THIRD EDITION

A Speaker's Guidebook

Text and Reference

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Bedford / St. Martin's
Boston ◆ New York

For Bedford/St. Martin's

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Composition: Stratford Publishing Services, Inc.
Printing and Binding: Quebecor World Taunton Press

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2005934864

Manufactured in the United States of America.
1 0 9 8 7 6
f e d c b a

For information, write: Bedford/St. Martin's, 75 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116 (617-399-4000)

ISBN-10: 0-312-44318-8

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-44318-4

Acknowledgments
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Speaker's Reference
Getting Started with Confidence

1. Becoming a Public Speaker

Recognize the Many Benefits of Public Speaking

- Enhance your professional and personal goals. (p. 6)
- Aid your work as a student. (p. 7)
- Learn to share your values and explore the values of others. (p. 8)
- Hone your critical thinking and listening skills. (p. 8)

Recognize the Similarities between Public Speaking and Other Forms of Communication

- As in *conversation*, you attempt to make yourself understood, involve and respond to your conversational partner, and take responsibility for what you say. (p. 9)
- As in *small group communication*, you address a group of people who are focused on you and expect you to clearly discuss issues that are relevant to the topic and to the occasion. (p. 9)
- As in *mass communication*, you must understand and appeal to audience members' interests, attitudes, and values. (p. 9)

Recognize the Differences between Public Speaking and Other Forms of Communication

- Opportunities for feedback are fewer than in conversation or in small group communication, and greater than in mass communication. (p. 9)
- The level of preparation required is greater than in other forms of communication. (p. 10)
- The degree of formality tends to be greater than in other forms of communication. (p. 10)

As You Prepare Your Speeches, Consider the Speech Context

- The speech context—the rhetorical situation—includes anything that influences the speaker, the audience, the speech, the occasion, or the situation. (p. 12)

Set Clearly Defined Goals for Your Speeches

- Establish a set of goals early in the speechmaking process. (p. 13)
- Keep a clear focus in mind. (p. 13)

Don't View Your Speech as Complete Until You've Assessed the Outcome

- Ask yourself whether you accomplished what you set out to do. (p. 13)
- Use constructive feedback for self-evaluation and improvement. (p. 13)

Draw on the Familiar Skills of Conversation and Writing

- Consider that in both conversation and writing, you try to uncover the audience's interests and needs before speaking. (p. 14)
- Consider that in both conversation and writing, you check to make certain that you are understood, and adjust your speech to the listeners and to the occasion. (p. 14)
- Much of what you've learned about organizing written papers can be applied to organizing your speeches. (p. 14)

Foster a Sense of Inclusion in All of Your Speeches

- Try to identify and respectfully address the diversity of values and viewpoints held by audience members. (p. 15)
- Work toward making every member of the audience feel recognized and included in your message. (p. 15)

Recognize the Enduring Nature of the Study of Public Speaking

- The *canons of rhetoric*, a five-part speechmaking process developed in ancient Greece, remains relevant for today's public speaker. (p. 16)

2. Giving It a Try: Preparing Your First Speech

To Gain Confidence, Deliver a Brief First Speech

Use This Overview to Construct and Deliver the First Speech

- Select a topic. (p. 18)
- Analyze the audience. (p. 18)
- Determine the speech purpose. (p. 19)
- Compose a thesis statement. (p. 20)
- Develop the main points. (p. 20)
- Gather supporting materials. (p. 21)

- Separate the speech into its major parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. (p. 21)
- Outline the speech using coordinate and subordinate points. (p. 22)
- Consider presentation aids. (p. 24)
- Practice delivering the speech. (p. 24)

KEY TERMS

Chapter 1

dyadic communication
small group communication
mass communication
public speaking
source
encoding
receiver
feedback
decoding
audience perspective
message
channel
noise
shared meaning
rhetorical situation
rhetorical proofs
culturally sensitive speaker
ethnocentrism
cultural intelligence
rhetoric
canons of rhetoric
invention
arrangement
style
memory
delivery

Chapter 2

topic
audience analysis
general speech purpose
specific speech purpose
thesis statement
main points
supporting material
introduction
body
conclusion
coordinate points
subordinate points
presentation aids
vocal delivery
nonverbal delivery

1 Becoming a Public Speaker

As a student of public speaking, you are joining a very large and venerable club. People have studied public speaking in one form or another for well over two thousand years. Indeed, public speaking may be the single most studied skill in history. Since before the time of the great Greek thinker Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) and the brilliant Roman statesman and orator Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.), practitioners of this ancient art have penned countless volumes bearing advice on how to address an audience. Our own frenzied era of electronic communication has not diminished the need for this singularly effective form of communication, and public speaking remains an indispensable vehicle for the expression of ideas. Whatever people care deeply about, public speaking offers a way to communicate their concerns with others. Indeed, few other activities offer quite the same opportunity to make one's voice heard.

This guidebook contains the tools you need to create and deliver effective speeches, from brief presentations made to fellow students, co-workers, or fellow citizens to major addresses given to large audiences. Here you will discover the basic building blocks of any good speech, as well as the requirements for delivering presentations in a variety of specialized contexts ranging from the college psychology class to the business and professional arena. You'll also find proven techniques to build your confidence by overcoming the anxiety associated with public speaking.

The Power to Make Yourself Heard

The ability to speak confidently and convincingly in public is an asset to anyone who wants to take an active role in his or her classroom, workplace, or community. As you master the skills of public speaking, you'll find that it is a powerful vehicle for professional and personal growth.

ADVANCE YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS

Whatever your career, chances are that public speaking will be a valuable, even crucial, skill to master. As a report entitled "What Students Must Know to Succeed in the Twenty-first Century" states:

> Clear communication is critical to success. In the marketplace of ideas, the person who communicates clearly is also the person who is seen as thinking

clearly. Oral and written communication are not only job-securing, but job-holding skills.[1]

Skill in public speaking tops the list of skills that are sought after by many organizations. Dozens of surveys of corporate managers and executives reveal that oral communication is the most important skill they look for in a college graduate. In a recent survey of employers, for example, oral communication skills ranked first in such critical areas as interpersonal, analytical, teamwork, and computer skills (see Table 1.1).

TABLE 1-1 Top Personal Qualities/Skills Rated by Employers

1. Communication skills (written and verbal)
2. Honesty/integrity
3. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
4. Strong work ethic
5. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
6. Analytical skills
7. Motivation/initiative
8. Flexibility/adaptability
9. Computer skills
10. Detail-oriented
11. Leadership skills
12. Organizational skills

Source: "Communication Skills, Honesty/Integrity Top Employers' 'Wish List' for Job Candidates." *Job Outlook 2005 Survey,* Jan. 20, 2005. National Association of Colleges and Employers. www.naceweb.org/products/jo2005report.htm. Accessed June 12, 2005.

ACCOMPLISH PERSONAL GOALS

Perhaps more than any other course of study, public speaking offers both extraordinarily useful practical knowledge and skills that will set you firmly on the path of satisfying personal development. Whether you're concerned about the environment or lower taxes, public speaking offers a way to communicate your concerns with others. As an effective speaker, you will be better able to inform others about important issues and perhaps even persuade them to adopt your viewpoints.

ENHANCE YOUR CAREER AS A STUDENT

Preparing speeches involves numerous skills that you can use in other courses. Many forms of writing or composition, for example, also require that you research topics, analyze audiences, support and prove claims, and select patterns for organizing ideas. In addition, courses as diverse as engineering and art history include an oral-presentation component. Students in technical disciplines and the sciences are often called upon to explain complex information clearly and accessibly. Charts, graphs, and other presentation aids are often an important part of such presentations (Chapters 20–22 and 30), as are effective introductions and conclusions (Chapters 14 and 15). Identifying target audiences

and selecting appropriate modes of delivery are critical skills for everyone, and no less so for the business major who must communicate with multiple audiences, including co-workers, managers, clients, and customers (Chapters 6 and 28). Other applications of public speaking skills across the curriculum are the focus of Chapter 30, "Speaking in Other College Courses."

EXPLORE AND SHARE VALUES

A speech is an occasion for speaker and audience to focus on ideas and events about which they feel strongly, even passionately. Thus public speaking offers a unique opportunity to explore values, deep-seated feelings, and ideas about what is important in life. Public speaking enables you to express your values and explore those of others in a civil dialogue, regardless of whether the audience shares your viewpoint. Speaking to an audience whose knowledge or opinions differ from your own can be an equally and sometimes even more satisfying experience than addressing a like-minded audience, especially when speaker and listeners end up gaining a fuller appreciation of each other.

HONE CRITICAL THINKING AND LISTENING SKILLS

Public speaking training will sharpen your ability to reason and think critically. As you study public speaking, you will learn to construct claims and then present evidence and reasoning that logically support them. As you practice organizing and outlining speeches, you will become skilled at structuring ideas so that they flow logically from one to another. You will be able to identify the weak links in your thinking and work to strengthen them.

Public speaking training also hones the highly valued skill of listening. As you learn what goes into a good speech, you will become a more critical receiver of speeches. In a world in which misleading information is often disguised as logic for purposes of selling, deception, or exploitation, the ability to listen critically enables you to separate fact from falsehood.

Public Speaking as a Form of Communication

Communication scholars generally identify four categories of human communication: dyadic, small group, mass, and public speaking. **Dyadic communication** is a form of communication between two people, as in a conversation. **Small group communication** involves a small number of people who can see and speak directly with one another. A business meeting is an example of small group communication. **Mass communication** occurs between a speaker and a large audience of unknown people. In mass communication the receivers of the message are not present with the speaker, or they are part of such an immense crowd that there can be little or no interaction between speaker and listener. Television, radio news broadcasts, and mass rallies are examples of mass communication.

In **public speaking** a speaker delivers a message with a specific purpose to an audience of people who are present during the delivery of the speech. Public speaking always includes a speaker who has a reason for speaking, an audience that gives the speaker its attention, and a message that is meant to accomplish a specific purpose.[2] Public speakers address audiences largely without interruption and take responsibility for the words and ideas being expressed. Public speaking shares many similarities with dyadic, small group, and mass communication, but there are notable differences as well.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Like small group communication, public speaking requires that you address a group of people who are focused on you and expect you to clearly discuss issues that are relevant to the topic and to the occasion. As in mass communication, public speaking requires that you understand and appeal to the audience members' interests, attitudes, and values. And like dyadic communication, or conversation, public speaking requires that you attempt to make yourself understood, involve and respond to your conversational partners, and take responsibility for what you say.

A key feature of any type of communication is sensitivity to the listeners. Whether you are talking to one person in a coffee shop or giving a speech to a hundred people, your listeners want to feel that you care about their interests, desires, and goals. Skilled conversationalists do this, and so do successful public speakers. Similarly, skilled conversationalists are in command of their material and present it in a way that is organized and easy to follow, believable, relevant, and interesting. Public speaking is no different. Moreover, the audience will expect you to be knowledgeable and unbiased about your topic and to express your ideas clearly.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Although public speaking shares many characteristics of other types of communication, several factors distinguish public speaking from these other forms. These include (1) opportunities for feedback, (2) level of preparation, and (3) degree of formality.

Public speaking presents different opportunities for *feedback*, or listener response to a message, than does dyadic, small group, or mass communication. Opportunities for feedback are high both in conversation and in small group interactions. Partners in conversation continually respond to one another in back-and-forth fashion; in small groups, participants expect interruptions for purposes of clarification or redirection. However, because the receiver of the message in mass communication is physically removed from the messenger, feedback is delayed until after the event, as in TV ratings.

Public speaking offers a middle ground between low and high levels of feedback. Public speaking does not permit the constant exchange of information between listener and speaker that happens in conversation, but audiences can and do provide ample verbal and nonverbal cues to what they are thinking and feeling. Facial expressions, vocalizations (including laughter or disapproving noises), gestures, applause, and a range of body movements all signal the audience's response to the speaker. The perceptive speaker reads these cues and tries to adjust his or her remarks accordingly. Because feedback is more restricted in public speaking situations than in dyadic and small group communication, *preparation* must be more careful and extensive. Because you have fewer opportunities to know how your listeners feel about what you are saying, you must anticipate how they will react to your remarks. With each audience member focused on you, it is important to be in command of your material. In dyadic and small group communication, you can always shift the burden to your conversational partner or to other group members. Public speaking offers no such shelter, and lack of preparation stands out starkly.

Public speaking also differs from other forms of communication in terms of its *degree of formality*. In general, speeches tend to occur in more formal settings than do other forms of communication. Formal gatherings such as graduations, weddings, religious services, and the like naturally lend themselves to speeches; they provide a focus and give form—a "voice"—to the event. In contrast, with the exception of formal interviews, dyadic communication (or conversations) is largely informal. Small group communication also tends to be less formal than public speaking, even in business meetings.

Thus public speaking shares many features of everyday conversation, but because the speaker is the focal point of attention in what is usually a formal setting, listeners expect a more systematic presentation than they do in conversation or small group communication. As such, public speaking requires more preparation and practice than the other forms of communication.

Public Speaking and the Communication Process

Communication, whether between two people or between one person and an audience of a thousand listeners, is an interactive process in which people exchange and interpret messages with one another.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

In any communication event, including public speaking, several elements are present. These include the source, the receiver, the message, the channel, and shared meaning, as well as context, goals, and outcome (see Figure 1.1).[3]

The Source

The **source**, or sender, is the person who creates a message. The speaker transforms ideas and thoughts into messages and sends them to a receiver, or an au-

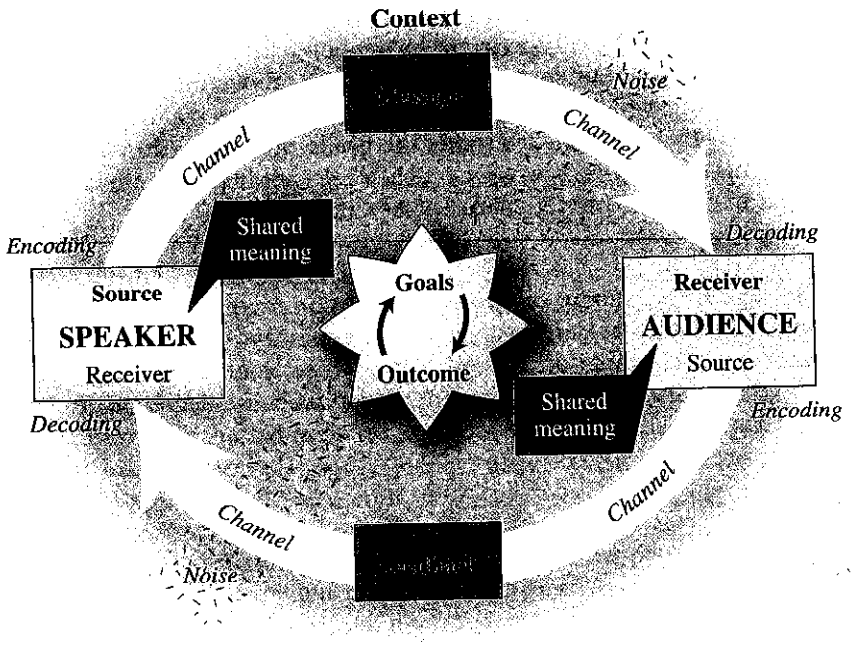

Figure 1.1 The Communication Process

dience. The speaker decides what messages are to be sent and how they will be sent. The process of organizing the message, choosing words and sentence structure, and verbalizing the message is called **encoding**. Encoding is this cumulative process of the source transforming thoughts into messages and delivering them to the audience.

The Receiver

The recipient of the source's message is the **receiver**, or audience. Although the speaker provides meaning for the message, the receiver interprets the message in ways that are unique to himself or herself. The process of interpreting the message is called **decoding**. Although a speaker may intend a message to carry a specific interpretation, audience members decode the meaning of the message selectively, based on their own experiences and attitudes. The audience's response to a message is called **feedback**, which can be conveyed both verbally and nonverbally. For example, an audience member may blurt out, "I don't think so," or may smile and nod. Feedback from the audience often indicates whether a speaker's message has been understood. Note that feedback is a message sent by the receiver to the speaker. In this way, the original receiver is now in the role of source (an audience member is encoding a message) and the original source is in the role of receiver (the speaker is decoding a message). This

change in roles between speaker and audience represents the interactive nature of public speaking.

Often, speakers deliver ineffective or inappropriate messages because they do not know or do not understand their audience (the receivers). Whether you are speaking to an audience of one or a hundred, always adopt an **audience perspective**—that is, try to determine the needs, attitudes, and values of your audience before you begin speaking. Let their relevant interests and background guide you in constructing your speech (see Chapter 6).

The Message

The **message** is the content of the communication process: thoughts and ideas put into meaningful expressions. Content can be expressed verbally (through the sentences and points of a speech) and nonverbally (through eye contact and gestures). Miscommunication can happen when audience members misinterpret the speaker's intended message, or when the speaker misreads audience feedback.

The Channel

The medium through which the speaker sends a message is the **channel**. If a speaker is delivering a message in front of a live audience, the channel is the air; sound waves deliver the message by traveling through the air. Other channels include telephones, televisions, computers, and written correspondence. If interference, or noise, occurs, the message may not be understood. **Noise** is any interference with the message. Although noise includes physical sounds such as a slamming door or ringing cell phone, it can also include psychological distractions such as heated emotions, and environmental interference such as a frigid room or the presence of unexpected people.

Shared Meaning

Shared meaning is the mutual understanding of a message between speaker and audience. Shared meaning occurs in varying degrees. The lowest level of shared meaning exists when the speaker has merely caught the audience's attention. As the message develops, depending on the method of encoding selected by the source, a higher degree of shared meaning is possible. Thus it is listener and speaker together who truly make a speech a speech—who co-create its meaning.

Context (Rhetorical Situation)

Context, or the rhetorical situation, influences all aspects of public speaking. Considering the context involves more than just audience analysis. The **rhetorical situation** includes anything that influences the speaker, the audience, or the occasion—and thus, ultimately, the speech itself. In the case of classroom speeches, context would include (among other things) the physical setting (e.g., a small classroom or large auditorium), the order and timing of speeches, recent events on campus or in the outside world, and the cultural orientations of

audience members. Considering the rhetorical situation allows the speaker to address audience concerns with sensitivity.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, speakers around the world adapted their already-prepared speeches to address the event; not doing so would have given audiences the impression that they were out of touch with an event with which everyone was preoccupied. Context is a way of examining each of the public speaking components in a holistic manner.

Goals

Goal setting is one of the primary tenets of most communication models. A clearly defined goal is a prerequisite for an effective speech. What is it that you want the audience to learn or do or believe as a result of your speech? How much ground do you want to cover? What do you personally want to achieve by delivering the speech? Establishing a set of goals early in the speechmaking process and writing them down in the form of concise sentences will help you proceed through speech preparation and delivery with a clear focus in mind. All the steps you take will be in concert with the clearly articulated goals that you have set. (See Chapter 7 for more on formulating the specific speech purpose.)

Outcome

A speech is not truly complete until its effects have been assessed and you decide whether you have accomplished what you set out to do. Usually this assessment is informal, as in listening to audience reactions. Sometimes it is more formal, as in receiving an evaluation from an instructor or from the audience itself. Constructive feedback is an invaluable tool for self-evaluation and improvement. (See Chapter 3 for further discussion and tips on giving and receiving constructive criticism.)

Learning to Speak in Public

Some people are so afraid of speaking in public that they refuse any opportunities that come their way. The result is often stalled careers and stilled personal voices. As described in Chapter 5, fear of public speaking is a widespread feeling—perhaps *the* number-one fear. Equally true, however, is the exhilaration people experience when they cope with the inevitable nervousness and go on to deliver successful speeches.

None of us is born knowing how to speak in public. Even seemingly effortless communicators such as Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and former U.S. President Ronald Reagan have worked hard—perhaps hardest of all—to achieve good results. Similarly, the employee who convincingly presents a new business strategy to his bosses, the lab worker who clearly describes her latest experiment to her colleagues, and the PTA parent who builds a groundswell of opposition to lengthening the school year all succeed because they have devoted time and effort to preparing their speeches.

DRAW ON FAMILIAR SKILLS

Learning any new skill—whether it's parachuting off mountain cliffs or speaking in public—involves mastering a set of techniques and then practicing them until you gain proficiency. For many activities, the process can be made less daunting by drawing on related skills that you already have. For example, you may think baking is difficult until you realize that, if you can read, use measurement tools, and follow directions carefully, you can indeed prepare many delicious recipes.

In a similar vein, consider the many "ingredients" public speaking shares with other things you've done for much of your life, such as conversation and writing.

Conversation and Public Speaking

Planning and executing the delivery of a speech, according to contemporary scholars, is much the same as engaging in a particularly important conversation. Although it requires more thinking and effort than ordinary conversation, delivering a speech rests on the same basic principles. Intuitively, you are already familiar with many of the basic principles of public speaking. For example, when speaking with a friend, you automatically check to make certain that you are understood and then adjust your meaning accordingly. You also tend to discuss issues that are appropriate to the circumstances. If you're speaking to someone you know quite well, you're likely to address any number of topics with ease. When a relative stranger is involved, however, you try to get to know his or her interests and attitudes before revealing any strong opinions.

These instinctive adjustments to your audience, topic, and occasion represent critical steps in putting a speech together. Although the means of discovery are of necessity more involved, both the conversationalist and the public speaker try to uncover the audience's interests and needs before speaking.

Speaking and Writing

As with conversation, preparing a speech has much in common with writing. For example, both effective speaking and effective writing depend on having a focused sense of who the audience is.[4] Both often require that you research a topic and document your sources, use effective transitions to signal the logical flow of ideas, and use **rhetorical proofs**, or various types of persuasive appeals, to appeal to an audience (see Chapter 25). Furthermore, familiarity with the organizing principles in one discipline prepares you to work effectively in the other. As Robert Perrin notes in "The Speaking-Writing Connection,"

> The principles that guide the organizing of a speech are the same as those that help organize papers. Interesting introductions draw listeners and readers into the topic; clear thesis statements or controlling ideas direct the audience's attention; a series of supporting topics describe, illustrate, elaborate, substantiate, and ultimately articulate the premise that is laid out in the thesis; thoughtful conclusions draw ideas together and create a sense of closure.[5]

RECOGNIZE PUBLIC SPEAKING'S UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS

As you can see, many of the skills required for public speaking are skills that you may already use elsewhere. You can also apply what you learn as a public speaker to your repertoire of conversational and writing skills.

Although public speaking has much in common with everyday conversation and with writing, it is, obviously, "its own thing." More so than writers, for example, successful speakers generally use familiar words, easy-to-follow sentences, straightforward syntax (subject-verb-object agreement), and transitional words and phrases. Speakers also routinely repeat key words and phrases to emphasize ideas and help listeners follow along, and even the briefest speeches make frequent use of repetition (see Chapter 16).

Oral language is often more interactive and inclusive of the audience than written language. The personal pronouns *we, I,* and *you* occur more frequently in spoken than in written text. Audience members want to know what the speaker thinks and feels, and that he or she recognizes them and relates them to the message. Speakers accomplish this by making specific references to themselves and to the audience.

In general, spoken language is more conversational than written language. Yet because public speaking usually occurs in more formal settings than does everyday conversation, listeners expect a somewhat more formal style of communication from the speaker. When you hold the floor of communication for an extended period of time, as in a speech, listeners expect you to speak in a clear, recognizable, and organized fashion. Thus, in contrast to conversation, in order to develop an effective oral style you must practice the words you will say and the way you will say them.

AIM TO BECOME A CULTURALLY SENSITIVE SPEAKER

Every audience member wants to feel that the speaker has his or her particular needs and interests at heart, and to feel recognized and included in the speaker's message. To create this sense of inclusion, the public speaker must attempt to understand the audience's beliefs and norms and to be culturally sensitive. The **culturally sensitive speaker** assumes differences and addresses them with interest and respect. The flip side of cultural sensitivity is **ethnocentrism**, the belief that the ways of one's own culture are superior to those of other cultures. Ethnocentric speakers don't bother to consider other perspectives or ways of behaving. No matter how passionately they believe in an issue, our most admired public speakers strive to acknowledge and respectfully consider alternative viewpoints.

More than ever, public speakers must demonstrate not only cultural sensitivity but also **cultural intelligence**.[6] As David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson explain, cultural intelligence means

> being skilled and flexible about understanding a culture, learning more about it from your ongoing interactions with it, and gradually reshaping

> your thinking to be more sympathetic to the culture and to be more skilled and appropriate when interacting with others from the culture.[7]

As a public speaker, you will continually confront values that are different from your own. In this guidebook you will find numerous suggestions for increasing your cultural intelligence so that you can become a more culturally sensitive speaker. These discussions range from assessing audience members' cultural values (see Chapter 6), avoiding stereotypes, and refraining from hate speech (see Chapter 4) to the crucial role that language plays in creating a culturally sensitive speech (see Chapter 16).

The Classical Roots of Public Speaking

The practice of oratory, or **rhetoric**, emerged full force in Greece in the fifth century B.C.E. It flourished primarily as a means of persuasive speaking and became an essential tool in settling civil disputes, determining public policy, and establishing laws. Classical scholars, notably Aristotle and Cicero, divided the process of preparing a speech into five parts—*invention, arrangement, style, memory,* and *delivery*—called the **canons of rhetoric**. **Invention** refers to adapting speech information to the audience in order to make your case. **Arrangement** is organizing the speech in ways that are best suited to the topic and the audience. **Style** is the way the speaker uses language to express the speech ideas. **Memory** is the practice of the speech until it can be artfully delivered. Finally, **delivery** is the vocal and nonverbal behavior you use when speaking (see Table 1.2).

Although scholars such as Aristotle and Cicero surely didn't anticipate the omnipresent PowerPoint slide show that accompanies so many contemporary speeches, the speechmaking structure they bequeathed to us as the canons of rhetoric remains remarkably intact. Although these canons are often identified by terms other than the original ones, they continue to be taught in current books on public speaking, including this one. For example, Chapters 6–10 and 24–25 (analyzing the audience; selecting and researching a topic; composing arguments) correspond to the *invention process.* Chapters 11–13 and 26 (on outlining and organizing the speech) represent *arrangement.* Chapter 16 (on language) focuses on *style.* Finally, Chapters 17–19 describe the process of *practice (memory)* and *delivery* (see Table 1.2).

It certainly isn't necessary for today's public speaker to be familiar with the classical canons of rhetoric. Yet it never hurts to be aware of a heritage as rich as that of public speaking. As Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, writers on rhetoric, note:

> The fundamental concerns of rhetoric in all ages appear to be those defined in the classical period: purpose, audience, composition, argumentation, organization, and style. Not only do the classical categories persist, but so do many of the particulars.[8]

TABLE 1.2 • The Classic Canons of Rhetoric and Speechmaking Today

The Canons of Rhetoric	Addressed in *A Speaker's Guidebook*
1. Invention (Selecting and adapting speech material to the audience; constructing arguments)	Chapter 6: Analyzing the Audience
	Chapter 7: Selecting a Topic and Purpose
	Chapter 8: Developing Supporting Material
	Chapter 9: Locating Supporting Material
	Chapter 10: Using the Internet to Support Your Speech
	Chapter 24: The Persuasive Speech
	Chapter 25: Developing Arguments for the Persuasive Speech
2. Arrangement (Ordering the speech)	Chapter 11: Main Points, Supporting Points, and Transitions
	Chapter 12: Types of Organizational Arrangements
	Chapter 13: Types of Outline Formats
	Chapter 26: Organizing the Persuasive Speech
3. Style (Use of language, including figures of speech)	Chapter 16: Using Language to Style the Speech
4. Memory (Practice of the speech)	Chapter 17: Methods of Delivery
	Chapter 18: The Voice in Delivery
5. Delivery (Vocal and nonverbal delivery)	Chapter 19: The Body in Delivery

2 Giving It a Try: Preparing Your First Speech

Novice speakers in any circumstances—at school, at work, or in the community—will benefit from preparing and delivering a first short speech of between two and five minutes. An audience of as few as two other people will suffice to test the waters and help you gain confidence in your ability to "stand up and deliver." Experts will tell you that the best way to overcome nervousness about speaking in public is to get up and deliver a speech. After all, you can't learn how to swim if you don't get wet. It is for this reason that instructors often assign a brief first speech within days of the start of class.

A Brief Overview of the Speechmaking Process

As a beginning speaker preparing your first classroom speech, you will not be required to know all the conventions of speechmaking as described in subsequent chapters. However, it is helpful to have a sense of the various steps involved in putting together and delivering a speech or a presentation (see Figure 2.1). In this chapter you will find a brief overview of the entire speechmaking process, from choosing a topic to rehearsing the speech for actual delivery.

SELECT A TOPIC

The first step in creating a speech involves finding a **topic**, or something to speak about. Unless the topic is assigned, let your interests—your passions—be your guide. What deeply engages you? What are your areas of expertise? Your hobbies? Are there controversies brewing on campus or at your workplace that you might wish to address? Beware, however, that personal interest should not be the only criterion for selection. It's equally important that you feel confident that your topic will be of interest to the audience. For example, if you are a college student your classmates might not be terribly excited about yet another talk on safe sex, but a brief speech on little-known facts related to the history of the college or some of its famous alumni might capture their attention. Whatever you settle on, make sure to consider your audience members and their interests.

ANALYZE THE AUDIENCE

Audiences have personalities, interests, and ambitions all their own. These factors affect how receptive an audience will be toward a given topic. Thus it is imperative that you learn as much as you can about the similarities and differ-

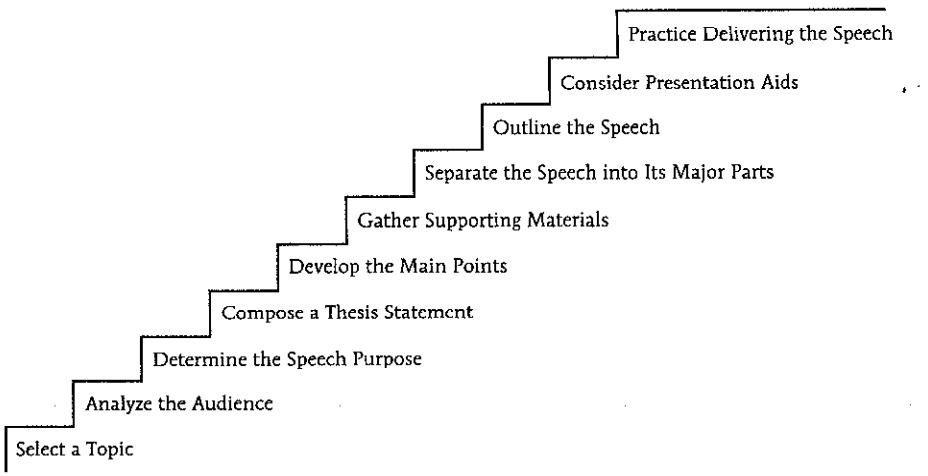

Figure 2.1 Steps in the Speechmaking Process

ences among the members of your audience. Begin with some fairly easily identifiable *demographic characteristics:* ratio of males to females, racial and ethnic differences represented in the group, noticeable age variations, and proportion of the group that is from out of state or out of the country. Next, consider how different people (e.g., older and younger, men and women, international and native-born) might think or feel differently about your topic. For example, if you decide to speak on the controversy of a proposed increase in resident student tuition, your talk will be less interesting to out-of-state and international students than to resident students.

Yet how can you know what the audience thinks? **Audience analysis** is actually a highly systematic process of getting to know your listeners relative to the topic and the speech occasion. The process involves studying the audience through techniques such as interviews and questionnaires (see Chapter 6). However, for this first speech assignment it should be sufficient to ask three or four people who will be part of your audience a few questions about your topic. For example, what do they already know about it? Does it interest them? What else would they like to know about it? A few answers to these questions will be helpful in narrowing your topic and relating it to the audience.

DETERMINE THE SPEECH PURPOSE

Once you settle on a topic, the next step is to decide what you wish to convey about it—and why. As you will learn in Chapter 7, there are three **general speech purposes** toward which you should direct your speeches: *to inform, to persuade,* or *to mark a special occasion.* Regarding the campus controversy topic, for example, you need to decide whether to simply inform your audience about the issue and the positions each side takes, or to persuade the audience to accept one position to the exclusion of other positions, or perhaps even

to entertain your listeners by making light of the issue in a creative but judicious way.

Your speech should also have a **specific purpose**. This is a declarative sentence stating what you expect the speech to accomplish. For example, if the general purpose of your campus controversy speech is to inform, its specific purpose could be "to identify the three key points on which students and administrators disagree about increasing resident tuition." If the general purpose is to persuade, its specific purpose might be "to convince my listeners that the administration does not need to increase resident tuition."

Write your specific purpose on a sheet of paper or on a Post-it note placed on the edge of your computer monitor. It will be an important guide in developing the rest of the speech.

COMPOSE A THESIS STATEMENT

Once you've identified the general and specific speech purposes, you need to compose a **thesis statement** that clearly expresses the central idea of your speech. While the specific purpose describes what *you* want to achieve with the speech, the thesis statement concisely identifies for your audience, in a single sentence, what the speech is about:

GENERAL PURPOSE:	To inform
SPECIFIC PURPOSE:	To inform my audience about the evolution of the MTV network.
THESIS STATEMENT:	MTV has evolved from a single music video cable station to a multichannel, multientertainment network.

As with the specific speech purpose, you will use the thesis statement as a guidepost to construct your speech. Wherever you are in the planning stage, always refer to the thesis statement to make sure that you are on track to illustrate or prove your thesis.

DEVELOP THE MAIN POINTS

Organize your speech around two or three **main points**. These are the primary pieces of knowledge (in an informative speech) or the key arguments in favor of your position (in a persuasive speech) (see Chapter 11). If you create a clear, specific purpose statement for your speech, the main points will be easily identifiable (if not explicit). For example, the statement "to convince my listeners that the university's administration does not need to increase resident tuition" points to ideas that should be developed into main points—compelling reasons that tuition should not be increased. In this hypothetical case, let's say the primary reason given by administrators for the higher tuition is to offset the costs of increased enrollment. The following is an example of a specific purpose and three main points supporting it:

2. Second level of subordination
    a. Third level of subordination
    b. Third level of subordination

Transition statement

B. Next point at first level of subordination
    1. Second level of subordination
    2. Second level of subordination

And so on . . .

As your speeches become more involved, you will need to select an appropriate **organizational pattern** (see Chapters 12 and 26). You will also need to familiarize yourself with developing both *working* and *speaking* outlines (see Chapter 13). To allow for the full development of your ideas, *working outlines* generally contain points stated in complete sentences, including the transition statements. As a rule, *speaking outlines* (also called presentation outlines) are far briefer than working outlines and are usually prepared using either short phrases or key words. The content of the speaking outline is placed on 4×6 index cards for use during the speech.

Following is a working full-sentence outline created by a beginning public speaking student for a speech of introduction (see speech below):

TOPIC:	Speech of Introduction for Lisa Tran
SPEECH PURPOSE:	To inform
SPECIFIC SPEECH PURPOSE:	To inform my audience about my odyssey as a refugee from war-torn Vietnam to a person fulfilling her potential and realizing her dreams in America

Introduction

(Captures audience attention—in this case, with a startling statement and select dramatic details of her story.) My story begins in Saigon, where my father was imprisoned. We fled the country without taking any belongings. The boat ride was horrific, and we arrived to harsh media attention. We first settled in Kansas, where we were finally reunited with Dad.

(States thesis statement and previews main points. In a brief speech, the preview can act as a transition.) We set forth on American soil some years ago, but my journey has just begun. Little did I dream then of what was in store for me. Little do I know of what my future will bring.

Body

I. We become American citizens, and I achieve things I never dreamed of.
    A. I become the first Asian pom captain at the University of Oklahoma.
    B. I become a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma and the 1999 Miss Greek OU.

II. My achievements could not have occurred if I did not have some knowledge of the difficulties and hardships of life.
   A. Though I could not afford lessons in Vietnam, as a child I trained myself to dance.
      1. Nine years later, I earned honors as a dancer and today I teach dance.
      2. In 1999, I was crowned the first Asian Miss Greek OU.
   B. Thanks to the love and support of my sorority, my friends, and my family, I have come far.
   C. The journey is not over.

Conclusion

(Restates the thesis in a memorable way.) As an anonymous poet once wrote, "Dream what you want to dream, go where you want to go, be what you want to be, because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do." Rather than proving my self-worth, my accomplishments merely symbolize the true passion and drive we have for living and succeeding.

(Leaves the audience with a motivating message.) We are what we learn and take with us during this journey we call life. I am the past because I have appreciation; I am the present because I have learned humbleness; I am the future because I have so much more to learn.

CONSIDER PRESENTATION AIDS

As you prepare your speech, consider whether using visual or audio aids, a combination of the two, or other **presentation aids** will help your audience understand your points. A presentation aid can be as simple as writing the definition of a word on a blackboard or as involved as a multimedia slide show. Presentation aids that summarize and highlight information, such as charts and graphs, can often help the audience to retain ideas and understand difficult concepts. They can also provide dramatic emphasis that listeners will find memorable (see Chapter 20).

PRACTICE DELIVERING THE SPEECH

The success of even your first speech in class depends on how well prepared and practiced you are. So practice your speech—often. It has been suggested that a good speech is practiced at least six times. For a four- to six-minute speech, that's only thirty to forty minutes (figuring in re-starts and pauses) of actual practice time. Like an actor in a play, a public speaker must deliver his or her "lines" to the audience. You will want to feel and appear "natural" to your listeners, an effect best achieved by rehearsing both the verbal and the nonverbal elements of your speech.

CHECKLIST

Using the Audio Recorder to Bolster Confidence

Many public speaking experts agree that of the vast array of high-tech audio-visual gizmos available, along with the video camera (see Chapter 20), the tape recorder, or the digital audio recorder, are among the few truly indispensable aids to building confidence in public speaking. Listening to your speech helps to make it real and, therefore, less scary.

- ✓ Record yourself at least one of the six times that you rehearse your speech.
- ✓ As you play back the recording, listen for clarity. Is your pronunciation clear?
- ✓ Watch for the tempo of your sentences. Are they too long? Too choppy? Have you included any tongue twisters that cause you to stumble as you speak?
- ✓ Time your speech as you record it. This will help you decide how to edit it and where to add or cut.
- ✓ Use positive self-imagery. Close your eyes and visualize yourself standing in front of the audience and being well received. Let the sound of your voice relax you as you sit back and appreciate all the good work you've done.[1]

1. Ron Hoff, *I Can See You Naked*, rev. ed. (Kansas City, Mo.: Andrews McMeel, 1992), 66.

Vocal Delivery

Vocal delivery includes speech volume, rate, pitch, variety, pronunciation, and articulation. As you rehearse, pay attention to how loudly or softly you are speaking. If you rehearse with a friend, ask him or her to sit at the far end of the room; if your friend cannot hear you from that distance, practice adjusting your volume. Pay attention to the *rate* at which you speak and aim to speak neither too fast nor too slowly. Beware of speaking in a *monotone;* audiences will quickly become turned off by a speaker who uses an unvarying, flat tone. Decide how you want to phrase your statements, and then practice saying them. Finally, check that you are pronouncing words correctly and clearly. (See Chapter 18 and Appendix D, "Commonly Mispronounced Words.")

Nonverbal Delivery

Beyond the words of a speech, audiences are also highly attuned to a speaker's **nonverbal delivery** or nonverbal speech behavior—facial expressions, gestures, general body movements, and overall physical appearance.

Facial Expression and Eye Contact. Practice smiling and otherwise animating your face in ways that feel natural to you. Audiences want to feel that you care about what you are saying, so avoid a deadpan, or blank, expression. Practice making eye contact with your listeners. Doing so will make audience

members feel that you recognize and respect them. As you speak, practice scanning with your eyes around the room. Imagine that people are looking at you, and pause to gaze at different audience members.

Gestures, Body Movement, and Posture. As you practice, consider your hand and arm *gestures*, or movements that express meaning during the speech. Practice gestures that feel natural to you, steering clear of exaggerated movements. A rule of thumb for the making of gestures in speeches is to begin a speech with your hands in a relaxed and free position, possibly at your sides or with one at your side and the other (with your forearm) crossing your abdomen. From this relaxed position, raise your hands and arms into the gesture you wish to make. Once you've completed the movement, return your hands to the original position (see Chapter 19).

Another area to consider as you practice is *body movement*. Consider the physical layout of your speech setting (e.g., the classroom) and how you will

ESL Speaker's Notes

Identifying Linguistic Issues as You Practice Your Speech

As noted in the preceding checklist, most experts recommend that you prepare for delivering your first speech (as well as for subsequent speeches) by practicing with an audio recorder. Non-native speakers may wish to pay added attention to pronunciation and articulation as they listen. *Pronunciation* is the correct formation of word sounds. *Articulation* is the clarity or forcefulness with which the sounds are made, regardless of whether they are pronounced correctly. It is important to pay attention to and work on both areas. If possible, try to arrange an appointment with an instructor to help you identify key linguistic issues in your speech practice tape. If instructors are unavailable, try asking a fellow student.

Because languages vary tremendously in the specific sounds they use and the way in which these sounds are produced by the vocal chords, each of us will speak a non-native language a bit differently than do native speakers. That is, we will have some sort of accent. This should not concern you in and of itself. What is important is identifying which specific features of your pronunciation, if any, seriously interfere with your ability to make yourself understandable. Listening to your speech with an audio recorder or a videotape, perhaps in the presence of a native speaker, will allow you to identify trouble spots. Once you have identified which words you tend to mispronounce, you can work to correct the problem.

As you listen to your recording, watch as well for your articulation of words. ESL students whose first languages don't differentiate between the /sh/ sound and its close cousin /ch/, for example, may say "share" when they mean "chair" or "shoes" when they mean "choose."[1] It is therefore important that you also check to make sure that you are using the correct meaning of the words you have selected for your speech.

1. Based on Robbin Crabtree and Robert Weissberg, *ESL Students in the Public Speaking Classroom* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 23.

position yourself. Rather than remaining fixed behind a podium, many speakers move around it in ways that bring them closer to the audience. Avoid nervously shifting from one foot to the other, and be sure to stand upright with good posture.

Finally, dress for the occasion. Your clothes and grooming are the first cues you give an audience, and they will create an important initial impression of you.

Anticipate Questions from the Audience

At the close of your speech, you are likely to face questions from the audience. As you review your speech before delivery, consider what questions the audience is likely to ask. See Appendix A for an in-depth discussion of how to handle the question-and-answer session.

Take the Plunge

The first speech is usually simple and fun, but it does require you to fulfill each of the steps in the speechmaking process described above. It is very important that you try to gauge your progress in preparing the speech, including your feelings of anxiety about the process—from the time the assignment is given to the few minutes immediately following the speech. Use the accompanying self-assessment checklist to evaluate your preparation for and presentation of this first assignment. Whenever you begin to feel anxious, try some of the strategies for alleviating speech anxiety described in Chapter 5. Begin by thinking positively!

CHECKLIST

Self-Assessment of My First Speech

It is important to keep track of your progress throughout the speechmaking process. Consider each item in this checklist in two ways—as something to accomplish during preparation, and as something to consider after you have presented your speech. Use this self-assessment tool to improve future speeches by isolating areas where you need improvement.

Introduction

____ 1. How will/did I capture attention?
____ 2. What is/was my thesis statement?
____ 3. What will/did I say to relate the topic to the audience?
____ 4. What will/did I say to preview the main points of the speech?
____ 5. What will/did I say to make the transition from my introduction to my first main point?

(Continued)

Body

____ 1. Is/was the arrangement of my main points clear and logical?
____ 2. What transition statements will/did I use between main points?
____ 3. Do I have/did I use appropriate support material for each point?

Conclusion

____ 1. How will/did I restate the thesis/purpose of my speech?
____ 2. What will/did I say to summarize the main points?
____ 3. What memorable thought will/did I end the speech with?

Delivery

____ 1. What will/did I do to assure consistent eye contact?
____ 2. What will/did I do to project appropriate vocal qualities (rate and volume, clear articulation)?
____ 3. What will/did I do to ensure proper posture, gestures, and general movement?

My overall assessment of this speech is: _____
What I consider strengths in this speech: _____
Elements I need to improve on: _____
Goals for my next speech: _____

Sample Introductory Speech

LISA TRAN

Introduction

• Everybody has a history; some, perhaps, more interesting than others. Mine began nearly twenty-one years ago in Saigon, Vietnam. My father, who was an affluent businessman, was taken captive along with many other men by the Vietnamese communist government and imprisoned because of his Chinese descent. All of our money, property, and rights were stripped away from us. My mother, three sisters, brother, and I escaped with thousands of other Vietnamese and Chinese refugees in search of safety and freedom. For six long months, my

• The speaker captures the audience's attention with a short but dramatically phrased introductory statement.

family and I survived the most horrific boat ride to the United States. Hundreds of people died due to the grotesque conditions and diseases prevalent on the boat. Nevertheless, we landed on the coast of California only to find harsh media attention focused on us upon our arrival. A program was implemented by placing each refugee family with an American caretaker. • For three years, my family and I resided in Caney, Kansas, with Father Mike. In 1981, my family and I were finally reunited with my father, who was released by the strict communist government. Due to the untimely death of Father Mike, we moved south to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where my family and I have lived for almost twenty years. • Although my journey seemed to begin in Vietnam, it has only just begun.

• Even in a short speech like this, the speaker probably should offer a little information about Father Mike.

• This preview—that the speaker's journey "has only just begun"—also acts as a transition statement.

Body

Through the trials and tribulations my family and I have undergone, we are lucky and fortunate to have become American citizens. • I never dreamed that I would be the first Asian pom captain at the University of Oklahoma, a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma, and the 1999 Miss Greek OU. I could not have accomplished these honors without knowing the difficulties and hardships of life. • As a young child, I would mimic the choreography performed by the dancers on the television show *Star Search*. However, because we were poor, I could not afford dance lessons each week. Through hard work and perseverance, I trained myself to dance. Nine years later, I have earned individual honors as a dancer and have been teaching dance for a national company. Because of my ability to dance, my sorority encouraged me to enter a pageant. I had never been in a pageant before, and was apprehensive from the moment my sorority voted me in. The house was confident in me, though, and offered support throughout the weeks I was training. On April 23, 1999, I was crowned Miss Greek OU. This title has allowed me to be a role model for young women in my community. • Most important, I have also been given the opportunity to represent my culture as one of the first Asian women to be voted Miss Greek OU. I could not have achieved this honor without the love and support of my sorority, my friends, and my family. These three accomplishments have shown me how far my life

• In just one sentence the speaker sets up three main, coordinate points—becoming pom captain, a sorority member, and a pageant winner.

• A series of subordinate points shows how the speaker overcame several personal trials and attained several noteworthy accomplishments.

• Rather than merely reciting a list of her accomplishments, the speaker frames them within the larger context of support from family, friends, and community.

has come. My story does not end here, because the journey is not over.

Conclusion

• "Dream what you want to dream, go where you want to go, be what you want to be, because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do." I do not let the achievements that I have accomplished prove my self-worth. They merely symbolize the true passion and drive we have for living and succeeding. • We are what we learn and take with us during this journey we call life. I am the past because I have appreciation; I am the present because I have learned humbleness; I am the future because I have so much more to learn.

• This quotation reinforces the inspirational nature of the speech. Using her own life as an example, the speaker exhorts others to use their time wisely.

• The speaker's strong conclusion leaves the audience with something to think about as we ponder the precise meaning of her near-poetic statement, "I am the past because. . . ."