More Speaking Tips

The first 10 speech projects in this manual provide much information on speaking. Following is additional information that may help as you prepare and deliver different speeches.

Sample Speech Outline
Several types of speech outlines are commonly used by experienced speakers. These are discussed in Projects 3 and 7. Yet all of them are organized into an opening, a body, and a conclusion.

Here is a very basic outline that illustrates the structure of a speech containing three main points:

A. Opening
   1. Captures audience attention
   2. Leads into speech topic

B. Body
   1. First point
      a. Statement of fact
      b. Supporting material
   2. Second point
      a. Statement of fact
      b. Supporting material
   3. Third point
      a. Statement of fact
      b. Supporting material

C. Conclusion
   1. Review or summary
   2. Call to action or memorable statement

The speech body should contain at least three main points that you want to express about your topic. Each point should be clearly stated, illustrated, and supported. Act as though your audience is not at all familiar with your topic; don’t assume they know anything. Devote a similar amount of time to each main point, otherwise the audience may consider it less important. Arrange your points in logical order.

How to Make Your “Butterflies” Fly in Formation
Nervousness, speech anxiety, stage fright, platform panic—it’s known by many names, but it’s a problem every speaker must confront. Actually, feeling nervous before a speech is healthy. It shows that your speech is important to you and that you care about doing well. But unless you learn to manage and control nervousness, it can keep you from becoming an effective speaker.

Here’s how you can make your “butterflies” fly in formation:

1. Know the room. Become familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early and walk around the speaking area. Stand at the lectern, speak into the microphone. If you’ll be using visual aids, practice with them. Walk around the area where the
audience will be seated. Walk from where you'll be seated to the lectern, as you will when you're introduced.

2. Know the audience. If possible, greet audience members as they arrive and chat with them. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

3. Know your material. If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness naturally will increase. Practice your speech and revise it until you can present it with ease.

4. Relax. You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for four to five seconds, then slowly exhale. Repeat 10 to 20 times. Or do physical exercises. Stand straight, arms extended over your head. Then bend over and touch your toes. Repeat 10 times. Stand with your feet apart. Extend your arms out at your sides, then turn your head and torso to the left. Return to center, then turn to the right. Repeat 10 times. To relax facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, then close them tightly. Repeat five times.

5. Visualize yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience applauds. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. Picture the audience applauding as you finish and return to your seat. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.

6. Realize that people want you to succeed. Audiences want speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They want you to succeed — not to fail. This is especially true in your Toastmasters Club, where your audience will always be understanding and supportive.

7. Don't apologize. Most of the time your nervousness doesn't show at all. If you don't say anything about it, nobody will notice. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you'll only be calling the audience's attention to it. Had you remained silent, your listeners may not have noticed anything.

8. Concentrate on the message — not the medium. Your nervous feelings will dissipate if you focus your attention away from your own anxieties and outwardly toward your message and your audience.

9. Turn nervousness into positive energy. The same nervous energy that causes platform panic can be an asset to you. Harness it, and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.

10. Gain experience. Experience builds confidence, which is a key to effective speaking. Most beginning speakers find that their anxieties decrease after each speech they give.

**Table Topics**

The ability to "think and speak" on your feet is an important skill that will help you be successful. That's why the "table topics" portion of the Toastmasters Club meeting was developed. Table topics provides you with the opportunity to practice thinking and speaking on your feet. You learn how to present your thoughts in a clear, organized manner with a minimum of preparation.

The table topics portion of the Club's program is conducted by the topic master. The topic master announces a topic and calls on members, one at a time, who give impromptu one- to two-minute talks on the topic. Or the topic master may assign subjects individually.
You'll frequently be called upon to speak during the table topics portion of your Club's program. Following are tips to help you prepare for impromptu speaking:

1. Read. You will be able to respond better if you're knowledgeable about current events. Read major magazines and newspapers, and watch television newscasts.

2. Organize your thoughts. When you're given your topic, pause to decide what the main point of your response will be. For example, if you're asked to give your opinion about an issue, determine your viewpoint. Then support your viewpoint with two or three reasons.

3. Structure your thoughts. Like a prepared speech, an impromptu talk has an opening, body, and conclusion.

4. Remain calm. Remember, your audience will think you are confident if you appear confident.

Toastmasters International's table topics handbook, "Think Fast!" (Catalog No. 1315), can help you. Consult your Club's Supply Catalog for order information.

**How to Introduce a Speaker**

Nearly everyone will be called upon at some time to introduce a speaker. The skill you develop in your Club, especially when you are Toastmaster of the meeting, will be valuable to you in the future.

Every speaker deserves a thoughtful and helpful introduction. The best introductions are two-way, just as personal introductions are. You introduce the speaker to the audience and the audience to the speaker, establishing a common bond between them, a basis of mutual views and interests.

An introduction is a mini-speech — less than a minute in your Toastmasters Club — which contains all the elements of a full speech.

It has an opening, which grabs the audience's attention and makes them aware of the importance of the upcoming subject.

It has a body, explaining:

- Why this subject?
- Why this speaker?
- Why this audience?
- Why at this time?

It has a conclusion, which in this case, is the lead-in to your actually presenting the speaker.

Your introduction should tell the audience about the expertise of the speaker and give relevant background information. You should set the mood of the audience for this particular speech, an especially challenging task if there is a marked change from the mood of the preceding talk.

While covering these points, be careful not to give the speaker's speech. Allusions to the topic will arouse audience interest without taking away from the speaker's impact. Build expectation and end your introduction when interest peaks. Weave the speaker's name into the introduction as much as possible (unless it is a surprise name the audience will recognize), so the audience will clearly relate this speaker with this topic. Above all, don't overdo it. Say what needs to be said, and then sit down.

Obviously, an introduction requires almost as much preparation as a full speech. You will need to contact the speaker in advance and discuss the relevant information about speech and speaker. You should then make an outline of your introduction and rehearse it. Good preparation will clearly
show, and both the audience and the speaker will appreciate it.

For more information, read the Toastmasters International pamphlet, “Introducing the Speaker” (Catalog No. 111).

**Visual Aids**

Visual aids can be powerful tools for effective communication. You are encouraged to use them whenever they might enhance a speech. Why use visuals? They have five important benefits:

1. **They increase understanding.** Ours is a visual age. Most of what people learn is ingested through their eyes - not their ears. Visual aids help you convey messages in the dimension best suited to clear understanding.

2. **They save time.** Information presented visually is received and processed by the brain faster than a verbal message. Visual aids are especially useful in helping people quickly understand complex or abstract ideas.

3. **They enhance attention.** People remember an average of just 10 percent of a spoken message a week after it's presented. However, they remember up to two thirds of what they both see and hear.

4. **They promote attentiveness.** People think much faster than you speak, so their minds tend to wander during a speech. Visuals help keep them focused on your message; they also add variety and interest to a presentation.

5. **They help control nervousness.** Displaying visual aids gives you purposeful physical activity that lets your body process nervous energy without distracting the audience.

**TYPES OF VISUAL AIDS**

Visuals range from simple hand held objects to expensive multimedia extravaganzas. Your choice for a particular speech should depend on several factors, including:

- The information you wish to convey
- The size of the audience
- The physical environment (meeting room)
- The equipment available to you
- The time available to prepare visuals
- The amount of money you can afford to spend.

Here are the types of visual aids most commonly used in Toastmasters Club speeches:

- **Physical objects, props, and models.** One of the simplest and easiest visual aids to use is a prop or object held in your hand or otherwise displayed during a speech. These visuals are usually very easy to carry and set up, require little or no advance preparation, and can effectively illustrate your message. However, they are suitable only when the audience is small and close to you. Avoid passing objects around the audience; this is highly distracting unless you're talking about the object while it's being handled.

- **Whiteboards.** These aren't easily portable, but they are readily available in many meeting rooms. They are useful for displaying simple lists, graphs, and diagrams, and for recording audience responses. However, they require thorough cleaning before each use and they can reflect light. Whiteboards are suitable only for small audiences.

- **Charts and posters.** These are versatile, inexpensive, portable, easy to obtain, and easy to use. They may be used for any simple visual message, and they offer high contrast and the use of many colors. They are most
effective when prepared in advance and displayed on an easel before a small audience. Variations include magnetic boards, flannel boards, and boards with Velcro adhesive.

**Flip charts.** These are highly useful visual aids for a small audience. They enable you to record audience response and easily refer back to previous pages. Flip chart pages can be prepared in advance — write on every second or third page so succeeding visuals won’t show through. You can use colorful crayons or felt-tipped pens, but avoid using dark ink that “bleeds” through the paper. Using a flip chart effectively involves some skill and patience.

**Overhead transparencies.** Common as training and meeting aids, overheads aren’t often used for Toastmasters Club speeches, because the equipment is expensive and not always readily available. You can use overheads with a relatively large audience and in a fully lighted room. They are usually prepared in advance, but you can write on them without turning your back on the audience. Using overheads effectively takes practice and skill. They also require an electrical outlet, as well as a screen that can be tilted to avoid distortion.

**35 mm. slides.** Slides are suitable for an audience of any size and offer outstanding color and image clarity. Duplicates can be made easily and cheaply, and slide projectors are readily available (although fairly expensive). Slide presentations require careful, often time-consuming planning and preparation, along with skill, practice, and rehearsal. Custom-made slides, such as special graphs and visual effects, are expensive and hard to obtain. Slide projectors require an electrical outlet, and are more likely to jam.

**LCD panels.** An LCD panel resembles a square plate which you set on top of an overhead projector and connect to your computer. Then you send the graphics you have created on your computer to the panel, where it is projected onto the screen. No overheads or slides are required. For them to be effective the room must be dark. You also must be familiar with a computer graphics program and have the right equipment.

**TIPS FOR USING VISUALS EFFECTIVELY**

1. **Make sure they are visible.** When preparing visuals, make letters large — a good rule of thumb is one-half inch for each 10 feet between the visual and the farthest audience member. Print neatly, keep lines horizontal, and use plenty of spacing between words. Display your visuals high enough so all can see, and avoid standing in front of them. Test visibility by viewing your visuals from various spots in the room before your speech.

2. **Keep them simple.** Use a simple visual aid to illustrate a single point. Make graphs and diagrams simple and accurate, giving each a title and labeling key components. With writing, follow the “seven-seven rule” — no more than seven lines and no more than seven words per line.