

A GUIDE TO SPEECH

(A Guide for the Fearful.)

Saskatchewan Elocution and Debate Association (SEDA) is a non-profit organization that promotes speech and debate activities in English and French. The Association is active throughout the province from grade 6 through 12 and at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The Association co-ordinates an annual program of speech and debate tournaments and other special activities, including a model legislature. SEDA's staff, along with printed and audio-visual materials, are available to assist any individual or group interested in speech and debate.

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Part 1 - INTRODUCTION

Many people dread public speaking. They go to great effort to avoid it. This is normal. This is common.

However, some people enjoy public speaking. Some make a good living doing it. The common assumption is that these people are maladjusted, social misfits. This is false. They have just learned how to prepare and deal with public speaking.

The reality is that there is a lot of tough competition in the world. Increasingly, employers place more emphasis on communications skills of all kinds. You can't hide from public speaking. The best advice: embrace the challenge and learn how to speak well. You might even enjoy it!

A lot of people are intimidated because they don't know where to begin. Here is where this handout will help. It'll teach you how to prepare and organize so that when its time for you to get up and speak people will think that you are a natural.

Part 2 - Getting Down to Business

A lot of people are intimidated by the thought of public speaking because they don't know where to begin. Here's how, step by step.

Step 1: Do some Preliminary Thinking.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH OF PUBLIC SPEAKING #1 - With a clear goal in mind and careful preparation, EVERYONE can produce a fluent, persuasive and meaningful speech.

Before giving a speech you should consider:

- ✓ Who is your audience? Is your choice of topic suitable? Remember: The International Association of Grandmothers won't be able to appreciate a speech about why *Metallica* is better than *Marilyn Manson*. (Most of them, anyway!)
- ✓ Is the content of your speech suitable for the occasion? (Here's a tip: Avoid stand-up comedy at a funeral)
- ✓ What do you want your audience to take away from the speech? What message do you want to get across?

Step Two: Sit Down & Brain-Storm The Points You Want To Cover. **PREPARATION IS VITAL!**

After you have determined what you have to do, you have to figure out what to say.

Make a list. Think of as much as possible. It can be in any order (you'll sort this out later). Think of smaller ideas that flow from your big points. Write down everything, even if it doesn't seem very relevant. It might lead you to something that is relevant. Once you get to the organizing stage, you can arrange these points so that they make sense.

This is also the time to do some homework. Unless you are an expert on a topic, you can always learn more. Do some research and find facts related to your topic.

Step Three: Now that you know what you want to say, decide on style.

There are many different types and styles of speeches. However, if you are a beginner, consider using one of these three basic styles to make preparation easier. Selecting one of these styles will help you keep your purpose in mind while preparing and help you remember key things to do in your speech.

a) THE SPEECH TO INFORM

The goal here is to impart knowledge. Keep your message clear. Keep in mind how much (or how little) the audience knows. If they are knowledgeable about the subject, go into depth. If the topic is new to them, keep your speech basic. Watch for audience reaction. If you see a lot of confused expressions, you need to slow down, repeat some points or simplify your comments as you go.

Don't overwhelm people with too much information. Complex statistics or data can be hard to absorb. Leave heavy details for written material that can accompany your speech.

b) THE SPEECH TO PERSUADE

The goal is not just to inform, but convince people of your point of view. Do some research and find evidence (other than your own opinion) to support your argument. Rely on reason, logic and evidence. Find credible authorities to support you. An emotional appeal may be effective in some cases. Avoid misquotations, distortions, and evidence taken out of context.

c) THE SPEECH TO ENTERTAIN

Even though you are entertaining, you must still prepare. A witty choice of words or style of presentation is often as good as a joke. Remember, you can be humorous and entertaining while making a serious point.

Humor should be relevant and audience suitable. Remember: be careful with humor! It's easy to offend people with jokes taken the wrong way. Self-directed humor is usually good. Err on the side of caution and "keep it clean".

STEP 4: Once you have decided on a style, your need to organize the speech accordingly.

ORGANIZATION IS ESSENTIAL!

A good formula to follow, whether you are a beginner or a pro, is...

- a) Tell them what you are going to tell them (a.k.a.: The Introduction)
- b) Tell them (a.k.a.: The Body)
- c) Tell them what you told them (a.k.a.: The Conclusion)

Now, don't literally tell the audience your specific point three different times. That is a guaranteed cure for insomnia. Think of it this way: you are guiding the audience on a mental tour. There are no signs so they will get lost unless you keep telling them where they are.

Let's look at the purpose of these three components:

I. The Introduction

Use it to gain audience attention and create a favorable impression. Use it to set the tone and lead into the speech. State the central idea and how you will divide your speech.

Pretend you are giving a speech about your view that Elvis Presley is still alive. You may wish to open your remarks in some of the following ways:

a) Explain the terms you will use. Define what you are *and are not* talking about.

Example: "Today, my comments will focus on evidence that proves "the King" is still alive. When I refer "the King" of course I refer to Elvis Presley and not the many cheap Las Vegas impersonators who soil "the King's" legacy every year!"

b) Begin with a personal experience designed to identify with the listeners.

Example: "When I was a young girl, I would lock myself in my room for weeks and listen to Elvis' music. I would often forget to sleep or eat because I loved Elvis so much. I promised that when I grew up I would marry him!"

c) Ask a question or a series of questions.

Example: "Are you aware that Elvis' name is misspelled on his tombstone? Are you aware that there have been more Elvis sightings in 7-11 than in any other place? Are you aware that this is all evidence of a government conspiracy!?!"

d) State a relevant quotation.

Example: "Since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell." Clearly, Elvis did find a new place to dwell by leaving Graceland in search of the peace of suburbia.

e) Challenge your audience with a startling statement.

Example: "In 1998, there were 786 Elvis sightings in Kentucky alone!!"

f) Tell a humorous anecdote.

Example: "Last week at the National Elvis Convention in Moose Jaw..."

g) All of the above.

II. The Body

This is the main part of the speech. There are a number of different ways to structure the body depending on which best suits the purpose of your speech. (The following is based upon Getting Started in Public Speaking by James Payne and Diana Prentice, National Textbook Company, Lincoln-Wood, 1985)

a) Logical or Topical order

A good method when you have several ideas to present and the ideas seem to naturally flow from one to another. For example, if you were giving a speech about the benefits of exercise, you might organize it like this...

1. Physical Benefits

- a) Cardiovascular Strength
- b) Muscle Tone
- c) Weight Loss

2. Mental Benefits

- a) You are more alert
- b) You feel better about yourself

b) Chronological (Time) Order

Use time sequence as a framework to organize your speech. This method is especially useful for speeches requiring background information. It also works well for speeches explaining a process or explaining how to do something. *For example, a speech on the history of baseball could begin with its invention and follow the rule changes up to the present day.*

c) Spatial Order

Uses physical space as the framework. If you were describing a house, you would start in one room and walk your way around the house. A weather report is usually given region by region without randomly skipping around the country. This style works well with informative speeches.

d) Classification

This method organizes things into categories or classes of items. This technique is useful for all types of speeches. Information is easily given by classifying ideas. *A speech about Elvis could be categorized as follows: songs written by Elvis, biographical facts about Elvis, facts surrounding his "alleged" death, and your theories about why he is still alive.*

e) Problem-Solution Order

This is a good technique for persuasive speeches. The first part of the speech outlines the problem and the second part gives a solution. Within the problem-solution pattern, you will find other types of organization. For example, the problem section of the speech might be organized using a logical sequence. The solution portion of the speech might involve classification. If your goal is to persuade, select one solution and present arguments for why it is the best option.

f) The Cause and Effect Order

This method, like the Problem-Solution method, contains two parts. The first describes the cause of the problem, and the second its effects. For example, if you were doing a speech on toxic waste pollution, the first part of the speech might explain how and why toxic waste causes environmental damage. The second part would discuss the effects of toxic waste on property and health. As with the problem-solution speech, other forms of organization are usually incorporated into the major sections.

III. Conclusion

The conclusion should end the presentation on a high note and tie the whole speech together. You should try to achieve three things:

- 1) Make the audience aware that the speech is drawing to a close.
- 2) Make sure the audience knows the point you are trying to make, the belief you are trying to establish or that action you wish the audience to take.
- 3) Leave the audience with something to remember.

PART III - Delivering the Speech

A) **Stance:** Stand firmly on both feet. Avoid slouching or leaning. Avoid pacing around and using distracting hand gestures. Any gestures you use should be relevant and non-repetitive.

B) **Dress:** Make sure that it is appropriate for the occasion.

C) **Eye Contact:** This is important! It helps you relate to your audience and keeps them interested. Allow your eyes to rove over the entire group. Watch for audience reaction and try to tailor your remarks accordingly. Of course, you can't do this if you have your eyes glued to your speech, so be sufficiently familiar with your speech so you don't need to read it. Also remember that your facial expression can convey a great deal to your audience.

D) **Volume:** Speak loudly enough so you can be heard. Fluctuating volume for emphasis can be very effective. Beware: keeping the same volume throughout the speech can be monotonous.

E) **Pace of Speaking:** Don't speak too quickly. The biggest danger of this happening is when you are reading your speech. Speak slowly when you want to emphasize something or when presenting complex information like statistics. Pausing can also be used for emphasis, for example, after making a point. Use variety in the pace of your speech to keep people from becoming bored.

F) **Notes:** Use small cards rather than large, distracting sheets of paper. Do not hesitate to refer to notes when necessary. However, don't write your speech out word for word. Rather, have general headings with key points listed. This will prevent you from reading your speech.

K) **Microphones:** Raise it to just below the level of your mouth and keep 15 to 30 centimeters away. Do not stoop to get closer to the microphone. Don't start your speech until you have the microphone properly adjusted. Always look beyond the microphone to your audience when you speak. Do not step away from the microphone or sway while speaking as you will move out of the range of the microphone and the audience will miss portions of your speech. Try to check out the sound system before you have to give your speech. You should not shout into the microphone: talk in a normal volume.

Beating Nervousness...

As a speaker, remember to relax and be yourself. Being a little nervous is a good thing. It keeps you alert and is the impetus to prepare. If you are very nervous consider the following to help your "nerves":

- 1) Know your speech well; thorough preparation reduces nervousness.
- 2) Memorize your opening words. It is a good start, which is sometimes the hardest part.
- 3) Take a few deep breaths before standing to speak.
- 4) Size up the audience. Avoiding them can exacerbate nervous feelings. Once you take a look at them you'll see that they're just average people.
- 5) Know your audience in advance. If possible, talk to them informally or socially before hand.
- 6) Relax in the knowledge that all speakers experience nervousness. Most nervousness does not show as much as you think it does. Just keep talking as though it was not there!

Tips for Thank-You Speeches

All of the same rules discussed above apply, but there are some additional considerations...

Be Prepared: Nothing looks less sincere than confusing a name and thanking the wrong person for the wrong thing! The best approach is to know what someone did for you and refer to it directly in your remarks.

Begin by Addressing the Audience: If there are dignitaries in the audience, acknowledge them first, beginning with the most prominent. Make eye contact with each dignitary as you address him or her.

The following is a guideline. If you need more detail on formal titles or for information on dignitaries not listed contact:

Saskatchewan Protocol Office, Intergovernmental Affairs
10th Fl., 1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, SK S4P 3V7 Tel: (306) 787-3001

Dignitary	Form of Address	In Conversation
Lieutenant Governor & Spouse	“Your Honour(s)”	Sir/Madam, Mr./Mrs. Weibe
Prime Minister	“Prime Minister”	Sir, Mr. Chrétien
Member of Parliament (MP)	“Mr./Mrs. Smith” (You may also add the constituency name “MP for _”)	
Member of Provincial Legislature	Same as for MP (Substitute MLA for MP)	
Mayor	“Your Worship”	Mayor Smith, Sir
City Councillor	Councillor Smith	Sir, Mr./Ms. Smith
Anyone you wish to acknowledge, but with out a title can be addressed as Mr./Ms. _____		

Also include prominent people in the audience when appropriate. For example, you might address the “...Rotarians, sponsors, and fellow students...” It is a good idea address the person you wish to thank! Be careful: you can’t address every one in the room personally. Use reasonable judgement in drawing the line. After you have acknowledged all the “big wigs” address the general audience as “Ladies and Gentlemen”. Here’s an example. “Thank you, Ms. Yanush for your introduction. Good evening (or welcome), Your Honours, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Smith, Member of the Regina Eastview Rotary Club and Ladies and Gentlemen. This evening I would like to say a few words of thanks about...”

Introduce Yourself: Usually speakers are introduced before they begin to speak, but not always. If you are not introduced by someone else, or if they announce your name only, you’ll have to provide your own introduction. The audience always wants to know who they are hearing from, so do this before you begin your speech. Give more information about yourself, but use your judgement about what and how much you share. If you are at an event where the participants are from different place, tell the audience where you are from.

Speaking on Behalf of Others: On many occasions you will have give a thank you on behalf of many people. Don’t forget to mention these people! Try this example: “On behalf of all of the students from the three Prairie Provinces who have come together to participate in Adventures in Agriculture, I wish to thank _____ for _____.”

Be Brief and Sincere: Don’t overdo it. Put enthusiasm into you remarks so that nobody gets the impression that you are being forced to say thank you. Usually, thank you speeches are shorter than regular speeches.

Personalize your Remarks: Appropriate and relevant humor is always appreciated. Feel free to share a funny anecdote. Even telling a serious story or relevant observation can be good. Don’t ever leave the audience (or the person you are thanking) with the impression that you don’t really appreciate what you received or that you giving a generic, canned thank you speech.

Brush Up Your Gestures!

(Some Humorous Advice to Speakers)

Wagging the Forefinger:

Any free citizen confronted by a wagging finger, especially if it is accompanied by the words "I tell you this," is entitled to ask: "Who is this jerk presuming to caution or admonish me? Is he my father? Is he my old headmaster? If he is not, let him keep his finger to himself. Let him prate if he will about the dangers of nuclear holocaust. I will not have a finger wagged at me."

Pointing the Forefinger:

This suggests that you wish to call up your audience for cannon-fodder. If you do, go right ahead.

Stabbing the Forefinger:

This unseemly usage, punctuating every half-dozen words, gives the audience the feeling that you would like (a) to prod them in the chest; (b) to poke them in the eye.

Raising the Forefinger Aloft:

Though not necessarily offensive, this gesture suggest that you are (a) trying to detect the wind; (b) leading a pack of tourists through a cathedral; (c) directing attention to a High Power; (d) requesting permission to leave the room.

Sawing the Air:

"Do not saw the air too much with you hand, thus," said Hamlet. We do not know what Shakespeare meant by "thus" or "too much". Just don't saw the air at all. Or cleave it. Or rend it. Or chop it. Or pummel it. Or part it. Or grasp it. Or knead it. Or compress it. Or mold it. Or tie knots in it. Or lift it. Or smooth it. Leave the air alone!

Clenching (or "Balling") the Fist:

Today this gesture is no more than a mechanical response to the sight of television cameras. It may mean any of the following: (a) Roll on the Revolution; (b) Imperialists out; (c) Down with the CIA; (d) No more education cuts; (e) A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.

Raising Both Fists:

Lincoln used this gesture to express execration of slavery. Southerners used it to express execration of **** Yankees. Do not devalue it by using it to demand mustard on your hamburger.

Stretching the Arms Wide:

A gesture sometimes used to suggest that the speaker's heart encompasses all humanity. Unfortunately, it is also the fisherman's gesture for the one that got away.

Folding the Arms:

This means you do not greatly care what happens when North Sea oil runs out and that it is time people got used to the idea of dying by hypothermia. It shows you are not a person to be stampeded by sentiment.

Gripping the Rostrum:

By doing this you will be able to retract your head into your chest and assume a look of defiance. It is a good attitude for defending the indefensible, especially if your eyes are ablaze with sincerity.

Pounding the Rostrum:

This will merely spill water and send shock waves through the microphones, stunning your audience, but go ahead if it makes you feel better.

Putting Hands in Pockets:

A traditional way of expressing healthy contempt for bourgeois and military taboos; also of expressing healthy contempt for your audience.

Removing the Spectacles:

Doing this will set your audience speculating as to whether you look better with or without glasses. It is a useful trick when you wish to divert attention from a weak argument. Remember that spectacles often give an illusion of maturity.

Finally, here are some more gestures to avoid at all costs:

1. Any movement suggestive of a general blessing (unless you want to be mistaken for the Pope);
2. Laying the right hand on the heart (unless you want to be mistaken for an American president);
3. Slackening the tie-knot (unless you want to be mistaken for a third-rate media man);
4. Scratching the top of the head (unless you want to be mistaken for Stan Laurel);
5. The "thumbs-up" sign (unless you want to be mistaken for a patient with a new heart);
6. Any erective jerk of the forearm (unless you want to be mistaken for an Italian bravo);
7. Touching the nose (unless you want to be suspected of a desire to explore it);
8. Any gesture involving the use of two fingers (unless you want to be duffed up on the spot).

Elements Of Style

Style is a difficult thing to describe. Style involves elements of content and speech mechanics, but there is more to it. Let's suppose two people are given an outline of a speech and both are good speakers, aware of good speech mechanics. Let's say that both give a good speech, likely the speeches would be different. A large part of this difference would be style. Style includes such elements as:

A) HUMOUR AND WIT

Entertaining speeches require careful preparation. One can be humorous and entertaining and still have a serious and worthwhile message. Keep your humour relevant and suited to the audience. You can entertain just as well with a witty choice of words, and style of presentation (effective use of pauses), as with a joke.

B) SPONTANEITY

Do not feel you have to keep to a carefully prepared script. If new and relevant thoughts occur, make use of them. Do not let a question or interjection from the audience upset you - respond to it, then resume your presentation. The speaker should try to be sensitive to the mood of the audience and try to modify her presentation to get a positive reaction from the audience.

C) SUITABILITY OF LANGUAGE

The language used should be appropriate for the age and experience of the audience and suitable for the topic.

D) ORIGINALITY

Treatment of the subject and the technique of presentation should strive for originality. (Refer to the section on organization.)

E) POISE

The speaker should be relaxed, comfortable, self-assured, and in control.

Producing Good Speech

Speaking is a bit like running; how you breath makes a difference and there are exercises which can improve your performance.

A) DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Diaphragmatic breathing is probably the most important thing you can learn about using your voice. It will give you control and produce a buoyant, well supported sound.

The diaphragm is the chief source of vocal motive power. It is the flat muscle that divides the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. Muscles around the waist and under the ribs in the solar plexus area also play an important part.

1) Mechanics of Diaphragmatic Breathing

Place palm of hand on the muscles in the solar plexus area. (The area below your ribs, but above your stomach, where the muscles of your abdomen and diaphragm meet.)

Take a deep, even breath. Feel bellows move outward.

Blow air out in a smooth, even stream.

-As the hand moves inward, the diaphragm pushes up, and the stream of air moves out the top smoothly and evenly.

There should not be any movement in the upper chest.

2) Exercises

Place one hand on the upper abdominal muscles, and the other on the intercostal muscles in the solar plexus area. Inhale by expanding abdominal and intercostal muscles (muscles situated or extending between the ribs). Hold breath for count of 2. Purse lips and exhale slowly, by blowing in a thin stream of air at a smooth, uniform rate.

Place hands as before. Inhale slowly. Hold for count of two. Exhale slowly on sound "OH", until air supply is exhausted. Hold the sound as long as possible. Do the same on the sounds AH, I, EE, AY, and OO.

B) POSTURE

When sitting do not slouch back in the chair with the middle of your back bowed outward. You have very little control of your breathing muscles. Sit forward on the chair, almost on the edge, and lean slightly forward. Keep middle of back straight. Keep feet flat on the floor; it is fine to bend, but pivot from the hips. This way you have full control over the breathing muscles.

When standing lean slightly forward, putting weight on balls of your feet. If weight is on heels, the abdominal wall will sag, and you will not have the same control.

C) NECK MUSCLES

Essential to have relaxed neck muscles for smooth, flowing tones.

1) Exercises:

Let head fall forward and touch chin on your chest. Rotate head slowly to the right. Keep chin close to your collarbone. Now, point chin at your shoulder, and stretch as far as you can. Roll head backward ...eyes on ceiling...and finish by pointing chin to left shoulder and back to central position.

Pretend your shoulders are chopping blocks and chop wood with your chin.

D) LOWER JAW

Should be completely relaxed and sort of fall open of its own accord when you speak, rather than be forced open.

1) Exercises

Open mouth as wide as possible until it hurts.

Open mouth halfway and wiggle your jaw from side to side. Push it to the full extremity on each side.

E) LIPS & TONGUE

The tongue has the greatest effect on clear speaking. The stronger and more flexible the muscles of the tongue, the better the chances of good, clear articulation. The lips also play a very important part in clear, crisp speech.

1) Exercises - Tongue

With mouth slightly open, point your tongue straight out as far as possible. Point the tip and stretch. The more stretch the more effective. Try to reach up and touch your nose with the tip of your tongue and then try to touch your chin with the tip of your tongue.

Point the tongue straight out, open the mouth wide and move the tip of the tongue in the widest possible circle. Change direction.

Drop open your lower jaw. Point the tip of the tongue against the hard palate. Push hard and bend the back of the tongue toward the front of the mouth.

2) Exercises - Lips

Stretch lips by hooking the little finger into the corners of the mouth.

The two extreme lip positions for all sounds in English are the vowel sounds "EE" and "OO". Several times daily, a few minutes each time, move the lips back and forth from these two extreme positions saying... "EE OO EE OO EE OO".