

How do I plan My Speech?

The first step to planning your speech is to choose a topic. It's important you choose a topic you know about or at least can do the relevant research for because if you're passionate and knowledgeable about the topic, it will come through in your speech.



Research

Once you know what you want to talk about, you'll need to do lots of research, probably much more than you think. Try to use a range of sources for your research; don't just rely on the internet. If it's appropriate, gather a mix of facts and statistics but also opinions and people's points of view on a topic. Then put all of your information into a concept map so you can begin to sequence it.

Purpose and audience

Being clear on your purpose for the speech and knowing your audience will allow you to tailor your content and register to the situation. For example, it may not be appropriate to use humour if you are presenting to officials or if you are discussing a serious topic, but you may want to use it if you are talking to your peers.

Your message

At the heart of every good speech is a message. Think carefully about what your message is before you begin to write your speech. For example, you may want to persuade your audience to take up your favourite sport, ensure they are aware of the dangers of relying on technology too much or point out the flaws in our justice system. Whatever your message, you must make sure the audience hear it clearly and that they come away from your talk understanding a little more about the topic.

It is always a good idea to plan the structure of your talk carefully. You need to think about the beginning, the middle and the end. You might want to structure your talk as follows: Introduction The first 30 seconds of your talk are really important. In that time, you must grab the attention of the audience and

engage their interest in what you have to say. This can be done in a number of different ways. For example, you could raise a thought-provoking question, make an interesting or controversial statement, recite a relevant quotation or even recount a joke. Depending on your audience, you will have to decide what you think is most appropriate.

- Start with a welcoming introduction that tells the audience who you are and outlines the main topic and why it is important to you.

- Try to give a comment, idea or statistic that will immediately interest the audience. Main body Once you have won the attention of the audience, you should move seamlessly to the middle of your speech. In this section, you will need to make a number of well-developed points and, where possible, each new point should build upon the previous one.

- For a five-minute speech, it is sensible to have five or six well developed ideas, views or arguments that are logically sequenced with carefully selected connectives and topic sentences to join the points together and move the talk on.

- Consider quality over quantity here; don't overwhelm your listeners with countless points. It is better to make a small number of points well than have too many, none of which are made satisfactorily.

- Conclusion Like your opening, the closing of your talk must contain some of your strongest material. Try to see the closing of your speech as a final opportunity to get your message across to your audience.

- You need a conclusion that purposefully summarises the main points of the talk and leaves the audience with a thorough understanding of the topic or issues discussed. You may also want to give them information as to where they can find out more about the topic: a website, a book they could read, or a phone number to call.