

HOW TO PREPARE A SPEECH



1ST RULE: START WITH A GOOD TOPIC

The first step in preparing a speech is to choose a topic. Here are five questions you need to ask yourself before choosing a good topic for your speech:

1. Is this topic interesting to me?
2. Will I enjoy doing research?
3. Will I enjoy talking about this topic?
4. Will this topic be interesting to my audience?
5. Am I passionate about the chosen topic?

You must be able to answer yes to all of these questions. Don't forget that your speech should be more than just words, as your audience will notice how you pronounce them. When you're truly invested in your topic, your speech will resonate with the audience.

2ND RULE: PROPER PREPARATION IS KEY

The next step will be to prepare your research. Start with a brainstorm by writing down everything you know about the topic and everything you would like to know. This is a great first step in outlining the goals and key points of your speech. According to the rules of the Public Speaking Contest, your speech must last between 3 and 5 minutes. This is crucial to remember when conducting your research to ensure you have ample information.

After choosing your topic, you must decide what kind of speech you will prepare before starting your research. Here are the different types of speech:

Informative speech. It's a speech that explains a topic. As a speaker, you want to explain a topic that the audience may be unfamiliar with.
Examples: the teacher who explains a new concept to the students; a travel guide who explains a tour.

Persuasive speech. It's a speech designed to promote an idea. As a speaker, you will provide facts and information. However, you must provide personal information. Think about how this topic can affect your audience and how it can influence their lives, families, or work.
Examples: the effects of smoking; the limitations and benefits of universal healthcare.

Entertaining speech. Obviously, it's a speech that aims to entertain. As a speaker, your goal is to provide information in an entertaining manner and, usually, with humour. You can make it personal by sharing your own experiences.
Examples: the lines of an actor on stage; a speech at a banquet; a toast at a wedding.

3RD RULE: AN EXTENSIVE RESEARCH OF THE TOPIC

For your research, focus on the objectives of your speech. Before you begin, decide on the main points in your speech. As a precaution, choose at least three subtopics that you want to discuss to support your original thesis or main objective. This will provide a solid foundation for your research. The information provided in your speech should be new and useful for you and your audience.

For example, if you want to give a persuasive speech on the effects of smoking, here are some possible subtopics:

1. the history of cigarettes and tobacco use;
2. the types of tobacco use (cigarettes, chewing tobacco or snuff);
3. the effects of tobacco on health; and
4. the effects of secondhand smoke.

There are many other possible subtopics on the effects of smoking, but you should focus on to the most important ones to ensure your research supports your original thesis or main point.

Depending on the type of speech you are preparing, decide where and how you will conduct your research. Will it be at the school library, public library, or computer lab? Perhaps you'll interview someone from your family, community, or another group. There are dozens of places where you can do your research. It is up to you to find the best place for you and your topic.

4TH RULE: THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAINSTORMING

Your ideas should flow effortlessly as you write your speech. To do this, it's important to structure your speech like any other document, with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

In your **introduction**, you present the topic of your speech. Imagine that the introduction looks like an inverted triangle. Start with a general statement or a brief overview of your topic. As you write, your sentences will become more precise until you reach the sentence describing the main objective of your speech.

The **body of the text** presents information, facts, and arguments to support your thesis. Each paragraph should contain about 5 sentences following this model:

- an introductory sentence;
- facts and information;
- clarification of the information, with a return to the main thesis; and
- a transition to the next paragraph or idea.

The **conclusion** of your speech refers to the end of your presentation. You can start the paragraph with “In conclusion...,” or something similar. It is important to let your audience know that you are almost finished. In this paragraph, you reiterate your main points and connect them to your thesis. To create a lasting impression, challenge your audience by saying: “The one thing I want you to remember from this speech is...”

5TH RULE: PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

As a speaker, you must spend as much time practising your speech as you do writing it. When you memorize it, give yourself enough time. If the teacher gives you two weeks for the Public Speaking Contest project, dedicate half of the time to memorizing and practising it. Here are some tips to make your task easier:

- Memorize your speech one section at a time. If you have trouble remembering certain points, use cue cards with keywords to help you (this is allowed in the Public Speaking Contest).
- Speak slowly to allow yourself to learn how to pronounce difficult words correctly. You will get used to pronouncing them correctly. Also, when you're nervous, you'll tend to speak faster. Take deep breaths, slow down, and focus.

- Do not forget about the volume of your voice. Do not use a monotone tone. Change your tone and volume from time to time appropriately.
- Show your emotions appropriately. Pause to create more impact and to allow your audience to absorb the information you have provided.