

CHAPTER

Public Speaking Apprehension

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Chapter Changes from Previous Edition

Chapter 2 begins with an expanded discussion on public speaking apprehension. The chapter also includes an entirely new section on Preparing a Narrative/Personal Experience Speech. In addition, a new sample speech in the text and reference to further speeches on the Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM provide examples for students.

2 Overcoming Nervousness through Effective Speech Planning

Rudolph F. Verderber & Kathleen S. Verderber
The Challenge of Effective Speaking, (12th ed), Wadsworth, 2003



Joel Gordon

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.

—Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, 1894

As Professor Montrose finished his introductory lecture, he announced that during the next two class periods everyone would present a short personal experience speech. “I’d like you to speak for two to four minutes. The goals of the assignment are to have you use the speech planning process and to learn how to use narratives effectively so that you will have this experience to draw on when using personal experiences in longer speeches later in the term.” Garth’s first reaction was anxiety. But as Professor Montrose explained that everyone experiences some apprehension, he also promised to give students help in coping with their fear. He then previewed how the speech planning process they were to learn would equip them to be successful. Garth felt his stomach begin to relax. “Maybe this won’t be so bad,” he thought. “Yeah, I think I can do this.”

You may have been given such an assignment already, and, like Garth, you may be feeling uneasy about speaking in front of the class. Rest assured, you are not alone. Fear of speaking in public is so widespread that polls of American adults consistently find it to be among the top three fears. It is natural to feel nervous about speaking in front of people you don’t know well. Some professional speakers also suffer serious prespeech jitters. After you have read this chapter, we hope that you, like Garth, will be more confident that you can overcome your anxiety and become an effective speaker.

In the first part of this chapter, we examine the concept of speech apprehension and discuss strategies that can help you overcome it. In the second part of this chapter, we preview the action steps of effective speech preparation. When you follow these steps, you will be able to cope with and often overcome speech nervousness. Finally, we explain how to apply the speech plan action steps to preparation of your first speech assignment.

Public Speaking Apprehension

People have feared speaking in public probably since they first began doing it. Those of us who teach others to speak have been concerned with helping students overcome their fears almost as long. **Public speaking apprehension**, a type of communication anxiety, is the level of fear a person experiences when anticipating or actually speaking to an audience. Almost all of us have some level of public speaking apprehension, but about 15 percent of the U.S. population experiences high levels of apprehension.¹ Today, we benefit from the results of a significant amount of research on public speaking apprehension and methods for helping us overcome it.

Chapter at a Glance

This chapter begins with an expanded section on public speaking apprehension and some techniques for reducing apprehension. This is followed by a preview of the six action steps of effective speech preparation. These action steps are discussed in detail in Part Two. The chapter concludes with a section focusing the preparation of a typical first speaking assignment, the Narrative/Personal Experience Speech.

Discussion Prompt

It is clear that it is possible to practice too little for a speech. Is it possible to practice too much? Why?

public speaking apprehension
the level of fear a person experiences when anticipating or actually speaking to an audience

Symptoms and Causes

The signs of public speaking apprehension vary from individual to individual, and symptoms ranging from mild to debilitating include physical, emotional, and cognitive reactions. Physical signs may be stomach upset (or butterflies), flushed skin, sweating, shaking, light-headedness, rapid or heavy heartbeats, and verbal disfluencies including stuttering and vocalized pauses (“like,” “you know,” “ah,” “um,” and so forth). Emotional symptoms include feeling anxious, worried, or upset. Symptoms can also include specific negative cognitions or thought patterns. For example, a highly apprehensive person might dwell on thoughts such as “I’m going to make a fool of myself” or “I just know that I’ll blow it.”

The level of public speaking apprehension we feel varies over the course of speaking. Researchers have identified three phases of reaction that speakers proceed through: anticipation reaction, confrontation reaction, and adaptation reaction.²

anticipation reaction the level of anxiety you experience prior to giving the speech, including the nervousness you feel while preparing and waiting to speak

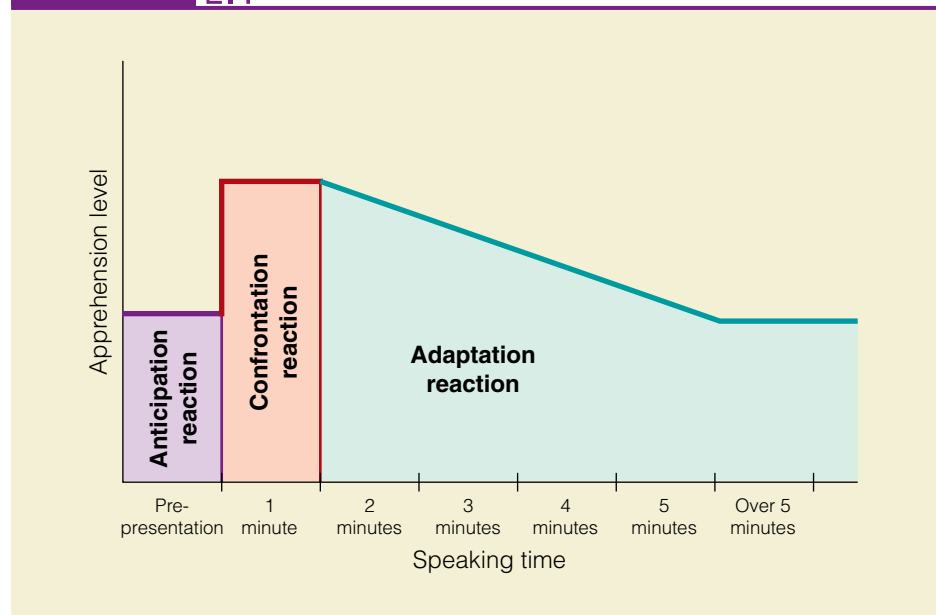
confrontation reaction the surge in your anxiety level that you feel as you begin to speak

adaptation reaction the gradual decline of your anxiety level that begins about one minute into the presentation and results in your anxiety level declining to its prespeaking level in about five minutes

Anticipation reaction is the level of anxiety you experience prior to giving the speech, including the nervousness you feel while preparing and waiting to speak. Your **confrontation reaction** is the surge in your anxiety level that you feel as you begin to speak. This level begins to fall about a minute or so into your speech and will level off at your prespeaking level about five minutes into your presentation. Your **adaptation reaction** is the gradual decline of your anxiety level that begins about one minute into the presentation and results in your anxiety level declining to its prespeaking level in about five minutes. Exhibit 2.1 depicts this cycle. Researchers have found that most speakers experience moderate levels of both anticipation and confrontation reactions.³

The causes of public speaking apprehension are still being studied, but several sources have been suggested. These include apprehension because of biologically based temperament, previous experiences, and level of skills.

EXHIBIT 2.1 Phases of public speaking apprehension



First, recent research has found that some public speaking apprehension may be inborn. This “communibiological” explanation proposes that public speaking apprehension stems from your temperament, which is neurobiological in origin. Two aspects of inherited temperament, extroversion/introversion and neuroticism, blend together to create public speaking apprehension.⁴ People who are more extroverted experience lower levels of public speaking apprehension than do people who are introverted. Extroverted people generally are more sociable, lively, active, assertive, dominant, and adventuresome than are introverted people. Public speaking apprehension is also related to the temperamental characteristic labeled *neuroticism*. People who are temperamentally neurotic experience greater levels of general anxiety, depression, guilt feelings, shyness, mood swings, and irrational thoughts than do those whose temperaments are more stable. According to the communibiological theory, public speaking apprehension is likely to be higher for people who are both more introverted and more neurotic. If you are temperamentally predisposed to high public speaking apprehension, does this mean that you are doomed to be ineffective in your speaking efforts? Of course not, but it does suggest that you will be “working against the grain” and may need special help in learning how to control some of these problematic aspects of your temperament.⁵

Second, your level of public speaking apprehension may be a result of the reinforcement you received from your previous speaking efforts.⁶ From reading aloud during second grade, to giving an oral report in science class, to accepting a sports award at a banquet, you have probably had many “public speaking” experiences. How well you performed in past situations is likely to affect how apprehensive you are about speaking in public now. If your second grade teacher humiliated you when you read aloud, or if you flubbed that science report, or had friends laugh at your acceptance speech, you will probably be more apprehensive about speaking in public than if you had been praised for earlier efforts. The public speaking apprehension you feel because of your past experiences, while uncomfortable, does not have to handicap your future performances. Some strategies you can use as you prepare to speak that will help you to reduce your apprehension and be more effective will be discussed in the next section.

A third cause of public speaking apprehension comes from having underdeveloped speaking skills. This “skill deficit” theory was the earliest explanation for apprehension and continues to receive attention by researchers. It suggests that many of us become apprehensive because we don’t understand or cannot do the basic tasks associated with effective speech making. These tasks include identifying our speaking goals, analyzing audiences and adapting to them, selecting ideas and putting them in order, choosing appropriate words to express our ideas, and using our body and voice in a way that enables others to easily listen to us.⁷ The less skillful we are, the more anxious we feel. People experiencing high public speaking apprehension because they lack the skills necessary to be effective can be helped by studying and learning to apply public speaking skills.

There are many ways to measure public speaking apprehension. One measure widely used by researchers is presented in Exhibit 2.2. Complete the six questions to assess your current level of public speaking apprehension.

Managing Your Apprehension

Many of us believe we would be better off if we could be totally free from nervousness and apprehension. But based on years of study, Professor Gerald Phillips has concluded that nervousness is not necessarily negative. He noted that “learning proceeds best when the organism is in a state of tension.”⁸ In fact, it helps to be a little nervous

Personal Report of Public Speaking Apprehension

These statements give you a chance to express how you feel about speaking in public. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you: 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Are Undecided; 4 = Disagree; or 5 = Strongly Disagree.

- ____ 1. I have no fear of giving a speech.
- ____ 2. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
- ____ 3. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
- ____ 4. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
- ____ 5. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
- ____ 6. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget the facts I really know.
- ____ **TOTAL**

Scoring: Begin by reversing the numbers you assigned to statements 2, 4, and 6 (1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1). Then add all six numbers.

Interpreting: If your total is more than 24, you may experience a high level of public speaking apprehension. People who are highly apprehensive will benefit most from applying the techniques designed to reduce anxiety.

Source: Adapted from the PRCA-24, subscale Public Speaking. See Virginia P. Richmond and James C. McCroskey, *Communication Apprehension, Avoidance, and Effectiveness* (Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, 1998).

Teaching Tip

This is an important section as students are usually apprehensive about speaking in public. Focus class discussion here and use positive terms as much as possible. “Excitement” should be the emotion, not “nervousness.” “Energy,” not “anxiety.”

Web Site

A series of articles on stage fright from the Advanced Public Speaking Institute are available at www.publicspeaking.org/public-speakingarticles.htm#stage. These can be used to supplement in-class discussion or as resources for students when practicing speeches.

to do your best. If you are lackadaisical about giving a speech, you probably will not do a good job.⁹

Because at least some tension is constructive, the goal is not to eliminate nervousness but to learn how to cope with it. According to Phillips, studies that followed groups of students taking speaking courses found that, while nearly all students still experienced tension, almost all of them had learned to cope with the nervousness. Phillips concludes that “apparently they had learned to manage the tension; they no longer saw it as an impairment, and they went ahead with what they had to do.”¹⁰ So how does this apply to you?

1. **Recognize that despite your apprehension you can make it through your speech.** Very few people are so afflicted by public speaking apprehension that they are unable to function. You may not enjoy the “flutters” you experience, but you can still deliver an effective speech. In the years we have been teaching (quite a few), we have heard thousands of student speeches and presentations. In all of that time, only two students were so frightened that they were unable to give the speech. We have seen speakers forget some of what they planned to say, and some have strayed from their planned speech, but they all finished speaking. Moreover, we have had students who reported being scared stiff who actually gave excellent speeches.
2. **Realize that listeners may not perceive that you are anxious or nervous.** Some people’s apprehension increases because they mistakenly think the audience will detect their fear. But the fact is that audience members are seldom aware of how nervous a person is. For instance, a classic study found that even speech instructors greatly underrate the amount of stage fright they believe a person has.¹¹



Although most speakers confess to nervousness at the prospect of giving an important speech, the goal is not to eliminate nervousness, but to learn how to cope with it.

3. **Understand that preparation can help you cope with apprehension.** This entire textbook is devoted to helping you become prepared for your speeches so that you will have more confidence in your ability to be effective when you speak. As you work on the speech preparation action steps we recommend, you will find yourself paying less attention to your apprehension as you become engrossed in the challenges of communicating with your particular audience. Moreover, by becoming prepared for a speech, you will reduce the anxiety you can expect to have if you are “winging it.” A study by Kathleen Ellis reinforces previous research findings that students who believe they are competent speakers experience less public speaking apprehension than those who do not.¹²
4. **Take comfort in the knowledge that students who take courses in public speaking reduce their apprehension.** If you seriously prepare and give your speeches, you will gain skill and will see improvement in your performance. From these experiences you will gain confidence and worry less. Research on the impact of basic courses on communication apprehension has shown that experience in a public speaking course can reduce students’ communication apprehension scores.¹³

Techniques for Reducing Apprehension

Because there are multiple causes of public speaking apprehension, a variety of techniques are used to help people reduce their anxiety. Some techniques are targeted at reducing apprehension that results from worrisome thoughts and irrational beliefs. Other techniques are aimed at reducing the physical symptoms of anxiety. Yet others focus on helping people overcome the skill deficiencies that lead to stress. In this section we review four approaches to reducing public speaking apprehension that have been effective with some speakers.

Instructor’s Resource Manual

There are many humorous examples of speech apprehension in films and television programs. These can help students reduce their anxiety. The *Instructor’s Resource Manual* has recommendations related to this topic.

communication orientation motivation (COM) techniques

techniques designed to reduce anxiety by helping the speaker adopt a “communication” rather than a “performance” orientation toward the speech

performance orientation

views public speaking as a situation demanding special delivery techniques in order to impress an audience aesthetically

communication orientation

views a speech as just an opportunity to talk with a number of people about a topic that is important to the speaker and to the audience

visualization techniques

reduces apprehension by helping speakers develop a mental picture of them giving a masterful speech

Discussion Prompt

Visualization may seem unusual to many students. Relating it to athletic or other highly competitive situations will probably help. Also, ask if there are any student-athletes in the class or students engaged in some other highly competitive setting. Do they use visualization or other similar techniques? Does it work for them?

systematic desensitization

a technique in which people first learn procedures for relaxation, then learn to apply these to the anxiety they feel when they visualize participating in a series of anxiety-producing communication situations, so that they can remain relaxed when they encounter anxiety-producing situations in real life

1. **Communication orientation motivation (COM) techniques** are designed to reduce anxiety by helping the speaker adopt a “communication” rather than a “performance” orientation toward the speech.¹⁴ According to Michael Motley, public speaking anxiety is increased for people who hold a **performance orientation**. These people view public speaking as a situation demanding special delivery techniques in order to impress an audience “aesthetically.”¹⁵ Individuals with a performance orientation view audience members as hypercritical judges who will be unforgiving about even minor mistakes. In contrast, people who approach public speaking from a **communication orientation** view a speech as just an opportunity to talk with a number of people about a topic that is important to the speaker and to the audience. Speakers with a communication orientation are focused on getting their message across to the audience, not the audience’s real or imagined reaction to them as a speaker.

So one technique for reducing public speaking apprehension is for performance-oriented individuals to develop a basic understanding of public speaking apprehension, to understand how their performance orientation adds to their apprehension, and to consciously work to adopt a communication orientation. This change comes about when performance-oriented individuals recognize that public speaking is very much like casual conversations that they succeed with every day. Further, audience members are not focused on judging the eloquence of the speaker but rather are concerned with understanding the content of the speech. COM techniques focus on providing speakers with information that helps them adopt a communication rather than a performance orientation.

2. **Visualization techniques** reduce apprehension by helping speakers develop a mental picture of themselves giving a masterful speech. Like COM techniques, visualization helps speakers overcome cognitive causes of apprehension. Joe Ayres and Theodore S. Hopf, two scholars who have conducted extensive research on visualization, have found that if people can visualize themselves going through an entire process they will have a much better chance of succeeding when they are in the situation.¹⁶

Visualization has been used as a major means of improving sports skills. One example is a study of players trying to improve their foul-shooting percentages. Players were divided into three groups. One group never practiced, another group practiced, and a third group visualized practicing. As we would expect, those who practiced improved far more than those who didn’t. What seems amazing is that those who only visualized practicing improved almost as much as those who practiced.¹⁷ Imagine what happens when you visualize and practice as well!

By visualizing speech making, not only do people seem to lower their general apprehension, but they also report fewer negative thoughts when they actually speak.¹⁸ Visualization activities are a part of effective speech preparation. A visualization activity you can use as you prepare your speeches is provided on the Challenge of Effective Speaking Web site is at the end of this chapter. The InfoTrac College Edition exercise at the end of this chapter will help you access more information on this topic.

3. **Systematic desensitization** is a technique in which people first learn procedures for relaxation, then learn to apply these to the anxiety they feel when they visualize participating in a series of anxiety-producing communication situations, so that they can remain relaxed when they encounter anxiety-producing situations in real life.¹⁹ This technique is designed to help people overcome the physical symptoms of public speaking apprehension. Since relaxing is easier said than done, these programs focus on teaching you deep muscle relaxation procedures.



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If people can visualize themselves going through an entire process, they will have a much better chance of succeeding when they are in the situation.

Teaching Tip

Many institutions offer anxiety counseling and remediation as part of their student services programs. Some large schools also have speaking labs or other similar support systems for students preparing oral presentations. You may wish to direct some students to these resources.

The process involves consciously tensing and then relaxing muscle groups to learn to recognize the difference between the two states. Then, while in a relaxed state, you imagine yourself in successively more stressful situations. For example, researching a speech topic in the library, practicing the speech out loud to a roommate, and finally giving a speech. The ultimate goal of systematic desensitization is to transfer the calm feelings you attain while visualizing to the actual speaking event. Calmness on command—and it works.

- 4. Public speaking skills training** is systematically teaching the skills associated with the processes involved in preparing and delivering an effective public speech with the intention of improving speaking competence as a means of reducing public speaking apprehension. Skills training is based on the assumption that some of our anxiety about speaking in public is due to our realization that we do not know how to be successful, that we lack the knowledge and behaviors to be effective. Therefore, if we learn the processes and behaviors associated with effective speech making, then we will be less anxious.²⁰ Public speaking skills include those associated with the processes of goal analysis, audience and situation analysis, organization, delivery, and self-evaluation.²¹

public speaking skills training systematically teaching the skills associated with the processes involved in preparing and delivering an effective speech with the intention of improving speaking competence as a means of reducing public speaking apprehension

InfoTrac College Edition

For additional material and exercises on managing speech anxiety, see the activities in the *InfoTrac College Edition Student Activities Workbook for Communication* by Nancy Rost Goulden.

Web Site

Great Speeches, presented by the Chicago Law Network, is an archive of speeches in audio format from the 1940s to the present. Students can listen to dozens of classic speeches on their Web site at <http://www.chicago-law.net/speeches/speech.html>.

This is an excellent resource to show the power and value of oratory.

All four of these techniques for reducing public speaking apprehension have been successful in helping people reduce their anxiety. Researchers are just beginning to conduct studies to identify which techniques are most appropriate for a particular person. A study conducted by Karen Kangas Dwyer suggests that the most effective program for combating apprehension is one that uses a variety of techniques but individualizes them by presenting them in an order that corresponds to the order in which the individual experiences apprehension.²² So, for example, if your immediate reaction when facing a speaking situation is to think worrisome thoughts (“I don’t know what I’m suppose to do,” “I’m going to make a fool of myself”), which then lead you to feel nervous, you would be best served by first undergoing skills training or COM techniques. A person who immediately feels the physical sensations (nausea, rapid heart beat, and so forth) when thinking about the event would benefit from first learning systematic desensitization techniques before working with visualization or receiving skills training. If you want to reduce your public speaking apprehension, you will want to use all four techniques—but use them in an order that matches the order in which you experience apprehension.

Reducing your public speaking apprehension draws on all four techniques. Public speaking skills training will enable you to feel less anxious, and by understanding and applying speech-making processes and skills you will also become more effective. As you read this textbook and work through the speech preparation activities, you will be developing the skills you need to be effective in speech making. At the heart of this is what we call the “speech plan.”

Developing an Effective Speech Plan

Whether you are an account agent selling an advertising campaign to Procter and Gamble, a coach trying to motivate your team in its game with your arch rival, or a student giving a speech in class, to have the greatest chance for success you need to have a **speech plan**—a strategy for achieving your speech goal. An effective speech plan for most speeches is based on the answers to these six questions:

1. How can I develop a speech goal that is adapted to my audience?
2. How can I best adapt my speech to my audience?
3. Where can I find the kind of information that I need to achieve this goal?
4. How can I organize and outline this information in a way that is most likely to help me achieve my goal?
5. How can I create visual aids that will dramatize my information?
6. What can I focus on in practicing the wording and the delivery of my speech?

In Part Two of this book, we will answer these questions more fully. For now, we want to provide the most basic answers that will help you in your total speech preparation process.

Speech Goal That Meets Audience Needs

Your **speech goal** (or speech purpose) is a statement of what you want your audience to know, believe, or do. To arrive at such a goal, you begin by selecting a topic. Regardless of whether you are a renowned speaker or are preparing your very first speech, the advice for determining what to speak about is the same: select a topic that you know something about and that is important to you.

speech plan a strategy for achieving your speech goal

Teaching Tip

After many years of education, most students are competent judges of how much time it takes to write a research paper or study for an exam. But for many students, outlining, researching, and practicing a speech are completely new skills. Students may not be aware of the time required and the need for careful planning. Reinforce the need for a well-thought-out plan.

speech goal what you want your listeners to know, believe, or do

Because your speech will be given to a particular audience in a particular setting, before you get very far in your planning, think about your specific audience. To help you decide the aspect of the topic you will speak on and the needs of your audience, make a preliminary audience analysis based on the gender, culture, average age, education level, occupation, income level, and group affiliation of your audience members. As you study these factors, you can assess the kinds of material the audience is likely to respond to.

You also need to consider your setting, including the size of the audience, when the speech will be given, where the speech will be given, the equipment necessary to give the speech, the time limit for the speech, and the specific assignment. If you will be speaking in the same classroom all term, determine any peculiarities of the room that you need to take into consideration. Most important for this first speech are the size of the audience and your time limit.

Once you have a topic and have analyzed the audience and setting, you are ready to phrase your speech goal. Every speech has a general and a specific goal that the speaker intends to achieve. For most of your in-class speeches, your general goal is likely to be determined by the assignment. You will probably be giving either an informative speech, where you want your audience to understand information, or a persuasive speech, where you want your audience to believe something or act in a particular way. For an icebreaker speech, your goal is likely to be to have the audience enjoy your personal experience.

Your specific goal articulates exactly what you want your audience to understand, believe, or do. For instance, for an informative speech, Glen, a member of the basketball team, might phrase his goal as “I want my audience to understand how to shoot a jump shot.” Ling, a student who was born in China, might phrase her goal as “I want the audience to have an appreciation of Chinese culture.”

Audience Adaptation

Once you have a clear speech goal, you begin the task of determining how you will adapt that speech to your specific audience. **Adaptation** means relating to audience interests and needs verbally, visually, and vocally. An effective speaker considers audience needs at all stages of the preparation process.

It is important to consider the audience’s level of interest in your goal, their ability to understand the content of the speech, and their attitude toward you and your topic. Especially for a first speech, the easiest way to adapt to your audience is to think of ways to speak directly to them by using personal pronouns and asking rhetorical questions. For instance, you might begin your speech by saying, “I’m sure we’ve all had experiences that we’d just as soon forget . . .” or asking “Do you remember what it was like when you . . .?”

If you believe your audience has very little interest in your speech, you will need to take some time early in the speech to help them see why the topic is important to them. For instance, if Ling is talking with an audience that she believes has very little interest in understanding Chinese culture, she will have to motivate the audience to recognize why they need to know something about Chinese culture. She might ask, “Did you know that because of the number of Chinese who are immigrating to the United States more Americans are coming into contact with Chinese people, and understanding how Chinese culture differs from American culture is becoming more important to all of us?”

Not only will you need to adapt your speech by providing motivation where it is low, but if you believe your audience’s knowledge of the topic is low, you will need to be especially careful in giving them the basic information they need to understand

Discussion Prompt

Students are often unclear as to the need for audience analysis. Why must we understand our audience? How should a speech be different if it was given to an audience of ten-year-olds, an audience of college students, or an audience of adults at a professional meeting? Why is it important to create “common ground” with the audience? Is it possible to create common ground if we disagree with the majority of our audience? How?

adaptation relating to audience interests and needs verbally, visually, and vocally

your speech. For instance, if Chala believes her audience is not familiar with basic heart functioning, she will want to make sure she briefly describes this process.

Later in the text, we will discuss other ways of personalizing information. As you gain skill, you will find that you are able to talk about your information in ways that tell audiences that you are thinking about them as you are speaking.

Web Site

This site, <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html> developed by New Mexico State University, provides a list of criteria, examples, suggestions, and sources that focus on the evaluation of the utility of Web sites as sources. Many students will want to use the Internet as a source for research material for their speeches; this source will assist in their search for useful sources.

Teaching Tip

It is important to discuss your policy on the use of Internet sources prior to the first assignment requiring research. Students need to know if there are limits on the number of Web pages used as sources.

Speech Material

For most speeches, you will want to include factual information from research sources that you access manually and electronically, or information that you acquire by interviewing experts. Regardless of the speech, you also will want to use some of your own humorous, exciting, or interesting experiences. When you select a topic you already know something about, you are in a better position to evaluate the information you glean from sources. You also will have experiences to draw from to make the speech more meaningful. For instance, Chala, who rides on the local volunteer Life Squad, will be able to give a better speech on CPR than a person with no practical experience who has learned about CPR from reading and interviewing others. Why? Because in the course of her volunteer work, Chala has actually used this skill and will have real examples to draw from. She will also be in a position to evaluate whether the sources that she reads are presenting accurate up-to-date information. Likewise, Ling, an international student from China, will be able to bring her firsthand knowledge of Chinese culture to a speech to her class on Chinese manners. Her experience may enable her to describe things in a way that someone who had not experienced both Chinese and American culture would be unable to do.

For your major class assignments, you may draw material from your own knowledge and experiences, observations, interviews, surveys, and research.

Organization

Any well-organized speech has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Because it is difficult to work on an introduction until the content of a speech is determined, it often works best to start organizing the body of the speech before considering the introduction or the conclusion. Throughout the process, work in outline form. Although your inclination may be to sit down and “write out” the speech as it comes to mind, as you read through the following chapters, you will see how speeches are likely to be better organized and better developed when you work in an outline mode.

Begin by wording the main points carefully, following an organizational pattern that clearly communicates the material. Two basic organizational patterns are chronological and topical order. In later chapters, we will consider several types of organization that you may want to use in your informative and persuasive speeches. Chronological means following an order that moves from first to last. Chala, who is planning to speak on CPR, will organize her speech on the steps (what is done first, second, and third) involved in administering CPR. In some circumstances, you may find that your speech is best presented topically. Topical presentation means following an order of headings. For instance, Ling might want to compare greeting practices, decision-making processes, and dinner manners of Chinese to those of Americans. First she may talk about greeting practices in each culture, then talk about decision-making processes, and conclude by describing simple dinner manners in each culture.

After you have outlined the body of the speech, you can outline your introduction and conclusion. At the least, your introduction should both get attention and lead into the body of the speech. Because there are never any guarantees that your audience is ready to pay full attention to the speech, find a way to start the speech that focuses



Visual aids clarify, emphasize, and often dramatize.

attention on your topic. Your conclusion should remind the audience of what you have said and hit home in such a way that the audience will remember your words.

When you think you are done, go back over the outline to make sure all of the parts are relevant to your goal. It is important to outline each speech on paper to test the logic and clarity of your proposed organization. A complete outline includes key parts of the introduction, the main points, major subpoints of the body and key support, section transitions, and key parts of the conclusion, plus a list of sources.

Although some experienced speakers are able to speak effectively from a mental outline, most of us need to see on paper what we are planning to do. If the parts of the speech flow logically from one to the next, then the audience should be able to follow your speech.

Selecting and Using Visual Aids

Even for a very short speech you may decide to create a visual aid that will help clarify, emphasize, or dramatize the verbal information. Audiences are likely to understand and retain information better when they have received that information through more than one sense. By using objects, models, charts, pictorial representations, projections, and computer graphics in creative ways, effective speakers are able to maximize the effect of their high-quality information. Visual aids can be especially valuable in informative speeches.

Practicing Speech Wording and Delivery

Ideas are communicated to the audience through verbal and nonverbal means. In your practice sessions, choose the wording of main points and supporting materials carefully. If you have not practiced various ways of phrasing your key ideas, you run the risk of missing a major opportunity for communicating your ideas effectively. In practice sessions, work on clarity, vividness, emphasis, and appropriateness of language.

Although a speech is comprised of words, your effectiveness is largely a matter of how well you use your voice and gestures in delivering your speech. Present the

Teaching Tip

Many students may have taken a previous course that notes the importance and power of language. These courses may include a speech communication overview course or an English composition or literature course. Refer students to their prior exposure to these ideas.

Teaching Tip

Students are usually most apprehensive about delivery. Reinforce to them that delivery will be practiced and can be improved with experience. Showing a sample student speech on video or CD-ROM at this point can help students realize that delivery can be mastered and that it need not be perfect for them to do well.

Teaching Tip

Exhibit 2.3 is an example of proper outline form. Students do best when they don't have to concentrate on the format. Introducing it to them early helps them get used to it.

narrative a tale, an account, or a personal experience

Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM

Eric Wais's speech is included on the Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM.

speech enthusiastically, with vocal variety and emphasis, using good eye contact (look at members of the audience while you are speaking). Later, we will spend considerable time discussing how to achieve these goals.

Very few people can present speeches effectively without considerable practice. The goal of practice is to give you confidence that you can talk comfortably with your audience and accomplish your speech goal within the time limit. Never try to memorize the speech. Memorized speeches make it difficult for you to adapt to the feedback you get from your audience and can add to your anxiety (fear of forgetting). Instead, practice to become familiar with your main points and the supporting material for them, to become comfortable transitioning from one point to another, and to become aware of where you might benefit from short notes. Throughout this text, we emphasize extemporaneous speaking—giving a speech that is researched, outlined, and practiced until the ideas of the speech are firmly in mind, but varying the wording from practice to practice and in the actual delivery. By keeping your mind on the main points of the sequence, you will be able to lengthen or shorten the story by including or deleting details of the experience. We will consider detailed information about methods of practice in Chapter 11.

Exhibit 2.3 summarizes the six action steps of an effective speech plan in outline form. These steps will be discussed in detail in the eight chapters that make up Part Two of this book. Each of these action steps is associated with specific speech preparation activities, which will help you understand the processes and skills necessary for effective speaking.

Preparing a Narrative/Personal Experience Speech

Your professor is likely to assign a short, ungraded first speech to help you “get your feet wet.” This speech is designed to give you a chance to talk with your class with little or no pressure. For this first speech, we recommend a **narrative** (a tale, an account, or a personal experience) that you can present in two to four minutes. Let's look at how to apply the action steps to prepare such a speech using what Eric Wais did to prepare for his speech, “The Funeral,” as an example.

The first step is to determine a speech goal that meets audience needs. For his personal experience speech assignment, Eric considered several experiences he thought the class would enjoy hearing about. For his topic, he finally chose “The Funeral,” a story of the funeral of Dan, one of Eric's best friends.

Eric thought his class could relate to his experience because many people find themselves in situations where mistakes occur when people don't really know those they are talking about.

He also knew that the speech would be for an audience of about fifteen classmates, that the assignment was a narrative/personal experience speech, and that his time limit was about three minutes.

Since Eric's assignment was a personal experience speech, his general goal was to have the audience enjoy his experience. Specifically, Eric wanted the audience to identify with his laughter at what appeared to be a total lack of understanding.

The second step is to develop a strategy for audience adaptation. Eric used personal pronouns and other means of creating common ground in telling his personal experience. He also tried to be as specific as possible in relating the details so that the audience would have a clear and vivid mental picture of the events.

The third step is to gather the kind of information you need to achieve this goal. For his personal experience narrative, Eric needed only to reconstruct the details of his funeral experience.



Determine a Speech Goal

I. Determine a speech goal that meets audience needs. (Chapter 4)

- A. Select a topic from a subject area you know something about and that is important to you.
- B. Analyze your audience.
- C. Consider your setting.
- D. Articulate your goal by determining the response that meets audience needs.



Develop a Strategy for Audience Adaptation

II. Develop a strategy for audience adaptation. (Chapter 5)

- A. Speak directly to members of the audience.
- B. Relate material to audience interests.
- C. Adjust content to appropriate level given audience level of understanding.
- D. Enhance your credibility with the audience.
- E. Adjust to your audience's attitude toward your topic.



Gather Information

III. Gather information. (Chapter 6)

- A. Survey manual and electronic sources of information and evaluate the quality of information found.
- B. Observe and interview sources of information.
- C. On note cards record information that is relevant to your specific speech goal.



Organize and Develop Your Material

IV. Organize and develop your material in a way that is best suited to your audience. (Chapters 7 and 8)

- A. Write a thesis statement that indicates the specifics of the speech goal.
- B. Outline main points as complete sentences.
- C. Order the main points following an organizational pattern that meets audience needs.
- D. Add supporting information.
- E. Create section transitions to serve as guidelines.
- F. Create an introduction that gets attention, sets the tone, creates goodwill, builds your credibility, and leads into the body of the speech.
- G. Create a conclusion that both summarizes the material and leaves the speech on a high note.
- H. Review and complete speech outline.



Create Visual Aids

V. Create visual aids to clarify, emphasize, and dramatize verbal information. (Chapter 9)



Practice Speech Wording and Delivery

VI. Practice speech wording and delivery. (Chapters 10 and 11)

- A. Practice until the wording is clear, vivid, emphatic, and appropriate.
- B. Practice until the delivery is enthusiastic, vocally expressive, fluent, spontaneous, and direct.
- C. Continue practicing until you can deliver your speech extemporaneously within the time limit.

The fourth step is to organize and develop your material in a way that is best suited to your audience. Since a personal experience is like a story, there isn't likely to be a need for a typical outline of an introduction, main points, and a conclusion. Eric began his speech with a description of his friend. The body of his speech was the recounting of the funeral experience. And his conclusion was the "punch line" to his personal experience.

If you are called upon to give a narrative/personal experience speech, build your speech around the following elements:

- *A narrative usually has a point to it, a climax to which the details build up.* Think carefully about the point of your story.
- *A narrative is developed with supporting details that give background to and embellish the story so that the point has maximum effect.* Try to select and develop details that heighten the impact.
- *A narrative often includes dialogue.* A story is more enjoyable to an audience when the story unfolds through dialogue.
- *A narrative often is humorous.* Most narratives have elements of humor. If what happened can be made funny, the humor will hold attention and help establish a bond between speaker and audience.

Step five is creating visual aids for your speech. Visual aids are less likely to be used in a short narrative speech like Eric's.

The sixth step is to focus on practicing the language and the delivery of your speech. In a narrative, make sure you are being as specific as possible in relating the details so that the audience will have a clear and vivid mental picture of the events. Eric used clear and vivid language to tell his story. He also practiced his speech several times until he was comfortable with his ability to tell the story.

Using the Speech Assignment

This is an excellent opportunity to introduce students to the public speaking environment in a nonthreatening way. Variations include

1. Doing this assignment in pairs, with each student helping the other prepare and practice.
2. Doing the assignment with minimal warning, having only some in-class time to prepare.
3. You may wish to have students view the sample speech on the Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM prior to doing this exercise.

Student Workbook

Chapter 2 in the *Student Workbook* includes alternative first speech assignment activities. These can be done in class or as outside assignments.

Instructor's Resource Manual

The *Instructor's Resource Manual* has additional exercises and tips on how to evaluate student speeches. Effective, constructive criticism is crucial for the first speech assignment, as it will influence student achievement in later speeches.

SPEECH assignment

Preparing a Narrative/Personal Experience Speech

Prepare a two- to four-minute personal experience (narrative) speech. Think about experiences you have had that were humorous, suspenseful, or dramatic, and select one that you think your audience would enjoy hearing about.

The sample speech that follows is an example of a student speech that was given to meet this assignment. You can watch, listen to, and evaluate this sample speech under Speech Interactive on your Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM. Click on the Speech Interactive icon to launch the video and audio of this speech.





The Funeral

About two years ago, my friend Dan moved to Minneapolis and about two months later he died in a motorcycle accident. It wasn't anybody's fault—he skidded on a patch of oil. But he left a lot of friends here and everyone took the news really hard. Dan was just so full of life—he really was a great guy to be around, always telling jokes, singing songs, his bands. He was a great guy to hang out with. He had “King of Saturday Night” tattooed across his back in giant letters. And that's how we all really liked to think of him. He was the guy you always wanted to spend your Saturday nights with, because he knew how to have a great time.

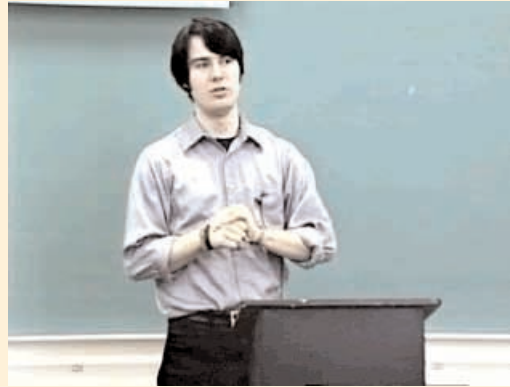
So it was hard on all of us when we found out. The funeral was very difficult. We all showed up. It was really rough—it was really hard seeing him in the casket like that so quiet and so unlike we remembered him. They had taken out all of his piercings and they had covered up all of his tattoos for his family. But, uh, you know, it was still the Dan we all knew. It was just really hard to see him like that.

The crowd at church was actually a pretty funny group. The first couple of rows in church were all Dan's family, all middle-aged, middle-class white people in their suits and ties. And then the rest of the church was just a crazy assortment of people—blue hair, tattoos, and whatever anyone could come up with for nice funeral clothing, which in a lot of cases was just a clean T-shirt and a pair of jeans. That's all some people could do. And no one really minded. The service was really emotional, and, uh, it was really hard on all of us. Everyone was taking it really hard. And for a lot of us that wasn't really normal—we weren't really used to going through that with each other.

Um, but toward the end of the service, the Priest stood up to give his eulogy. We were all crying and trying not to cry. He stood up and said, “I know Dan was a musician. And I think if Dan was here today, he'd want to sing us a song.” And like I said we were all kind of busy with our own thoughts. We knew that this guy had never met Dan and didn't know him. But we were willing to put up with—we were willing to go along with it. But he paused, and he took out a sheet of paper and he said, “I think Dan would sing this song in particular for his friends and family. ‘Did you ever know that you're my hero. You're everything I wish I could be?’” And he just said it so matter of factly that as soon as I heard it, I started laughing. I couldn't stop myself. And I felt

awful about it, but I couldn't stop. And he just kept reading this song. The idea of Dan sitting on his motorcycle with tattoos and a cigarette hanging out of the corner of his mouth or standing up with one of his bands and singing this Bette Midler song was just so absurd to me that I just couldn't help just laughing out loud. And as the Priest kept reading the lyrics to this awful song, I looked around and everyone in the back of the church was just screaming laughing—falling out of their seats laughing, rolling in the aisles. And the Priest had no idea what was so funny. And the family certainly didn't think anything was funny about it. But, I think we all knew that it was the way Dan would have wanted it—if he was there he would have been laughing right along with us. It was one big last joke for him and it's really my last memory of Dan, and I can't think of a better way to say good-bye. ■

*Eric Wais*²³



Summary

All speakers feel nervous as they approach their first speech. Public speaking apprehension has been studied for a long time. Symptoms include physical, emotional, and cognitive reactions, which vary from person to person. The level of apprehension varies over the course of speaking. The level of anxiety experienced prior to speaking is called the anticipation reaction. The surge in anxiety experienced at the beginning of a speech is called the confrontation reaction. The gradual decline of this is called the adaptation reaction. Since at least some tension is constructive, our goal is not to get rid of nervousness but to learn how to cope with it. Because nearly everyone who speaks in public experiences some nervousness, we need to be aware of several realities. Despite nervousness, you can make it through your speech; moreover, listeners are not nearly as likely to recognize your fear as you might think. In addition, the more experience you get in speaking and the better prepared you are, the better you will cope with nervousness. In fact, experienced speakers learn to channel their nervousness in ways that help them to do their best.

Public speaking apprehension is to be expected, and you can use four techniques to minimize it. Communication orientation motivation (COM) techniques help speakers switch from a performance orientation (“everyone is watching me to find

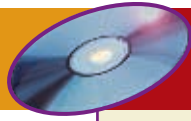
Paul is scheduled to give his first speech—one in which he is supposed to talk about a personal experience he has had. The more Paul realizes that his nervousness is being heightened by the personal nature of the topic, because he thinks his experiences are really ordinary and will bore the class. Suddenly he remembers his high school buddy, James. Now James was a wow—and man, did he have the stories. So Paul thinks, “Hey, I’ll just pretend that the “dead rat incident” happened to me. After all, no one knows it didn’t. So, Paul develops his speech around this experience that James had. It’s a great story, he delivers it well, and he receives an “A” on the assignment.

Is it ethical for Paul to relate the experience as his? Explain.

my mistakes”) to a communication orientation (“I have some really important and useful information I want to talk with audience members about”). Visualization is a technique that helps reduce apprehension by having speakers picture themselves being successful. Systematic desensitization teaches speakers deep relaxation techniques to use during visualization and in actual speech performances. Public speaking skills training teaches the processes and skills associated with speaking effectiveness so that apprehension due to unfamiliarity with effective speaking techniques is reduced. All four techniques have been found to reduce public speaking apprehension; however, speakers improve more when the technique used first is one that matches the immediate cause of their anxiety.

Effective speech planning reduces public speaking apprehension and increases speaking effectiveness. An effective speech plan is the product of six action steps. First, the speaker must develop a goal based on his or her own interest and expertise and an analysis of the audience. Second, the speaker must adapt the material to the audience. Third, the speaker must gather and evaluate information useful in reaching the speech goal. Fourth, the speaker must organize and develop supporting material. Fifth, the speaker may create visual aids to clarify, emphasize, and dramatize verbal information. Sixth, the speaker will practice wording until ideas are presented clearly, vividly, emphatically, and appropriately, and the speaker will practice speech delivery until the delivery is enthusiastic, vocally expressive, fluent, spontaneous, and direct.

A good opening assignment is a narrative/personal experience speech that is ungraded. A narrative is a speech that has a point to it, a climax to which the details build up. It is developed with supporting details that give background to and embellish the story so that the point has maximum effect. A narrative often includes dialogue and is usually humorous.



CHALLENGE ONLINE

Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM/Student Workbook

These quizzes and activities can be graded assignments or learning activities. The CD-ROM includes all Web sites mentioned in the text and annotations. The *Student Workbook* has paper versions of these forms and Web sites.

Use your Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM for quick access to the electronic study resources that accompany this text. Included on your CD-ROM is access to the Challenge of Effective Speaking Web site featuring Speech Builder Express at the Wadsworth Communication Café, InfoTrac College Edition, and a demo of WebTutor for *The Challenge of Effective Speaking*. The Web site offers chapter-by-chapter access to the Speech Preparation Action Step Activities, InfoTrac College Edition exercises, a digital glossary of key terms, Web links, Speech Preparation Forms, Speech Evaluation Checklists and quizzes. Review the key terms and complete the InfoTrac College Edition exercises on the book's Web site:

<http://www.wadsworth.com/product/0534563856>



InfoTrac College Edition Exercise

Visualization has been recognized as a means of improving performance in many areas, most specifically in athletics. Using InfoTrac College Edition, click on Subject Guide and type the word "visualization." Click on "search." Then under "Visualization (mental images)" click on "view Periodical references," where more than fifty articles are listed. Scroll down to and open the article "Visualization: The Mental Road to Accomplishment" by Dennis Best, August 1999, and look specifically for suggested procedures for using visualization in athletics that you can apply to speech making.

Key Terms

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| adaptation (27) | confrontation reaction (20) | speech goal (26) |
| adaptation reaction (20) | narrative (30) | speech plan (26) |
| anticipation reaction (20) | performance orientation (24) | systematic desensitization (24) |
| communication orientation (24) | public speaking apprehension (19) | visualization techniques (24) |
| communication orientation motivation techniques (COM) (24) | public speaking skills training (25) | |



Speech Interactive for Challenge

Using your Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM, click on Speech Interactive and then click on Eric to view Eric presenting his speech on “The Funeral,” which was discussed in this chapter. What are Eric’s strengths as a speaker? If you were giving the speech, what might you do differently to make it even better?



CNN Connection

The *CNN Connection* series of tapes offer several speeches by political and other prominent figures.

Wadsworth The Challenge of Effective Speaking Microsoft Internet Explorer

Thomson Learning • Introduction • Speech Menu • **Assignment** • Checklist • Analysis • HELP

Welcome

Web Site

webTUTOR

InfoTrac

Speech Interactive

Funeral

Watch this speech movie, and then complete the Checklist below and Answer questions 1-4 in the bottom of the box and, again, Yes, you can even compare your work to that of the author.

This Assignment

Eric's speech assignment was to prepare a 2- to 3-minute personal experience (narrative) speech that used supporting details and came to a climax.

Notes

- His speech can be found, as well as here on the CD.
- Although the usual session includes a graded speech, an *Excluded Checklist* is nevertheless provided here to be able to identify some of the strengths of the speech.

Wadsworth The Challenge of Effective Speaking CD-ROM