

## **THEME WITH THE PREPARED SPEECHES**

### **STEP # 1: SPEECH TOPIC – PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

Think about your speech project objectives and how a particular topic can help you achieve them.

**See more about speech topic selection in this article ([Click this link](#)).**

Write down how the topic can help you with the project objectives in a sentence or two. If you need help coming up with speech topics, ask coaches.

### **STEP # 2: YOUR EXCITEMENT FOR THE SPEECH TOPIC**

- What prompted you to select this as your speech topic?
- What do you like about it?
- What makes you think about it?

Answer it in one or two sentences. The idea is to keep the passion, excitement, or concern behind the speech topic in mind while preparing for the presentation. Think about it and write down your first cut at the answer as you start the process; it will help you.

If a different answer emerges for you while preparing for the speech, revise it.

### **STEP # 3: DEVELOP YOUR SPEECH OUTLINE**

The following components can help develop a clear point. You don't necessarily have to develop them in the same order.

#### **3-a: TAKE AWAY FROM THE PRESENTATION**

What is your key takeaway from this presentation? Or, what is the main idea of this speech? Answer it by completing one of the following two sentences.

1. I want my audience to
2. I want to

Examples:

1. I want my audience to understand how nanotechnology is impacting our lives.
2. I want to explain how nanotechnology is impacting our lives.
3. I want to inspire my audience to learn more about nanotechnology.
4. I want my audience to see how my vacation trips help me understand different cultures and ways of life.
5. I want my audience to appreciate the thrill I had from the different places I visited.
6. I want to show how much I enjoy spending time with my family on vacation.
7. I want my audience to understand the importance of maintaining good posture.
8. I want to describe how basketball is making a difference in my life.
9. I want to share what earning the 3rd-degree black belt test at Taekwondo means.
10. I want to inspire my audience to join the Boy Scouts (or the Girl Scouts).
11. I want my audience to see how the Boy Scouts can help them become better leaders.
12. I want to show how I enjoy playing video games.
13. I want my audience to understand how video games positively impact youth.

**Note:** The examples in the above list – #2 & #3, #4, #5 & #6, #10 & #11, or #12 & #13 – are related but have different messages and would therefore be very different speech presentations.

### **3-b: BRAINSTORM IDEAS**

Jot down all that comes to your mind – a list of points or paragraphs – however it flows for you.

While doing it, if your takeaway (step # 2) changes, revise it as you see fit.

If you are used to writing paragraphs, what would be the idea that each paragraph might have developed?

### **3-c: PICK AND CHOOSE IDEAS – SEQUENCE THEM**

Start with your presentation's main idea or takeaway (#3-a)

Which of your ideas from #3-b would help?

Which of your ideas from #3-b would **NOT** help? Move them to the side.

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String together what you have chosen to keep or include in an outline like the following:

### **Part I – Opening**

- Begin with something that will capture the audience’s attention or create intrigue for your message.
- Introduce your topic.
- Develop a brief transition statement to introduce what you will discuss next.

### **Part II – Main Body**

- Main point 1 – transition
- Main point 2 – transition
- Main point 3 – transition

### **Part III – Conclusion**

- Reinforce your overall theme.
- Close with impact.
- Food for thought: what would help me make the conclusion memorable for my audience?

Developing your speech outline can be an iterative process. Feel free to go back and revise it while you prepare and practice.

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## **STEP # 4: SPEECH OPENING**

Try your speech opening out loud; feel it. Revise it as you go so it flows naturally for you. Practice it at least a few times. Bring energy and enthusiasm to your speech opening.

If you need to revise the speech theme or outline while practicing the speech opening aloud, do so. It’s totally okay and normal if you feel like changing the speech while trying the opening – you aren’t the only one – you aren’t the first one.

Practice presenting your speech opening at least three times, and [use our engagement techniques](#) (more on it is in this link – click on it.)

## **STEP # 5: SPEECH CONCLUSION OR ENDING**

Please think of how this topic can relate to people in your audience personally, or what they can use it for themselves, or a lasting impression you would like to leave, so that they will remember your speech.

Try your conclusion out loud; feel it. Revise it as you go so it flows naturally for you. Practice it at least a few times.

If you need to change the speech outline while practicing the opening and conclusion, that is okay and recommended. Speech preparation is an iterative process.

## **STEP # 6: SPEECH TITLE**

Questions or ideas to consider to select your speech title:

- Avoid giving away your speech with the title. You want your audience to listen to your presentation to see what it is. A speech title, in that regard, can be very different from the title of a written essay or a book. Using the title to summarize what is in the article for a written piece probably makes sense. A speech title, on the other hand, can be a tool to intrigue your audience.
- The title could be the word(s) for a key idea or theme you develop in your speech.
- The title could be the surprise element or a climax you develop in your speech.
- Maybe weave the title into your conclusion.
- What is a critical idea for the audience to understand your perspective? Make it your speech title.
- Tie the title to your crucial takeaway for them. It will help you reinforce your speech's purpose and drive the point home.

**Action Item:** Write down your idea and angle for the speech title. What is your speech title, and what was your thought process to decide on it?

## **STEP # 7: YOUR OVERALL THEME WITH THE PRESENTATION**

1. Think about steps #1 and #2 one more time. What excited you about this speech topic? What is your intended takeaway from it?
2. Do steps #3, #4, #5, and #6 help you achieve your speech objectives? Revise them as required.
3. Make sure to be clear and explicit about where you are going with your speech title. If your audience couldn't understand the meaning of your speech title from your presentation, you missed an opportunity to make a strong connection and make your message memorable.

Split your preparation over multiple days; clarifying your theme and message will work wonders.

**Action Item:** Write your theme in one or two sentences in this step.

## **STEP # 8: PROJECT OBJECTIVES (AGAIN 😊)**

Think about your speech objectives once more. Practice.

For example:

1. If it is about using body language, consider when, where, and how you can integrate it into your delivery.
2. If it is about developing vocal variety, practice emphasizing keywords using the “stretch” technique, delivering dialogue in your speech, varying tonality, using pauses, changing projection, etc.
3. If it is about persuading or inspiring your audience, practice emotional engagement and bring out your connection to or passion for the speech topic.
4. If it is about using descriptive language, prepare and practice vivid descriptions, metaphors, similes, rhetorical devices, and other techniques.

**Action Item:** Share in 3-5 sentences your plan to implement ideas for the project objectives.

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## **NOTE ON VISUAL AIDS**

1. Have a clear plan for how you think the visual aid will support your idea. Why and how will a visual aid add value? It will probably complicate your life and dilute your presentation if you can't clearly explain why you need it.

2. A PowerPoint or Keynote slide presentation isn't the only visual aid option. Bring a project you might have worked on if the speech concerns that. Use an easel with a chart and write/draw/develop it as you speak, like a classroom chalk talk. Bring something printed for everyone in the audience, so they can see and follow it when you talk.
3. Q: "What if I use slides to list my main points to develop?"  
A: I'd use it only if you think it will help you reinforce your message for them. If you use visual slides to remind yourself what is next, a much easier and simpler thing is to bring small handwritten flashcards. It will probably save you time and effort. It will also help you focus on your delivery.
4. When you use PowerPoint or Keynote, remember that you are the presenter, not the TV screen. TV and your slides are tools to help you, not replace you. Avoid reading word-for-word what is on your visuals. Or else your audience can get bored.

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