

## SPEECHCRAFT - IMPROMPTU SPEAKING – Speaking Without Preparation

What are the benefits of effective impromptu speaking skills?

- Improve oral expression of thought
- Develop confidence in public speaking
- Think quickly on your feet
- Develop leadership and communication skills

### Techniques to Delivering a Better Impromptu Speech

The following techniques can help to give you more confidence in giving impromptu speeches and that will in turn reduce any nerves or butterflies you might have at the time.

- **Give yourself time to prepare**

Take deep breaths

Rise slowly from your chair and walk slowly to the lectern (or stand behind and away from your chair)

Use this time to collect your thoughts and decide on the purpose and plan of your speech

Think about the opening sentence

**Remember:** You don't have to start the speech immediately

- **Feel confident**

Look around at audience and smile. Stand tall.

Don't slump, don't fidget, don't grasp the lectern, don't put hands in your pockets

Speak and act in a confident manner

- **Slow delivery**

Gives you time to think ahead

The audience has time to absorb and react to what you are saying

Helps you reduce umms and ahhs

- **Focus**

Keep the focus on the subject while talking

Don't think of any negatives (eg being unprepared)

Talk directly to the audience and adapt to their feedback

Maintain good eye contact with the audience

Be brief and to the point

Don't ramble or say too much on the subject

Speak at the audience's level

### Speech Structure - Opening, Body and Conclusion

An impromptu speech is simply a mini-speech and therefore it has an Opening, a Body and a Conclusion.

#### Opening

- Open by addressing the Chairman or Master of Ceremonies eg Mister/Madam Chairman
- Brief introduction/opening sentence – attention getting

#### Body

- Cover the main points (Try to find 1 or 2 central themes )
- Use clearly worded simple sentences and try to link the themes

#### Conclusion

- Be brief and look for an elegant closing that links back to the opening
- End by acknowledging the Chairman or Master of Ceremonies

### Sources of Content

- **Personalize**

This is the subject you know most about

Audience can relate more easily to personal topics - they probably have similar experiences

- **Your opinion**

- **Humour**

Breaks the ice with the audience and relaxes you

- **Other**

Current events, something you have read or seen (newspaper, book, TV), knowledge of pertinent facts

## Methods to Determine Content

The following methods are for guidance only. You don't have to use them however they may help you to think quickly on your feet. You may develop other techniques that suit your style of speaking better.

- **PREP Method**  
When asked to express an opinion - to inform, persuade or inspire
  - **Point** Make your point (Opening)
  - **Reason** State your reason for making the point (Body)
  - **Example** Give an example to justify your previous remarks (Body)
  - **Point** Drive home the point again. Links the conclusion back to the opening.
- **Past, Present, Future Method (Body)**  
When asked for your comment on a particular topic
  - **Point** Make your point (Opening). Be brief.
  - **Past** What happened in the past. Reflect on a past issue. (Body)
  - **Present** What is happening today (Body)
  - **Future** What will/could happen in the future (Body)
  - **Point** Drive home your opening point. Reminds audience what the point of your speech was all about. (Conclusion) Be brief
- **Who, What, How, When, Where (Body)**  
When asked to role play or to use your imagination
- **Other Methods (Body)**
  - Cause, Effect, Remedy
  - Before, The Event, The Result
  - Local, State, Federal
  - Good, Bad, Indifferent

## Be Prepared

There is a good chance that you will be unexpectedly called upon to give an impromptu speech at a Toastmasters (Table Topics) or other (business, club or P&F etc) meeting. Try and pre-empt possible topics that may arise, such as those from current events or contentious issues. Have an emergency speech available.

## Speech Time

In Toastmasters:	Club level (Table Topics)	90 secs
	Competition level	2 minutes
	Speechcraft	60 secs
	Elsewhere	3 to 5 mins (whatever seems appropriate to occasion)

## Summary

- Deliberately rise from your chair very slowly and pause for a moment. Use this time to decide on the purpose and plan of your speech
- Keep the focus on the subject while talking, and don't think about any negatives such as being unprepared or that you will look or sound foolish. Rather, think about the subject. Look for opportunities to bring in humour.
- Talk directly to the audience and adapt to audience feedback.
- Be brief and to the point. Guard against rambling and the temptation to say too much about the subject.
- Remember, this is a mini speech so try to have an opening, a body and a conclusion. The conclusion should reflect back to the comments in the opening.
- Always try to speak and act in a confident manner.
- Don't rush
- Address the Chairman before and after the speech