

PREPARING FOR SPEAKING IN PUBLIC*

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Abstract

Public speaking can be a terrifying experience for many, yet it is an excellent way to express an opinion, especially if the comments made are well thought out and the speaker is prepared to deliver the speech. In this lesson, students will take steps to prepare a simple speech that will be given at a later time.

Communication Skills/Expressing Yourself

Preparing for Speaking in Public

Objective: The student will complete items on a checklist in preparation for making an informal speech.

Comments:

Public speaking can be a terrifying experience for many (most?) people, yet it is an excellent way to express an opinion, especially if the comments made are well thought out and the speaker is prepared to deliver the speech. In this lesson, students will take steps to prepare a simple speech that will be given at a later time.

Introductory Activities:

- Have students name or list some people who are good public speakers, or people whom they enjoy listening to (perhaps a stand-up comedian, favorite teacher, etc.)
- Have the students' list reasons why it might be scary to speak in front of people.
- Have students suggest techniques that make a good speaker seem interesting or easy to listen to (humor, interesting topic, interesting voice, etc.)

Activity:

The student is to select a topic he or she finds interesting or might know something about. If the topics on the worksheet "Preparing for Speaking in Public" do not seem appropriate for your class, have students suggest others. The students do not all have to pick the same topic. Students will then go through the checklist, item involved in giving the actual speech (perhaps 3 to 5 minutes).

Materials: Have resources available such as books, encyclopedias, newspapers or pamphlets.

Also, instruct students to obtain note cards (3 x 5) and other materials (posters, markers, rulers, etc.) if they are going to include visual aids.

Time: You may want to plan several days or a week to complete this activity. Depending on how much help the students need, this activity might take more time than the usual writing activities. You may want to assign specific due dates to items on the checklist. Have students be available to monitor each other's progress.

Discussion: As students progress through the checklist, monitor them carefully to make sure they are not bogged down on certain steps. Some will need help with outlining, writing good introductions and

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conclusions, and preparing the visual aids. At this point, it is more important that they go through the steps and complete each item even if it is not completely “polished”. An outline could be as simple as writing the topic sentence from each paragraph on individual

note cards. Go through the following discussion questions to help students focus on the activity:

1. Was it difficult to select a topic?
2. Were your resources readily available? Did you find resources other than printed material? (such as individuals)
3. Can you read your rough draft?
4. Do you feel you have outlined you speech adequately? What information should be put on the note cards?
5. How can you keep your note cards organized? (number them, color-code)
6. Why is it important to have a goof introduction and conclusion?
7. What types of visual aids would be good for your presentation? Why?
8. How many times would you need to practice your speech before you feel comfortable with it?
9. Where are some places or who are some people who could help you feel comfortable with practicing your speech?
10. Why is it important to look at your audience rather than just reading the cards?
11. Why is it important to speak slowly and to remember to breathe? (Slows you down, makes sure people can understand you).

Extension Activities:

1. If students are having particular difficulties with some aspect of this assignment (e.g., outlining, writing a conclusion, practicing), pair students with a buddy who is more competent and allow them to work together.
2. To make interesting visual aids, give students time to work in the computer lab (if available) or use other resources to create charts, graphs, or pictures.

Evaluation:

- a. State the topic of your speech.
- b. List at least two important features that will be included in your speech (visual aids, interesting statistics, etc.)

Preparing for Speaking in Public

Directions: Select a topic about which you feel strongly or know a lot about. Go through the following checklist, marking off each item as you have completed or thought through what you plan to do.

Suggested Topics:

- Professional Athletes Make too Much Money
 - Students Should Have More Voice in the Way They Are Graded
 - Ways We Can Stop Pollution in Our Community
 - Exotic Animals Should Not Be kept as Pets
 - Why We Need a Girls’ Football Team
1. _____ I have selected a topic.
 2. _____ I have several resources (people, newspapers, library books, etc.) to get information.
 3. _____ I have jotted down some Ideas about what I want to say.
 4. _____ I have a rough draft outline of what I want to say.
 5. _____ I have a more finished copy of the outline.
 6. _____ I have put my outline on note cards.

7. _____ I have a good introduction.
8. _____ I have a good conclusion.
9. _____ I have some visual aids (charts, pictures, slides, etc.)
10. _____ I have practiced reading my speech.
11. _____ I practically know the speech without looking at my cards.
12. _____ I have practiced the speech, remembering to look occasionally.
13. _____ I have practiced the speech, remembering to slow down and breathe occasionally.
14. _____ I have practiced the speech, giving it in front of a friend.
15. _____ I feel that I am ready to give my speech to a real audience.