



PUBLIC SPEAKING

SPEAKING EFFECTIVELY

Research has shown that the single most compelling fear is fear of public speaking. We tend to separate public speaking from other kinds of speaking and thus, feel uncomfortable before a group.

The effectiveness of one's communication is important in determining the effectiveness of one's life. Important factors in becoming an effective communicator are confidence and speaking skills. Communication takes many forms. It involves language, voice, posture, use of gestures and dress. Language is a basic skill, which comes through practice, but an important part of our impact is non-verbal.

All communication has one experience in common. It states; this is me, this is who I really am. We not only want to succeed as communicators, but the people we communicate with, whether it is one or one thousand, want us to succeed.

Maintain a consistent message. Build trust and believability.

Three (3) aspects of communication:

- a. VERBAL
- b. VOCAL
- c. VISUAL



Communication skills:

- o Overall presentation should say, "This is me."
- o Body language
- o Posture / use of gestures
- o Appearance
- o Language (your natural voice)
- o Intention
- o Confidence / self-esteem
- o Participation / practice

How to speak on the spur of the Moment

The communicating most of us do is at home, at work, at a social gathering, or in offering an opinion at a meeting. This gives helpful aids for speaking effectively without formal or prolonged preparation.

You can constantly increase your ability to speak effectively on the spur of the moment, if you make a habit of trying to be clear and to the point in your general conversations. Tidiness in conversation adds much force to what you say.

The P.R.E.P. Formula to help you organize your thinking and speaking:

POINT, REASON, EXAMPLE, POINT:

Statement of your **Point**, **Reason** for your choice, **Example** to illustrate and Restatement of your **Point**.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE FORMULA:

Link the subject to the **PAST**, which could be any length of time from a few minutes ago to centuries ago.

Relate it to the **PRESENT**, bring it up to date.

Project it into the **FUTURE**.



The A.I.D.A. Formula (ATTENTION, INTEREST, DISIRE, ACTION)

ATTENTION: Capture the Attention of your listeners at the very beginning of your remarks.

INTEREST: Hold their attention by talking in terms of their needs, their desires, and their special interests. Use examples, illustrations, “slices of life”, and case histories, to make your point and sustain the attention you have captured.

DESIRE: You should try to whip up a desire on the part of every individual in your audience, to think or do whatever it is you hold out to them.

How to make an Oral Report

1. Be prepared – If you have assumed a chairmanship, it is your responsibility to be prepared to report at the meeting. Regardless of whether your chairmanship is on the Post, Unit, Squadron, District or Department level, be informed of your duties as that chairman. This is your obligation in assuming the job. No one should have to call you in advance or hand you a report to be read.
2. Be concise and to the point – value the time of everyone.
3. Cut down on introductory remarks.
4. Don't apologize.
5. Be modest – don't brag.
6. Don't ramble – nothing will cause boredom or loss of interest more than an unprepared report, jumping from here to there with nothing accomplished.
7. Have notes or written report prepared. Repeating yourself, losing your train of thought, etc., will soon cause boredom and loss of interest.
8. Summarize your remarks and if action if necessary, you move the action at the conclusion of your report.



Remembering Names

1. Get the name right when you first hear it and concentrate on it. If you didn't understand it, ask the person to repeat it. They will repeat it clearly so that you can understand it. Do not ask the person who introduced you but the person to whom you are being introduced. Just say, "I'm sorry, but I didn't get your name" or "I didn't understand your name."
2. Look directly at the person's face while the name is being spoken. Try to put the name and face together - - possibly some facial characteristic that may help you recall the name in the future or associate the name with something tangible. I am sure you can think of many things. Example: Mr. Fox? A fox, Mr. Lyon?
3. Repeat the name immediately after you have heard it.
4. Use the name immediately after you have heard it. Each time you use the name, it will become more firmly fixed in your mind.

How to Start and End a Talk

1. **Begin each talk with a moderate amount of enthusiasm and animation.** If you start in a flat and colorless manner, you can hardly expect your listeners to be any more interested than you seem to be.
2. **Do not waste time on apologies and fruitless explanations.** If you are not well prepared, or not a good speaker, your audience will soon find it out.
3. **Communicate with your eyes:**
 - a. Look directly at your listeners, so that when you speak, you are actually talking with your eyes.
 - b. Talk to the person in the last row at the left of the room and then to then to the person in the last row at the right of the room. Gradually sweep the audience with warm, friendly gaze, allowing your glance to rest here and there for a brief second or two.
 - c. Concentrate on seeing faces and facial expressions.



- d. Determine whether your listeners are following along with you or if they are bored. (This is seeing your feedback).
- e. Never be afraid to smile.
4. **Strive to communicate good ideas and do not worry about good performance.** Put your message first and yourself second.
5. **Do not feel that you must be humorous.** Humor is not always needed.
6. **Be aware of the importance of preparation.** Efficient leaders are those who know where they are leading. Preparation is the “Mother of Confidence.”
7. **Use gestures in moderation that contributes to the message you are trying to convey.** A raised eyebrow, a shrug of the shoulders, use of the arms and hands are part of the “silent language of communication.” How many times have you heard someone say, “She couldn’t say a word with her hands tied.” Body movements in moderation, stimulate listeners and relieve tension, it takes away from a wooden appearance. Let your hands be free, forget about them. Avoid folding arms; avoid jingling items, as this is distracting. When gesturing with hands, use the arm too and generally, gesture about the “elbow area.” Hand gestures made below the “elbow area” are weak, ineffectual and often cannot be seen.
8. **Do not let your voice trail off.** Avoid letting your voice run down hill or fade out to a bare whisper at the end of your presentation sentence. Be forceful, enthusiastic and final. Never end on an apologetic note that seems to say, “I did a miserable job, didn’t I?” **“Have faith in your Convictions.”**
9. **You learn by doing.** Welcome every opportunity to practice to speak before a sympathetic audience.
10. **Pay close attention to what others do and say.** Do not imitate, but you can learn much from watching others.



Why give a Speech

Speeches are a powerful form of communication. They are an important means of conveying the Legion or your message while contributing a positive organizational image to various audiences.

Audiences are very perceptive... they respond best when a speaker can offer them useful or interesting information with credibility in an entertaining fashion. They are particularly appreciative when data has some benefit, value, and meaning for them.

Legion members are usually asked to speak for the following reasons:

- a. To inform the audience or fellow members about a particular topic, program or issue.
- b. To motivate the audience into positive action.
- c. To introduce a new audience to The American Legion and its role in the community.
- d. To bring greetings or act as a representative on behalf of The American Legion on formal occasions.

THE SPOKEN WORD IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR SETTING DIRECTION, SHAPING VISION, AND MOVING FORWARD.



HOW TO BEGIN

If a verbal invitation is extended, ask your host to confirm in writing the speaking date, time and place, requested speech content, length and any special arrangements. Reconfirm by telephone two days in advance.

Prepare a brief introduction of yourself and send it to the program director.

Before giving a speech, know the answers to the following questions:

Audience...

Who is my audience? What gender and age are they?
Do they represent a particular group or segment of society?
How large is the audience?
Why are they the audience?
What do they know about The American Legion?
Is there a current issue that has brought them together?

Purpose...

What is the purpose of my speech? (To inform? To inspire? To entertain?)
What is expected of me?
What do I want to accomplish?
What do I want from the audience?

Setting...

At what point in the program do I speak?
How much time is allotted for my presentation?
Am I the keynote speaker?
Who else will be speaking before and after me?
What is the topic of their speeches?
Where will the speech be presented?
What are the conditions in the rooms; i.e. lighting, seating arrangement, sound system, etc.
What type of equipment will be available? Do I know how to use it? (Audio visual aids).



Creating an Effective Speech

1. In selecting your topic, review your own qualifications. Determine what it is that makes you an appropriate choice as a speaker.
2. Select material of interest to the audience you will be addressing. The main topic should be one about which you are well informed or have researched thoroughly. Good resources are your local library, Legion Post and your National Organization.
3. Develop your ideas into an outline of no more than five main points. Write one or two word phrases for information to support those main points. This will help you organize your thoughts into their proper place.
4. Draw your speech from your own life experiences as a Legionnaire or as an active volunteer.
5. Add information and examples that give unity to the main topic.
6. Use present tense to get the audience involved.
7. Give your listener the opportunity to ask questions to clarify your material.

PREPARATION PLUS ORGANIZATION EQUALS CONFIDENCE

The more confidence you have in your material, the more you will look forward to giving the presentation.

The Elements of a Speech

Opening or Introduction:

- a. Thank the person who introduced you and if necessary, address the highest ranking person present ... not ALL the VIP's.
- b. Open the speech with a provocative idea or dramatic statement to gain attention. A quote from a famous person or document is an effective way to set the stage for your subject.
- c. Let the audience know exactly what you intend to talk about and why it is important.



Body of the Speech:

- a. Check your facts and know your sources and have them available.
- b. Develop 3 – 5 main points... one at a time. Too many points will not be remembered. If more are necessary, use visual aids and hand out materials to reinforce them.
- c. Use smooth transitions to flow from one point to another. Don't move back and forth between points.
- d. Use clear, precise information, which is well prepared.
- e. Vary sentence length and the intensity of delivery... raising and lowering your voice to regain attention.
- f. Give examples to prove your points – drive home the facts.
- g. Ask rhetorical questions to involve the audience.
- h. Illustrate your key points using examples and anecdotes from your Post or Department experiences. Be careful not to stray too far from the subject!

Conclusion:

- a. Have a strong finish! Summarize and restate your key points.
- b. Challenge the audience to take action or do something constructive.
- c. Praise and affirm their effort.



Tips for making a Successful Presentation

- a. Rehearse numerous times prior to the presentation.
- b. Arrive at your specified location on time.
- c. Dress comfortably in professional attire, which will not distract the audience.
- d. Walk erect and with confidence when approaching the podium.
- e. Have your notes or speech in hand before beginning to speak. Have them triple spaced in large print to assure they are easily read. Number the pages!
- f. Speak slowly, distinctly, with confidence and sincerity. If you, the speaker, are confident and positive, those assembled will find you credible.
- g. Smile at the audience and make frequent eye contact.
- h. Do not let visual aids being used dominate your presentation. Stand to the left of the screen. Dim; do not completely darken the room. Face your audience, don't address or face your visuals.
- i. Use gestures to enhance your presentation, being careful not to rattle papers or hit the microphone.
- j. Avoid using jargon, obscure technical terms or unfamiliar words. Keep it simple, concise and conversational.
- k. Inexperienced speakers are advised to avoided long stories, jokes, or humorous anecdotes. Even professionals find this difficult to do successfully.
- l. Limit your speech to no longer than 20 minutes unless your host specified otherwise.
- m. Try to end your speech with an idea, not a quote. Never end with "thank you."
- n. Be yourself! Relax! Be enthusiastic!



Speaker's Guide – A Basic Guide to Public Speaking

Prepared by Public Relations Division - The American Legion

Butterfly Time

The invitation has been acknowledged. You have agreed to address a civic group about The American Legion. Now, you are unsure what to say or how to pull everything together.

Nearly everyone is nervous before getting up in front of an audience to make a speech. Even the professionals! Just remember -- you are the only one who knows what you are going to say. That's why the audience came to hear you. If you forget a part, or you say something that doesn't come out exactly as you planned, only you know it!

So relax. Serving The American Legion as a speaker should not be the most difficult challenge of your life. Instead, it is the opportunity to tell others the Legion story from your perspective -- what the Legion does and why it does it right here in your hometown.

This short booklet provides the basics -- coupled with your knowledge and experience The American Legion story can begin to unfold.

Speaking before a group of concerned citizens is the most effective way to tell The American Legion story. You can more effectively interact with each of the audience members because they can physically see and hear you. You are able to observe the audience and can react to their feedback and modify your comments accordingly.

Your speeches, audience and subject matter, may require the use of a verbatim manuscript or may just require casual notes to jog your memory on main points. In any case the goal to communicate your story remains the same. Remember to talk to the group as though it is a living room conversation. Pick out several people around the room and concentrate on them as you speak.

Speeches tend to make the speaker distant, formal, authoritarian and not real or likeable. Consciously avoid this tendency - be friendly, warm and human.



How to Prepare and Deliver a Speech

Successful speechmaking depends upon two primary activities: Preparing the speech, and delivering the speech. Both are equally important. Failure to properly and adequately perform either will result in a less than totally effective speech.

You wouldn't think of driving a high powered race car in the Indianapolis 500, or participating in the Olympic ski jump competition unless knew something about it, trained and prepared for it.

You just can't expect to stand up before a group of people and "wing it." You've got to prepare and research your subject, you've got to organize your material, and you've got to rehearse, using some techniques you ought to learn.

Preparing for the Speech

The Purpose:

The first step in preparing your speech is to define **your purpose**. **Why are you speaking?** To inform, to entertain? to inspire? Write down your purpose in a clear, simple, declarative sentence and understand your purpose completely.

The Audience:

The next important step is to define **your audience**. Know as much as possible about who will hear and see you speak. Is it an all male audience, or are there men and women present? Who are they? Do they represent a particular group or segment of society? What is their general educational background? Is there a current issue that has brought them together? What do they share in common? What do they already know about the subject?

Usually, the program chairman or person who invited you to speak can give you guidance on the audience makeup. You can also find out where and when you will speak. What time of day? What does the room and seating arrangement look like? If you can, it is also a good idea to try to get a look at the place you will speak in advance of your actual appearance.

The Topic



Once you have defined your purpose and assessed your audience, you can select **your subject or topic**. Sometimes, the topic will be suggested by the person who requested you to speak. Normally however, the choice of a specific topic and presentation will be left up to you.

In selecting your subject or topic, a good place to start is review your own qualifications. Determine what it is that makes you an appropriate choice as speaker. Regardless of your topic, you can and should draw your speech from your own life and experiences as a Legion or Auxiliary leader, as a professional, or as an active and knowledgeable volunteer.

Research is always important

Do not, however, expect your entire speech to be based entirely on what you already know. **research your topic**, using the resources of your local library, the Legion post or Auxiliary unit, and your National Organization. Talk to those who may be more experienced in the subject than you, and use their input along with your research and your own experiences.

Your subject should fit the audience and appeal to its interests and experiences. The choice of language vocabulary and structure should be appropriate to the audience and the particular situation and occasion. Carefully select examples the audience will readily understand. The result will be a speech which will appeal to the wider audience on many levels, and be more enjoyable for everyone.

Time your speech

Tailor the length of the speech for the specific occasion. Lengthy after dinner speeches are inappropriate. A keynote address is often expected to be a bit longer, since it is considered to be the "major address" among several others at a conference or convention. Always include enough information to make your audience understand and appreciate the knowledge you have brought to them. But avoid providing so much information that they cannot react to it or are worn down or bored by the sheer volume of the material.

As a general rule, the body of most speeches should be no more than twenty minutes in length. Question and answer periods after a speech should be held to about ten minutes.

The best approach is to avoid attempting to cover an entire subject in detail. Instead, select a specific aspect of the central subject. Try to address that central subject by making no more than three main points about it.



With your purpose and topic clearly in mind, it's usually a good idea to set down the two or three main points you plan to make, in rough outline form. The idea of the outline is simply to help you organize all your thoughts into their proper place. Write one or two word phrases or "bullets" to describe the main points, and for each of those main points, do the same for information to support them. Don't worry about the opening or closing right now...just build a "skeleton" or framework of the main body of information you want to present.

How to Write your Speech:

Using the statement of purpose and outline as a guide, prepare your speech by starting at THE END! That's right deciding how you want to END the speech. Do you want them to take action, to DO something? Do you want them to KNOW something they didn't know before? Do you want them to feel inspired or uplifted? Or do you just want them to feel good and have a smile on their faces?

Now OUT LOUD say the words you want to say at the END of your speech. Make your final pitch, your major appeal, your big finish! You could end with a story, a quote, or a challenge. But say the words OUT LOUD!

Then, STOP! Before you go any further, take a 3x5 card, and write down EXACTLY WHAT YOU SAID, just the way you said it. Then throw the card on your desk, or in the middle of the floor.

Next, refer to your outline. Look at one of the "bulleted" points you want to make. Let it remind you of what you know about that part. Then OUT LOUD TALK about that particular point, as if you were telling someone else what you know in a casual, over the back fence conversation.

STOP again! Using another 3x5 card, write down exactly what you said...just the way you said it...about that part. Throw that card down, too.

Keep doing that. TALK your speech in segments, instead of sitting down and writing it all at once. Illustrate the main points you are making by use of examples, similes, metaphors, personal stories, anecdotes, startling statistics (avoid too many facts and figures.) In other words, make what you are saying COME ALIVE for each member of the audience.



When you've covered your three main points, gather up all the cards and arrange them in a logical order of presentation, with your ENDING, which you did first...as the LAST card.

Now, think of a good way to BEGIN YOUR SPEECH. It could be as simple as one succinct sentence that states your theme, and why it is important. But you really want to get the attention of the audience right away, and make them want to hear more. Your opening should be a one or two minute introduction that heightens interest in you and your subject.

A good way to begin a speech is to tell a story...perhaps about someone or some event which leads into the WHAT or WHY of your subject. A good, personal anecdote is often effective. This technique helps the audience identify in a personal way with you and what you are about to say. A quote from a famous person or document is another effective way to set the stage for your subject.

Humor is useful, IF you can do it. Most people cannot tell jokes very well. Be cautious when using humor!

Your opening is often the most difficult part of preparing your speech. But when you have decided how to start...VOILA!... you have "written" your speech from END to BEGINNING....by TALKING IT! Isn't that what you are going to do, anyway?

Delivery of Speeches :

You should make a few preliminary arrangements for the delivery of your speech, both before you arrive at the program site and once you are there.

Prepare a brief introduction for yourself and send it to the program director, so that you can be properly introduced to your audience. Your introduction should include brief personal data and a concise statement of your qualifications for speaking. Include with your suggested introduction, a list of items to make your speech more effective, such as: blackboard, pointer, and display stand, microphone or slide projector.

Prior to the date of the speech, rehearse it. Practice it over and over until you are familiar with its content and with the most effective pace for delivery. Rehearse on your feet, in a relatively large room in front of another person, if possible. You may also use both a tape recorder and a mirror, to properly gauge your total presentation. Remember, when you are comfortable, you will make your audience comfortable, as well.



Once you reach the program site, check over your facilities -room size, your position relative to the audience, the acoustics, the microphone. Do this long before you actually give your speech, to ensure that everything is adequate and functioning.

Then, when you are introduced -- properly and personally -- you will be ready to proceed with your speech.

As you speak, look directly at your audience. Establish eye contact at the outset, and constantly re-establish it by looking up from your notes. Eye contact with the audience is especially important at the beginning and conclusion of your address, so know the opening well. Don't memorize it, but know what you plan to say, and say it. The same holds true for the conclusion.

In fact, reading a prepared text, or reciting a memorized speech usually lead to dull speeches. Talking to your audience using notes, or "bullets" on cards, makes for effective, personal one-on-one delivery.

During the body of your address, keep your movement at the podium to a minimum. Audiences are distracted by too much movement. If you move away from the podium and microphone, you will need to adjust your voice level to accommodate the increased distance, unless you have been outfitted with a lapel-type microphone, or a wireless mike.

Excessive movement is distracting. Gestures, however, can enhance your presentation. By using your face and eyes, you can express the finest shades of meaning that your words cannot. The nod, the frown, the smile, and the raising of an eyebrow can impart additional information of use to the audience. Practice controlling your movements and facial expressions until you are in complete control and can use them to your advantage.

Remember, gesture to your audience, not to yourself, just as you speak to your audience and not to yourself. Be definite. An effective gesture is firm and direct, not a flinch. Effective gestures are forms of communication, and therefore, are purposeful and should be directed to the audience. Do not confuse or distract your audience with superfluous actions such as buttoning or unbuttoning your coat or sweater, tapping on the podium, running your hands through your hair, rummaging through your pockets, tapping your toes, or straightening your tie.



Just as you wouldn't surprise your audience with inappropriate gestures, don't surprise yourself with elements of your speech. Know the proper pronunciation of difficult names and words. Use proper pronunciation, but be sensitive to colloquialism and local places, names and customs. Using a tape recorder while rehearsing can help you discover the places you are likely to stumble, and will help you avoid them.

Making speeches requires a lot of time and effort. However, the results that are derived from a successful speech make it rewarding to you and The American Legion.

Remember -- Preparation plus Organization equals CONFIDENCE!

Important points

- ☑ Have something to say!
- ☑ Pick a definite topic, and research it.
- ☑ Organize your main points. Have a purpose!
- ☑ Know your audience.
- ☑ Know their interests, check on previous programs, and determine the occasion.
- ☑ Be comfortable - relax.
- ☑ Develop your subject smoothly.
- ☑ State main points clearly. Illustrate, and emphasize the points you want remembered.
- ☑ Be brief.
- ☑ Maintain a high interest level.
- ☑ Be enthusiastic!
- ☑ Keep good eye contact.
- ☑ Use voice inflection, pauses and gestures.
- ☑ Have a strong finish.
- ☑ Restate the main points.
- ☑ Review the advantages of your action.
- ☑ End with a challenge. -
- ☑ Keep your talk around 20-minutes - but no longer than half an hour.
- ☑ Have speeches triple-spaced. Use large type.
- ☑ Underline your key points.
- ☑ Don't carry sentences from one page to another.
- ☑ Don't staple pages together, or keep them in a loose-leaf binder.
- ☑ Number your pages!
- ☑ Leave a decent margin on the left side for your last minute notes or directions, i.e. Smile, emphasize this point, add joke here.
- ☑ Avoid Legion jargon and acronyms - keep it simple, concise and conversational.



Remember – when you are called upon to speak, you are in control of your effort. It takes some time, but you can handle the challenge. Just be sure to prepare in advance; keep a positive attitude and show enthusiasm. Tell The American Legion story in the dynamic way only YOUR experiences can express.

Useful Quotations : (When using a quote, be sure to tell its source)

"Depend upon it, the lovers of freedom will be free." -- Edmund Burke

"Freedom suppressed and again regained bites with keener fangs than freedom never endangered." -- Cicero

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it." -- Thomas Paine

"The ground of liberty must be gained by inches." -- Thomas Jefferson

"We view our Nation's strength and security as a trust, upon which rests the hope of free men everywhere." -- Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty." -- John F. Kennedy

"Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end, and prefer the interest of mankind to any narrow interest of their own."-- Woodrow Wilson in War Address to Congress on April 2, 1917

"All we have of freedom, all we use or know-this our fathers bought for us, long and long ago." -- Rudyard Kipling

"The world has never had a good definition for the word liberty." -- Abraham Lincoln

"We are not to expect to be transplanted from despotism to liberty in a featherbed." -- Thomas Jefferson

"It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure peace only by preparing for war." -- John F. Kennedy



"The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it." --John Stuart Mill

"...the soldier above all other people pray for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war." -- General Douglas MacArthur

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserved neither liberty nor safety." -- Benjamin Franklin

"Liberty exists in proportion to wholesome restraint; the more restraint on others to keep off from us, the more liberty we have." -- Daniel Webster

"The real democratic American idea is, not that every man shall be on a level with every other, but that every one shall have liberty, without hindrance, to be what God made him." -
- Henry Ward Beecher, "Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit" in 1887

"Freedom--no word was ever spoken, that has held out greater hope, demanded greater sacrifice, needed to be nurtured, blessed more the giver, damned more its destroyer or come closer to being God's will on earth. And I think that's worth fighting for, if necessary."
-- General Omar N. Bradley

"You can see things, and you say, 'Why?', but I see things that never were and I say, 'Why not?'-- George Bernard Shaw

"Patriotism is not a short frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime." -- Adlai Stevenson

"I believe that if we think clearly enough, plan carefully enough, and work tirelessly enough, we can both save freedom and secure peace." -- Dwight D. Eisenhower

"And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country." -- John F. Kennedy

"For those who fight for it, life has a special flavor the protected will never know." --
Unknown defender of Khe Sanh in Vietnam

"Democracy is not a static thing. It is an everlasting march." -- Franklin D. Roosevelt