sometimes it cannot be avoided. In fact, many of the speeches you give in life will be impromptu. You might be called on suddenly to “say a few words” or, in the course of a class discussion, business meeting, or committee report, want to respond to a previous speaker.

When such situations arise, don’t panic. No one expects you to deliver a perfect speech on the spur of the moment. If you are in a meeting or discussion, pay close attention to what the other speakers say. Take notes of major points with which you agree or disagree. In the process, you will automatically begin to formulate what you will say when it is your turn to speak.

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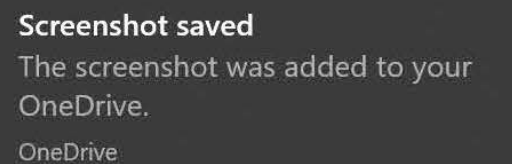
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The Speaker's Voice



What kind of voice do you have? Is it rich and resonant like Vin Diesel's? Soft and alluring like Scarlett Johansson's? Loud and irritating like Dick Vitale's? Whatever the characteristics of your voice, you can be sure it is unique. Because no two people are exactly the same physically, no two people have identical voices.

A golden voice is certainly an asset for a public speaker, but some of the most famous speakers in history have had undistinguished voices. Abraham Lincoln had a harsh and penetrating voice; Winston Churchill suffered from a slight lisp and an awkward stammer. Like them, you can overcome natural disadvantages and use your voice to the best effect. Lincoln and Churchill learned to *control* their voices. You can do the same thing.

The aspects of voice you should work to control are volume, pitch, rate, pauses, vocal variety, pronunciation, articulation, and dialect.

Volume

At one time, a powerful voice was essential for an orator. Today, electronic amplification allows even a soft-spoken person to be heard in any setting. In the classroom, **volume** is essential, because you will speak without a microphone. When you do, be sure to adjust your voice to the acoustics of the room, the size of the audience, and the level of background noise. If you speak too loudly, your listeners will think you boorish. If you speak too softly, they will not understand you.

Remember that your own voice always sounds louder to you than to a listener. Soon after beginning your speech, glance at the people farthest away from you. If they look puzzled, are leaning forward in their seats, or are otherwise straining to hear, you need to talk louder.

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Pitch

Pitch is the highness or lowness of a speaker's voice. The faster sound waves vibrate, the higher their pitch; the slower they vibrate, the lower their pitch.

Changes in pitch are known as **inflections**. Inflection is what makes the difference between the "Aha!" triumphantly exclaimed by Sherlock Holmes upon discovering a seemingly decisive clue and the "Aha" he mutters when he learns the clue is not decisive after all. If you were to read the preceding sentence aloud, your voice would probably go up in pitch on the first "Aha" and down on the second.

In ordinary conversation, we instinctively use inflections to convey meaning and emotion. People who use no variation in pitch are said to speak in a **monotone**, a trait whose only known benefit is to cure insomnia in one's listeners.

Although few people speak in an absolute monotone, many fall into repetitious pitch patterns that are just as hypnotic. You can guard against this by recording your speeches as you practice them. If all your sentences end on the same inflection—either upward or downward—work on varying your pitch patterns to fit the meaning of your words.



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Rate

Rate refers to the speed at which a person talks. People in the United States usually speak at a rate between 120 and 150 words per minute, but there is no uniform rate for effective speechmaking. Franklin Roosevelt spoke at 110 words per minute, John Kennedy at 180. Martin Luther King opened his “I Have a Dream” speech at 92 words per minute and finished it at 145. The best rate of speech depends on several things—the vocal attributes of the speaker, the mood she or he is trying to create, the composition of the audience, and the nature of the occasion.

Two obvious faults to avoid are speaking so slowly that your listeners become bored or so quickly that they lose track of your ideas. Novice speakers are particularly prone to racing through their speeches at a frantic rate. Fortunately, this is usually an easy habit to break, as is the less common one of crawling through one’s speech at a snail’s pace.

The key in both cases is becoming aware of the problem and concentrating on solving it. Use a recording device to check how fast you speak. Pay special attention to rate when practicing your speech. Finally, be sure to include reminders about delivery on your speaking outline so you won’t forget to make the adjustments when you give your speech in class.³

Pauses

Learning how and when to **pause** is a major challenge for most beginning speakers. Even a moment of silence can seem like an eternity. As you gain more poise and confidence, however, you will discover how useful the pause can be. It can signal the end of a thought unit, give an idea time to sink in, and lend dramatic impact to a statement. “The right word may be effective,” said Mark Twain, “but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.”

Developing a keen sense of timing is partly a matter of common sense, partly a matter of experience. You will not always get your pauses just right at first, but keep trying. Listen to accomplished speakers to see how they use pauses to modulate the rate and rhythm of their messages. Work on pauses when you practice your speeches.

Make sure you pause at the end of thought units and not in the middle. Otherwise, you may distract listeners from your ideas. Most important, do not fill the silence with “uh,” “er,” or “um.” These **vocalized pauses** can create negative perceptions about a speaker’s intelligence and often make a speaker appear deceptive.⁴

Vocal Variety

Just as variety is the spice of life, so is it the spice of public speaking. A flat, listless, unchanging voice is as deadly to speechmaking as a flat, listless, unchanging routine is to daily life. When giving a speech, you should strive for vocal variety—changes in rate, pitch, and volume that will give your voice interest and expressiveness.



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one of several causes of mispronunciation, but you can articulate a word sharply and still mispronounce it. For example, if you say the “s” in “Illinois” or the “p” in “pneumonia,” you are making a mistake in pronunciation, regardless of how precisely you articulate the sounds.

Among U.S. college students, poor articulation is more common than ignorance of correct pronunciation. We know that “let me” is not “lemme,” that “going to” is not “gonna,” that “did you” is not “didja,” yet we persist in articulating these words improperly. Here are some other common errors in articulation you should work to avoid:

Word	Misarticulation
ought to	●tta
didn’t	dint
don’t know	dunno
have to	hafta
want to	wanna
will you	wilya

If you have sloppy articulation, work on identifying and eliminating your most common errors. Like other bad habits, careless articulation can be broken only by persistent effort—but the results are well worth it. As Shakespeare advised, “Mend your speech a little, lest you may mar your fortunes.”

Dialect

Most languages have **dialects**, each with a distinctive accent, grammar, and vocabulary. Dialects are usually based on regional or ethnic speech patterns. The United States has four major regional dialects—Eastern, New England, Southern, and General American. We also have multiple ethnic dialects. As the nation has become more diverse culturally, it has also become more diverse linguistically.

Linguists have concluded that no dialect is inherently better or worse than another. Dialects are not linguistic badges of superiority or inferiority. They are usually shaped by our regional or ethnic background, and every dialect is “right” for the community of people who use it.

When is a given dialect appropriate in public speaking? The answer depends above all on the composition of your audience. Heavy use of any dialect—regional or ethnic—can be troublesome when the audience does not share that dialect. In such a situation, the dialect may cause listeners to make negative judgments about the speaker’s personality, intelligence, and competence. This is why professional speakers have been known to invest large amounts of time (and money) to master the General American dialect used by most television news broadcasters.

Does this mean you must talk like a television news broadcaster if you want to be successful in your speeches? Not at all. Regional or ethnic dialects do not pose a problem as long as the audience is familiar with them and finds them appropriate. When speaking in the North for

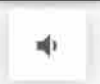


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don't know	dunno
have to	hafta
want to	wanna
will you	wilya



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Does this mean you must talk like a television news broadcaster if you want to be successful in your speeches? Not at all. Regional or ethnic dialects do not pose a problem as long as the audience is familiar with them and finds them appropriate. When speaking in the North, for example, a southern politician may avoid regional dialect. But when addressing audiences in the South, the same politician may intentionally include regional dialect as a way of creating common ground with listeners.

Although not strictly speaking a matter of dialect, the proficiency of non-native speakers of English often arises in the speech classroom. Fortunately, teachers and students alike usually go out of their way to be helpful and encouraging to international students and others for whom English is not the primary language. Over the years, many non-native speakers of English have found speech class a supportive environment in which to improve their proficiency in spoken English.⁶



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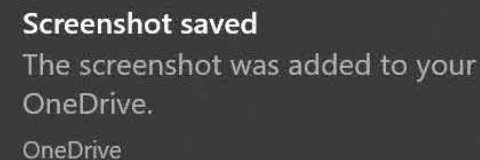
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Emma Stone's facial expressions to shape a speech and maintain a listener's interest in these remarks by Emma Stone at the U.S. Open tennis tournament.

©Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Many studies have confirmed that personal appearance plays an important role in speechmaking.⁸ Listeners always see you before they hear you. Just as you adapt your language to the audience and the occasion, so should you dress and groom appropriately. Although the force of your speech can sometimes overcome a poor impression created by personal appearance, the odds are against it. Regardless of the speaking situation, you should try to evoke a favorable first impression.

Movement

Novice speakers are often unsure about what to do with their body while giving a speech. Some pace back and forth across the podium, shift their weight from one foot to the other, fidget with their notes, or jingle coins in their pockets. Still others turn into statues, standing rigid and expressionless from beginning to end.

Such quirks usually stem from nervousness. If you are prone to distracting mannerisms, your teacher will identify them so you can work on controlling them. With a little concentration, these mannerisms should disappear as you become more comfortable speaking in front of an audience.

As important as how you act during the speech is what you do just *before* you begin and *after* you finish. As you rise to speak, try to appear calm, poised, and confident, despite the butterflies in your stomach. When you reach the lectern, don't lean on it, and don't rush into your speech. Give yourself time to get set. Arrange your notes just the way you want them. Stand quietly as you wait to make sure the audience is paying attention. Establish eye contact with your listeners. Then—and only then—should you start to talk.

When you reach the end of your speech, maintain eye contact for a few moments after you stop talking. This will give your closing line time to sink in. Unless you are staying at the lectern to answer questions, collect your notes and return to your seat. As you do so, maintain your cool, collected demeanor. Whatever you do, don't start to gather your notes before you have finished talking, and don't cap off your speech with a huge sigh of relief or some remark like, “Whew! Am I glad that's over!”

When practicing your speeches, spend a little time rehearsing how you will behave at the beginning and at the end. It is one of the easiest—and one of the most effective—things you can do to improve your image with an audience.

Gestures

Few aspects of delivery cause students more anguish than deciding what to do with their hands. “Should I clasp them behind my back? Let them hang at my sides? Rest them on the lectern? And what about gesturing? When should I do that—and how?” Even people who use their hands expressively in everyday conversation seem to regard them as awkward appendages when speaking before an audience.

Over the years, more nonsense has been written about gesturing than any other aspect of speech delivery. Adroit **gestures** can add to the impact of a speech; but effective speakers do not need a vast repertoire of gestures. Some accomplished speakers gesture frequently, others hardly at all. The primary rule is this: Whatever gestures you make should not distract from your message. They should *appear* natural and

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Video 13.3 View an excerpt from “Third-Culture Kid.”

Gesturing tends to work itself out as you acquire experience and confidence. For now, make sure your hands do not upstage your ideas. Avoid flailing them about, wringing them together, or toying with your rings. Once you have eliminated these distractions, forget about your hands. Think about communicating with your listeners, and your gestures will take care of themselves—just as they do in conversation.

Eye Contact

The eyes have been called “the windows of the soul.” We look to them to help gauge a speaker’s truthfulness, intelligence, attitudes, and feelings.

Although patterns of **eye contact** in everyday conversation vary from culture to culture, there is wide agreement across cultures on the importance of eye contact in public speaking. In most circumstances, one of the quickest ways to establish a communicative bond with your listeners is to look at them personally and pleasantly. Avoiding their gaze is one of the surest ways to lose them.

Speakers in the United States who fail to establish eye contact are perceived as tentative or ill at ease and may be seen as insincere or dishonest. It is no wonder, then, that teachers urge students to look at the audience 80 to 90 percent of the time they are talking. You may find this disconcerting at first. But after one or two speeches, you should be able to meet the gaze of your audience fairly comfortably.

It isn’t enough just to look at your listeners: *how* you look at them also counts. Beware of the tendency to gaze intently at one part of the audience while ignoring the rest. In speech class, some students look only at the section of the room where the teacher is sitting. Others avoid looking anywhere near the teacher and focus on one or two sympathetic friends. You should try to establish eye contact with your whole audience.

When addressing a small audience such as your class, you can usually look briefly from one person to another. For a larger group, you can scan the audience rather than try to engage the eyes of each person individually. No matter what the size of your audience, you want your eyes to convey confidence, sincerity, and conviction.



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If this or any practice method is to work, you must start early. Don't wait until the night before your speech to begin working on delivery. A single practice session—no matter how long—is rarely enough. Allow yourself *at least* a couple of days, preferably more, to gain command of the speech and its presentation.

Answering Audience Questions

If you have ever watched a press conference or heard a speaker answer questions after a talk, you know the question-and-answer session can make or break a presentation. A speaker who handles questions well can strengthen the impact of his or her speech. On the other hand, a speaker who evades questions or shows annoyance will almost certainly create the opposite effect.

The question-and-answer session is a common part of public speaking, whether the occasion is a press conference, business presentation, public hearing, or classroom assignment. An answer to a question is often the final word an audience hears and is likely to leave a lasting impression.

Preparing for the Question-and-Answer Session

The first step to doing well in a Q&A session is to take it as seriously as the speech itself. The two major steps in preparing are working out answers to possible questions and practicing the delivery of those answers.

Formulate Answers to Possible Questions

Once you know that your presentation will include questions from the audience, you should be thinking about possible questions even as you are writing your speech. If you practice your speech in front of friends, family, or coworkers, ask them to jot down questions. Keep track of all the questions and formulate answers. Write your answers in full to make sure you have thought them through completely.

If you are giving a persuasive speech, be sure to work out answers to objections the audience may have to your proposal. No matter how careful you are to deal with those objections in your speech, you can be sure they will come up in the Q&A session.

If you are speaking on a topic with technical aspects, be ready to answer specialized inquiries about them, as well as questions that seek clarification, in nontechnical terms. You might even prepare a handout that you can distribute afterward for people who want more information.

Practice the Delivery of Your Answers

You would not present a speech to a room full of people without rehearsing. Neither should you go into a Q&A session without practicing the delivery of your answers.

One possibility is to have a friend or colleague listen to your presentation, ask questions, and critique your answers. This method is used by political candidates and business leaders before debates or press conferences. Another possibility is to record your answers to anticipated questions, play them back, and revise them until they are just right.

As you rehearse, work on making your answers brief and to the point. Many simple questions can be answered in 30 seconds, and even complex ones should usually be answered in a minute or two. If you practice answering questions beforehand, you will find it much easier to keep to these time limits.



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Managing the Question-and-Answer Session

If you have ever watched a skillful speaker field inquiries from the audience, you know there is an art to managing a Q&A session. Entire books have been written on this subject, but the following suggestions will get you started on the right foot.

Approach Questions with a Positive Attitude

A positive attitude will help you answer questions graciously and respectfully. Try to view questions from the audience as signs of genuine interest and a desire to learn more about your subject. If someone asks about a point that seems clear to you, don't respond by saying "I discussed that at the beginning of my talk," or "The answer seems obvious." Instead, use moments like these to reiterate or expand upon your ideas.

A speaker who adopts a sharp or defensive tone while answering questions will alienate many people in the audience. Even if you are asked a hostile question, keep your cool. Avoid the temptation to answer defensively, sarcastically, or argumentatively. Most people in the audience will respect you for trying to avoid a quarrel.

Using Public Speaking in Your CAREER

Utilizing your business degree and computer savvy, you have made a success of the online marketing company you started after graduating from college. Now in its third year, the company has prepared a proposal to design the e-commerce site for a major sporting goods retailer. In your 30-minute presentation to the retailer's management team, you will review the homepage designs, site maps, and security protocols.



©Nick David/Getty Images

You notice on the agenda that another 30 minutes has been allotted after your presentation for questions and answers. Knowing from your previous experience with clients how important the Q&A session can be, you want to be sure you are ready for it. What steps will you take to prepare?



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Listen Carefully

It's hard to answer a question well if you don't listen carefully to it. Give the questioner your full attention. When faced with an unclear or unwieldy question, try to rephrase it by saying something like, "If I understand your question, it seems to me that you are asking. . . ." Another option is simply to ask the audience member to repeat the question. Most people will restate it more succinctly and clearly.

Direct Answers to the Entire Audience

When you are being asked a question, look at the questioner. Direct your answer, however, to the entire audience. Make occasional eye contact with the questioner as you answer, but speak primarily to the audience as a whole. If you speak just to the questioner, the rest of your audience may drift off.

When speaking to a large audience, repeat or paraphrase each question after it is asked. This involves the entire audience and ensures that they know the question. In addition, repeating or paraphrasing the question gives you a moment to frame an answer before you respond.

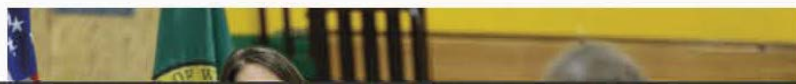
Be Honest and Straightforward

If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Don't apologize, don't evade, and most important, don't try to bluff. Do, however, let the questioner know that you take the question seriously. Offer to check into the answer as soon as possible after the speech. If a more knowledgeable person is at hand, ask if she or he knows the answer.

Stay on Track

It's easy to get diverted or lose control of time in a lively Q&A session. Unless there is a moderator, the speaker is responsible for keeping things on track. Allow one follow-up question from each person, and don't let yourself be dragged into a personal debate with any questioner. If someone attempts to ask more than two questions, respond graciously yet firmly by saying, "This is an interesting line of questioning, but we need to give other people a chance to ask questions."

Sometimes, a listener will launch into an extended monologue instead of posing a question. When this happens, you can retain control of the situation by saying something like, “Those are very interesting ideas, but do you have a specific question I can answer?” If the person persists, offer to talk individually with him or her after the session.



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Key Terms

nonverbal communication (📖 230)

manuscript speech (232)

impromptu speech (📄 233)

extemporaneous speech (📁 234)

conversational quality ( 234)

volume ( 235)

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vocal variety (📖 237)

pronunciation ( 238)articulation ( 238)

dialect ( 239)

kinesics (240)

gestures ( 241)

eye contact ( 242)

Words have two kinds of meanings—denotative and connotative. *Denotative meaning* is precise, literal, and objective. It describes the object, person, place, idea, or event to which the word refers. One way to think of a word’s denotative meaning is as its dictionary definition. For example, denotatively, the noun “school” means “a place, institution, or building where instruction is given.”

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Connotative meaning is more variable, figurative, and subjective. The connotative meaning of a word is what the word suggests or implies. For instance, the connotative meaning of the word “school” includes all the feelings, associations, and emotions that the word touches off in different people. For some people, “school” might connote personal growth, childhood friends, and a special teacher. For others, it might connote frustration, discipline, and boring homework assignments.

Connotative meaning gives words their intensity and emotional power. It arouses in listeners feelings of anger, pity, love, fear, friendship, nostalgia, greed, guilt, and the like. Speakers, like poets, often use connotation to enrich their meaning. For example:

Terrorists neither listen to reason nor engage in reasoning with others. Their aim is to generate fear—to frighten people into submission. They measure success by the magnitude of the fear they generate through brutal, savage acts of violence. Terrorists are prepared to kill to further whatever cause they claim to be pursuing. And the heinousness of these murders is accentuated by the fact that terrorists murder without passion. They murder with cool deliberation and deliberate planning. They are utterly amoral.

The underlined words in this passage have powerful connotations that are almost certain to produce a strong emotional revulsion to terrorism.

Here, in contrast, is another version of the same statement—this time using words with a different set of connotations:

Terrorists do not seek to negotiate with their opponents. They seek victory by using political and psychological pressure, including acts of violence that may endanger the lives of some people. To the terrorist, ultimate objectives are more important than the means used to achieve them.

With the exception of “terrorist,” the words in this statement are less likely to evoke an intensely negative response than those in the first statement.

Which statement is preferable? That depends on the audience, the occasion, and the speaker’s purpose. Do you want to stir up your listeners’ emotions, rally them to some cause? Then select words with more intense connotative meanings. Or are you addressing a controversial issue and trying to seem completely impartial? Then stick with words that touch off less intense reactions. Choosing words skillfully for their denotative and connotative meanings is a crucial part of the speaker’s craft.

