

DEVELOPING YOUR SPEECH TOPIC AND PURPOSE

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- Understand public dialogue is an ethical and civil exchange of ideas.
- Examine how your audience affects speaking goals.
- Select your speech topic.
- Identify the general purpose and specific purpose of your speech.
- Develop a thesis statement and main points for your speech.
- Identify the parts of an introduction and ways to conclude your speech.



10

Why Enter the Public Dialogue?
Your Audience
Choosing Your Speech Topic
Stating Your Speaking Goals
Organizing Your Speech
Introductions and Conclusions

Jung Yeon-Ju/AP/Getty Images

More than any other time in our history, the issues facing us are global and central to the lives of each one of us. What issues do you feel concerned or even passionate about? Consider using these as a topic for your first speech.

The way we, as a global community, respond to the intertwined problems of hunger and climate change will define the legacy of our generation.

—Jennifer Burney, environmental scientist and National Geographic Emerging Explorer

dialogue

civil exchange of ideas and opinions between two people or a small group of people.

public dialogue

ethical and civil exchange of ideas and opinions among communities about topics that affect the public

When you speak publicly, you participate in a dialogue that can influence others. With every speech you give, you make choices about the kind of influence your part in the dialogue will have. We are all familiar with the combative exchanges popular media present to us, but you may also be familiar with the call for more civility in these public exchanges. Recall from Chapter 1 that the word *civility* comes from a root word meaning “to be a member of a household.” Approaching public speaking as an act of civility means that we can think of the speeches we give as adding our views and voices to that household by way of a public dialogue or conversation. A **dialogue** is a civil exchange of ideas and opinions between two people or a small group of people. The **public dialogue** is the ethical and civil exchange of ideas and opinions among communities about topics that affect the public. To participate in the public dialogue is to offer perspectives, share facts, raise questions, and engage others publicly in stimulating discussions. When we enter the public dialogue, we become active and ethical citizens who participate in our nation’s democratic process and consider the needs of others in our communities as well as our own needs.

In this section of this book, you will learn about the power of public speaking and the ways it helps us enter this larger, sometimes global, dialogue. As you engage with this power yourself, strive to give speeches that help clarify issues and stimulate thinking as you inform, persuade, or invite others to consider a perspective. Although you may have strong views on issues, a civil and ethical approach to public speaking can be the most powerful way to present those views.

Why Enter the Public Dialogue?

People decide to participate in the public dialogue for three main reasons: they decide to speak, they are asked to speak, or they are required to speak.

Deciding to Speak

The most common reason to speak is because we find an issue so important or relevant that we decide to speak about it. Before the advent of television and radio, people used a variety of platforms to share their opinions and ideas. They spoke in churches and town halls, at street corners, and in town squares or centers. Today, people often view mass media as the voice of the

public, forgetting voices into public make it possible Web sites, blogs, people still give can express their and participate organizations solutions. In b we discuss idea plans or progr about issues t environment.

Being Asked

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public, forgetting we still can and do insert our own voices into public discussions. New technologies make it possible for us to record our views via Web sites, blogs, and other Internet formats. And people still give real-time speeches so that they can express their views. We give class presentations and participate in student government and student organizations debating issues and proposing solutions. In business and professional meetings, we discuss ideas, give presentations, and create new plans or programs. In community forums, we speak about issues that are important to us such as the environment, education, and social services.

Being Asked to Speak

When we are asked to speak, we are asked to share a part of ourselves with others. When we are asked to speak, we can share our knowledge, skills, experiences, and perspectives with others. In this setting, we are recognized as experts or at least as someone who has information and knowledge with other people. As you move through life, you might find you are asked to speak in educational settings, at service clubs, or at formal or professional gatherings. If you are asked to speak publicly, it is because people want to hear your views and ideas. But remember that expertise in a particular subject area does not always guarantee you are an expert at giving speeches. Although you may be considered an expert, you will be a more successful speaker if you follow the principles of speech preparation discussed in this book.

Being Required to Speak

Being required to speak can be a regular part of our lives. For example, you are now taking a communication course that requires you to give speeches. But outside your class, you may have a job that requires public speaking, such as in marketing or as a tour guide. Occasionally, you may have to fulfill a civic obligation such as speaking in front of a town council, at a public hearing, or even in a courtroom or for a legal investigation.

Although we may not like required public speaking, learning to give speeches in a communication course can be invaluable. If you view a classroom speaking requirement as an opportunity to prepare for other speaking contexts, then you can make the most of the time you spend in class.

Understanding how you become a public speaker is the first step in preparing a successful presentation. Once you recognize why you are speaking, you can turn your attention to who is in your audience, selecting and narrowing your speech topic, and deciding on your purpose for speaking.

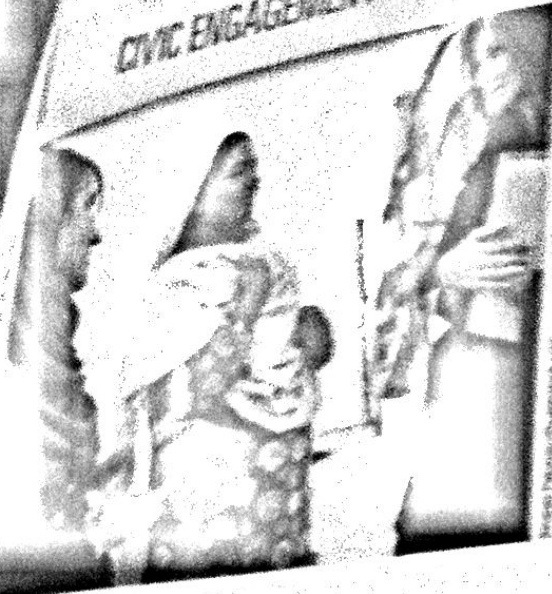
CourseMate Connection: Go to cengagebrain.com to access the CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* to view a video about UNHRC.



Individuals often feel so strongly about an issue that they decide to speak out publicly. When you have listened to people speak out, what makes them effective or ineffective speakers?



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION



Protecting Human Rights

If you conduct a Google search for award-winning actor Angelina Jolie, you will get literally millions of hits, almost all highlighting her many children, her relationships, her sex image, and her movies. However, many people outside the reaches of Hollywood know her primarily for her humanitarian work. Through her efforts as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), she has assisted the United Nations in providing relief to more than 20 million refugees displaced by violence, war, and poverty around the world. She not only engages directly with the men, women, and children who are affected but also assists in building shelters for refugees, has released many of her journals that document her travel experiences, and visits U.S. detention centers so she can

make effective advocacy for the removal of families who are escaping their home countries.

Jolie became passionate in the rights of refugees early in her career. In 1997, she wrote "The World Is a Better Place" for the *Los Angeles Times*. In the article, she wrote: "There were many things I didn't know about the world, but I was not hearing about it in the news. I wanted to understand." Her belief in what the United Nations does to support its mission and the protection of human rights is what has resulted in her commitment to the world. She has traveled to learn as much as she can about the world's refugee crisis. For example, she says: "When I read about the million people under the care of UNHCR, I wanted to understand how in this day and age that many people could be displaced."

Jolie's focus is on the humanity and heroism of those who have been forced to leave their homes and who are surrounded by dangerous refugee camps. "What was really shocking was that every individual person you meet will tell you their immediate family was affected. Someone's child was killed, someone's husband. Someone was beaten. . . . You go to these places and you realize what this really means about what people are really going through. . . . These people are the heroes" (Brown, 2009; UNHCR, n.d.).

What Do You Think?

1. Are there issues you want to learn more about, like Jolie did? What are those issues and could you use them as possible speech topics?
2. Jolie is a powerful example of one person's outward actions making a difference in the lives of others. Think of other people who are using their time and energy to learn about issues and then speak out about them.

Your Audience

Your Audience Is a Group of Diverse People

People are unique for a variety of reasons that relate to some combination of culture, upbringing, experiences, personality, and even genes (Wood, 2011). These differences are part of what causes speakers to want to be audience centered. An audience-centered speaker is one who considers the positions, beliefs, values and needs of an audience. As a result,

audience-centered speaker

speaker who considers the positions, beliefs, values, and needs of an audience

speakers, how can we give a speech that considers audience differences as well as their similarities? To stay audience centered, I used the material presented in Chapter 2 and try to consider how the members of your audience might view the world by analyzing their master statuses and their standpoints.

Master Statuses

Groups of people share common experiences, perspectives, and attitudes because they occupy certain master statuses. Master statuses are significant positions a person occupies within society that affect that person's identity in almost all social situations (Marshall, 1994). A person's master statuses might include race or ethnicity, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, age, economic standing, religion or spirituality, and educational level. They could include positions in society such as being a parent, child, or sibling; being employed or unemployed; and so on if those positions affect someone's identity in almost every social situation. Here's how one public-speaking student, Miranda, described her master statuses and how they influenced her life and speaking experiences:

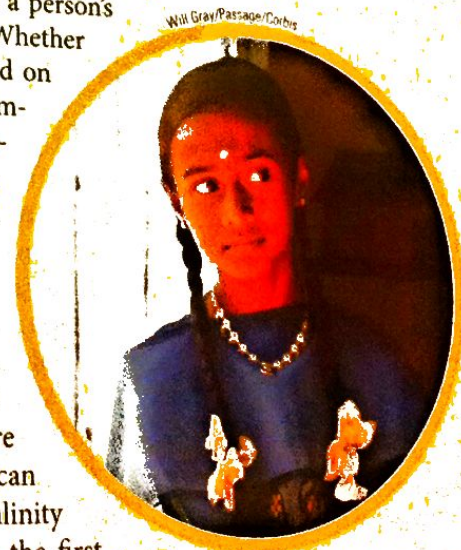
I have many master statuses. I am a daughter dedicated to her family and her family values. I am forever a student, always craving new knowledge. I am a first-generation student, boldly going where no one else in my family has gone before—college. I am a Mexican-American living life for my ancestors. Last but not least, I am curious, always searching for new adventures in life. All of this makes up who I am and affects every decision I make each day, from what clothes I choose to wear to the books I choose to read. It also affects what topics I choose to speak about and how effectively I listen to other speakers.

A status is a *master status* when it profoundly influences a person's identity and the way in which he or she is perceived by others. Whether we intend to or not, we often respond to other people based on one or more master statuses. For example, teenagers with rumpled and baggy clothes are often treated differently in a grocery store than neatly dressed adult mothers with children. Whether or not our assumptions about these people are correct (teenagers will cause problems; mothers are responsible and will manage their children), we categorize and respond to people based on the positions they hold in society.

Master statuses affect our view of the world because we make judgments based on them, and hence we see some as more valuable than others. For example, whether we are comfortable acknowledging such differences or not, American culture tends to rank whiteness, heterosexuality, and masculinity higher than color, homosexuality, and femininity. Because the first three statuses are considered more valuable, they are generally rewarded with higher salaries, more acceptance and protections, and more personal freedoms, whereas the last three, on average, receive lower salaries, less

master statuses

significant positions a person occupies within society that affect that person's identity in almost all social situations.



Master statuses affect our identity in most social situations. What are the master statuses of this young girl? What are your master statuses?

acceptance and fewer protections, and greater threats to physical safety (Bennett & Ellison, 2010; Browne & Williams, 1993; Buzawa, Austin, & Buzawa, 1995; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 1998; "Facts About Violence," 2010; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1989, 1995; Lackie & de Man, 1997; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.; National Organization for Women, n.d.; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

Standpoints, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values The impact of different treatment because of master statuses can affect an individual's standpoint, the perspective from which a person views and evaluates society. Members of your audiences will have different standpoints. This is because they will have different master statuses and thus different experiences. For example, teenagers often see life as unfairly biased against them, and mothers often see the world as expecting them and their children to behave perfectly in all situations.

Note that although master statuses can have a powerful influence on a person's view of the world, master statuses do not *determine* a person's standpoint (see Chapter 2). For example, not all women believe they need to have children to fully experience womanhood, just as not all men believe their masculinity is weakened if they are not the primary breadwinners for their families. In addition, we all occupy numerous master statuses throughout our lives, and each influences us in different ways. For example, although we maintain our ethnicity throughout our lives, if we move to a new country, adapt to a new culture, and learn a different language, our experience of our ethnic identity can evolve. Moreover, we all move from young to old and experience changing family and job roles, shifting from child to parent, unemployed to employed, and so on.

Our standpoints influence our attitudes, beliefs, and values. An **attitude** is a general positive or negative feeling a person has about something. Attitudes reflect our likes and dislikes and our approval or disapproval of events, people, or ideas (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Olson & Zanna, 1993). A **belief** is a person's idea of what is real or true or not. Beliefs are more conceptual than attitudes and reflect what we think we know about the world. A **value** is a person's idea of what is good, worthy, or important. Our values reflect what we think is an ideal world or state of being. Values help us determine whether we think a person, idea, or thing is acceptable in our worldview (Kidder, 1994; Rokeach, 1970, 1973; Schwartz & Blisky, 1990).

Conversations, debates, and arguments held as part of the public dialogue are heavily influenced by the different attitudes, beliefs, and values that result from our different standpoints and master statuses. In particular, attitudes, beliefs, and values are often influenced by our cultural backgrounds. All cultures have unique ways of explaining and organizing the world. Audience-centered speakers recognize these different worldviews and guard against ethnocentrism. Recall from Chapter 1 that **ethnocentrism** is the belief that our own cultural perspectives, norms, and ways of organizing society are superior to others. Speakers who let ethnocentric views come through in their speeches run the risk of alienating audience members who do not hold similar views.

attitude

general positive or negative feeling a person has about something

belief

a person's idea of what is real or true or not

value

a person's idea of what is good, worthy, or important

ethnocentrism

belief that our own cultural perspectives, norms, and ways of organizing society are superior to others

T. H. Culhane

Emerging Explorer and Urban Planner

What beliefs or values are important to consider about your audience before you speak to them?

Well, I try to find out the expectations of the target audience. They are really tough, so I do get very nervous. And I've had some bad experiences. I was flown in after a very successful Cairo speech and asked to give one to some people in Abu Dhabi. The slides that I showed and the music that I played and experiences I related—they didn't resonate with the audience at all. And I could feel a misunderstanding and tension in the room, and it turned out it was because seeing slums and poverty, even though my messages are always hopeful and always about where we are going and how we are climbing up together, they didn't resonate. These very wealthy people, who were philanthropists, they didn't feel very motivated seeing what the other 90 percent go through and how they live. Many people actually felt threatened. So, I always try to get the message out that we human beings are part of something my dad introduced me to—part of the Great Conversation. We have been sharing stories for centuries that have helped us to progress, and because of that great conversation, I always say no human beings should be excluded from it. But that doesn't always work. I thought the idea that you can turn your waste into energy and fertilizer, and produce your own electricity from the available sunlight—doing it yourself—I thought it would have universal appeal, but it doesn't always.



To be audience centered, speakers must consider the significant influence of master statuses, standpoints, attitudes, beliefs, and values on audiences. When speakers take these factors into consideration, they increase their chances of giving effective speeches.

Choosing Your Speech Topic

Your **speech topic** is the *subject of your speech*. Selecting a topic for a speech can be a highly creative and energizing part of putting a speech together. The steps described in this section will help you find interesting and relevant speech topics for your required speeches, articulate your purpose, and narrow your topic.

speech topic
subject of your speech.

The Classroom Setting

Before you can select an appropriate and interesting topic for your assigned speech, you must consider the requirements of your assignment.

- **Preselected purpose.** An instructor usually tells you to give a particular type of speech such as a speech to inform or persuade. You do not have the freedom to select your speech purpose, and you must select a topic that is compatible with the purpose.

- **Highly structured assignment.** You are usually asked to incorporate several specific speech components such as a specific number of outside sources, visual aids, or a specific style of language. And you will usually have strict time limits, so the structure of an assigned speech often influences topic selection.
- **Your audience.** You give your classroom speeches to an instructor, who is already a skilled public speaker, and your classmates. You must select a stimulating topic that both will appreciate and that is not commonly used.

So how do you select a manageable, interesting, and dynamic topic for your required speeches? The process takes a bit of planning and effort, but you will discover that you have a wealth of usable ideas once you organize your thoughts about who you are, what you know, and what issues and events capture your own attention.

Outline the Requirements for the Assignment The first step to selecting a topic is to outline the requirements of the speech assignment. Your assignment might look like this:

Informative purpose; four minutes long; three to four sources; one statistic; one of the following: metaphor, analogy, narrative, or alliteration; inclusive language.

The second step is to match your interests or expertise to these requirements.

Matching Your Interests to the Speaking Assignment Before you can match your interests to a particular assignment, you must determine what they are. Divide your interests into the following categories: what you like to do, what you like to talk about, and what you would like to know more about.

Most people can identify many activities they like to participate in. Make a list of them, including those that seem serious as well as playful or silly. Try to be as detailed as possible. Krista, a twenty-three-year-old college senior, likes to do the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| swim, run, cycle | spend time with friends |
| play soccer, volleyball, tennis, and Frisbee golf | coach children in sports during the summer |
| snowboard, skateboard, and hike | get good grades |
| watch television and movies | stay up late |
| Facebook | eat pizza, hamburgers, anything barbecued, and some vegetables |

With a little adjustment and creativity, any of these interests could be turned into an interesting and engaging topic. Krista could inform her audience about any of the following:

Lynsey Ashford/National Geographic



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the first chat r
gender differer
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excellent speech
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could explore it
you participate
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that grow out of
and curiosity of

the top ten medal-earning swimmers in the world
 the history of marathon running
 how to play Frisbee golf
 who invented skateboards
 the longest-running television sitcom
 the first chat room on the Web
 gender differences in friendship styles
 the relationship between grades and annual income
 medical research on optimal sleeping patterns
 the origins of pizza

These are just a few of the many informative topics that you could speak about, all relevant to her instructor, her classmates, and the public dialogue.

Issues, events, people, and ideas you are curious about also often make excellent speech topics. You could give a speech that informs others of a particular event, or you could persuade them to participate in that event. If you are intrigued by a famous person, you could give a commemorative or informative speech about that person's life and accomplishments. If you are curious about a place, an idea, an object, or an animal, you could explore it with others in an informative or invitational speech. If you participate in an activity or have always wanted to do so, you could give a persuasive, informative, or invitational speech about it. Speeches that grow out of a speaker's curiosity often capture the attention, interest, and curiosity of an audience as well.



This traveling midwife is speaking to women in Afghanistan about health and hygiene. What are your areas of expertise? What topics could you teach your audience?

Matching Your Expertise to a Speech Assignment Whether we realize it or not, almost everyone is an expert in some area of life. Some people are experts in obvious ways, such as playing a musical instrument, painting, or computer programming. Other people are experts in less obvious ways. They may have an unfailing sense of direction, know the right gift to buy for any occasion, or tell jokes that make people laugh. Dynamic speech topics can come from your own skills and talents. Consider the following examples:

- Tomás is an excellent cook. He decides to give an informative speech on the differences between traditional Bolivian and Spanish foods.
- April is fluent in American Sign Language. She decides to give a speech persuading her audience to learn a second language.
- Gardner is a mechanic. He decides to give a commemorative speech on nineteenth-century French inventor Gustave Trouvé, the creator of the first automobile powered by electricity.

brainstorming

process of generating ideas randomly and uncritically without attention to logic, connections, or relevance

These are interesting speech topics about activities or skills that may seem mundane to the person who has them. You can identify areas in which you may be considered an expert by asking yourself the questions in Practicing Human Communication. Your answers may reveal expertise that you have not thought much about.

PRACTICING HUMAN COMMUNICATION

How Am I an Expert?

Answer the following questions to help you identify areas in which you may be considered an expert.

- What comes naturally to me?
- What runs in my family?
- Do I often get compliments when I do a particular thing?
- Do others repeatedly ask me to take the lead, take care of some situation, or solve a problem for them?
- Have I ever had special training or lessons?
- Have I spent years studying, practicing, or doing something?
- Do I have degrees, certifications, licenses, or other markers of my accomplishments?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be an expert in some area that would make an interesting topic for a required speech. A few final tips: As you translate your experiences into speech topics, be certain you can talk about them easily without getting upset or revealing more than you are comfortable with. And note that although you might know a lot about a topic, you should still research it to discover interesting aspects about which you might be unaware.

Brainstorm Possible Topics Brainstorming is the process of generating ideas randomly and uncritically, without attention to logic, connections, or relevance. This process requires you to free associate rather than plan, and it is often used as a problem-solving strategy in business settings. Brainstorming can be an effective tool for coming up with speech topics in required speaking situations, and you can use this technique by yourself, in pairs, or in groups. Here are some tips for successful brainstorming:

- Let your thoughts go where they will. Do not censor yourself or others. Allow all ideas, even those that seem trivial or odd.
- Write down your ideas quickly. Do not worry about spelling or punctuation, and abbreviate whenever you can.
- Keep your list handy over the course of several days, and add to it as new thoughts come to you.

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You can approach brainstorming in several ways: by free association, by clustering, by categories, and by technology.

When you brainstorm using free association, you use a random word, paper, or your computer with a blank screen, and record all ideas that come to your mind (Rosa & Fischoltz, 1996). After a few minutes, your free-association list might look like this:

hands, keyboard, letters, movement, running, wind, rain, clouds, laughter, skinned knees, Band-Aids, nurses, hospitals, people, tigers, cougars, wilderness, encroachment, farming, children, boys, rodents, circus, clowns, entertainment, contraband, drugs, war, peace, hostility, conflict, harm, warm, cold, chairs, dining rooms, meals, holidays, families, celebration.

When you are trying to come up with a speech topic, you spend at least several minutes brainstorming by free association, then you select at least one idea as possible. Once you have compiled your list, you can determine if one of your ideas might be an appropriate speech topic. The free association list here could generate the following interesting speech topics:

- the inventor of the Band-Aid
- what to do when you encounter a feral cat
- different kinds of clowns
- how different countries celebrate holidays or the start of new seasons

You can also brainstorm by clustering. Using this method, you write down an idea in the center of a piece of paper and then draw four or five lines extending from it. At the ends of these lines, write down other ideas that relate to your first idea. Then extend lines from these new ideas to even more ideas.

Take a look at Jeret's clustering diagram. He began scuba diving at a very young age, so he used this as his general idea and developed the cluster of ideas shown in Figure 10.1.

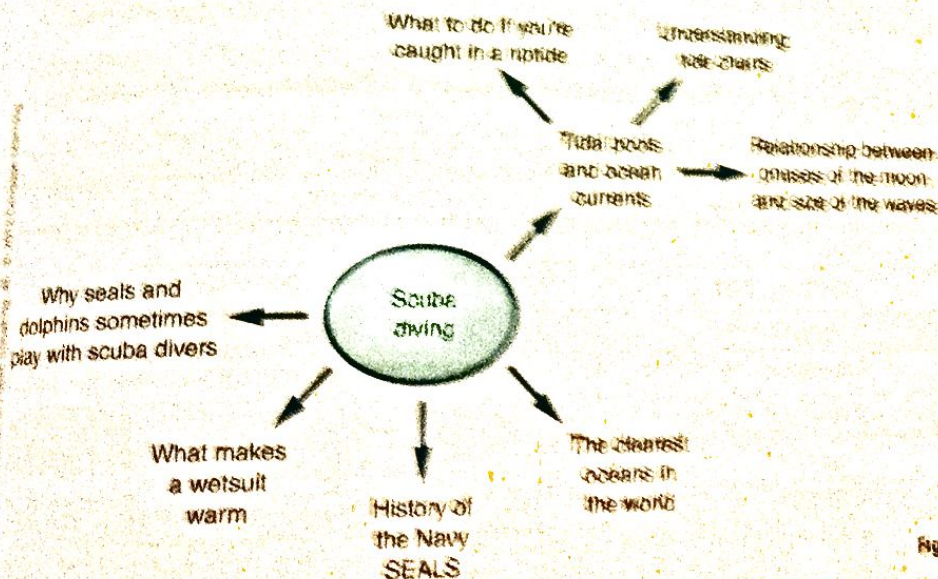


Figure 10.1 Cluster diagram

scuba diving. Jetet was
storming by clustering
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WEN

Similarly, if none of your brainstormed topics catches your interest, look several of them together. Can you find a connection among Mexico, India, and political elections? What about these locations and tourism or earthquakes? How about laptops, espresso machines, and theme dining? Linking any of these topics, randomly or with purpose, gives you additional opportunities to develop interesting speech topics.

Finally, you can brainstorm by using technology. If you have access to the Internet, you can discover possible topics by browsing a search engine's subject indexes. Using technology, you can explore a variety of topics, click a general subject, and link to more and more specific topics until you find a topic that interests you and fits the requirements of your speech assignment.

Libraries also provide many online indexes for journals, newspapers, magazines, and the like. Browse through the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, InfoTrac College Edition, The New York Times Index, or subject-specific indexes about medicine, physics, science, or women's studies.

Stating Your Speaking Goals

Articulating Your Purpose

Once you have selected the topic of your speech, you will want to consider your speaking goals, which can be explained in terms of general purposes and specific purposes. The **general purpose** of a speech is its broad goal: to inform, invite, or persuade. The **specific purpose** is a focused statement that identifies exactly what a speaker wants to accomplish with a speech. Take a look at how you use each of these purposes to organize your thoughts about your speeches.

general purpose

The broad goal of a speech—to inform, invite, or persuade.

specific purpose

focused statement that identifies exactly what a speaker wants to accomplish with a speech.

General Speaking Purposes Suppose you have decided to speak about organic farming. You could speak about many aspects of this topic. Without knowing your purpose for your speech, it can be difficult to know where to begin. Do you describe organic farming, what it is, and who practices it (informative)? Do you invite your audience to explore the impact of organic farming on the environment and the average family's grocery bills (invitational)? Do you attempt to convince your classmates that organic farming is the most efficient type of farming (persuasive)? Your first step toward answering these questions is to determine the overall goal for your speech or your general purpose:

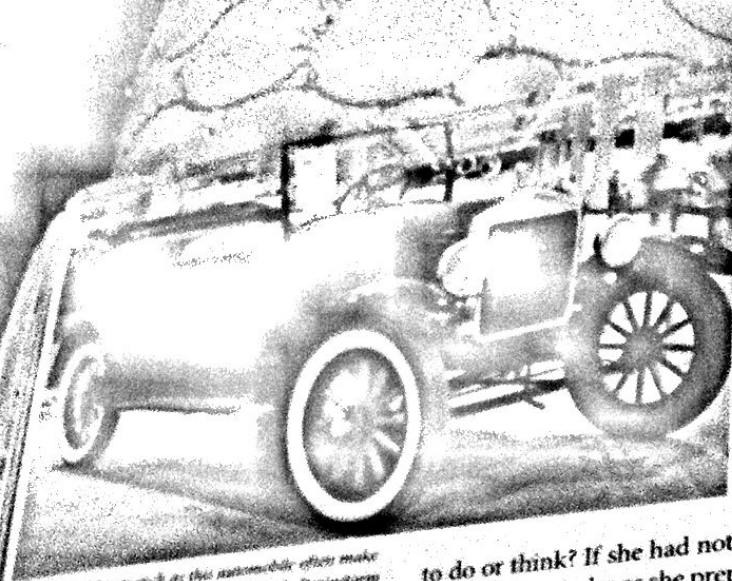
to inform—describe, clarify, explain, define;

to invite—explore, discuss, exchange, understand; or

to persuade—change, shape, influence, motivate.

Notice that each of these overall goals is quite different from the others. For example, the goal of describing is different from the goal of exploring, which is different from the goal of influencing. So by determining your general purpose, you begin to find a focus for your speech.

Specific Speaking Purposes Specific speaking purposes help you narrow the focus of your speech. A specific purpose states exactly what you



Objects such as this automobile often make interesting subjects for a speech. Brainstorm as many different ways as you can to give a speech related to this image of a car.

behavioral objectives

actions speaker wants audience to take at the end of a speech

want to accomplish in the speech. To understand the importance of a speech's specific purpose, consider Ashley's speaking situation.

Ashley tutored fourth graders in an after-school math homework program. This experience prompted her interest in several topics related to the public school system in her state, including possible gender bias in math education and the pledge of allegiance. She decided that she wanted to talk about the pledge and that her general speaking purpose was to persuade. But what did she want to persuade them

to do or think? If she had not figured this out, she would have found herself going in circles as she prepared her speech. She would have researched supporting material she did not need, and she would have gotten frustrated as she lost sight of what she wanted to accomplish with her speech.

Ashley needed to develop a specific-purpose statement. How did she do this? First, she identified her **behavioral objectives**, the actions she wanted her audience to take at the end of her speech. After some thought, she decided that she wanted her classmates to change their view of the pledge. She wrote on a piece of paper, "I want my classmates to believe a certain way about the Pledge of Allegiance." This speech purpose was still fairly broad, but it was more focused than her general purpose of persuading her classmates to change.

Ashley's next step was to narrow the focus of her behavioral objective even further. She defined what she meant by "believe a certain way." Based on her experiences in the public school and her research, she gained increased understanding of what the pledge means and why she thought it should be recited with the phrase "under God" by children in school. After some thought, Ashley realized that more specifically than wanting her classmates to believe a certain way, she wanted them to adopt her views about the pledge.

So even though Ashley generally wanted to persuade her audience to believe something, she specifically wanted to persuade them to support the pledge. Thus, her specific-purpose statement was, "I want to persuade my audience that the pledge, with the phrase 'under God,' should be recited in schools." At this point, she had a focused idea of what she wanted to communicate to her audience. She then found it much easier to prepare a speech with a specific purpose than if she had stopped at her general purpose of wanting her audience to change.

Table 10.2 shows more examples of general and specific purposes. Notice the differences between the general purposes and the specific purposes. From the three general purposes, you could generate specific purposes for at least twelve very different speeches.

When you state your specific speaking purpose, state it clearly and remain audience centered. Consider the following tips.

TABLE 10.2

GENERAL PURPOSES

To inform

To invite

To persuade

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State your specific purpose statements with these phrases: hope to accomplish and incorrect

Correct

To inform

history of

United States

To invite

to explore

support for

organic growth

To persuade

to participate

the Cure.

Notice

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makeup

TABLE 10.2 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC SPEAKING PURPOSES

GENERAL PURPOSE	SPECIFIC PURPOSE
To inform	To inform my audience about the importance of counseling centers. To inform my audience about the services offered by our campus preparing organic garden.
To invite	To invite my audience to participate in planting, harvesting, and group counseling. To invite my audience to explore the benefits of individual and part of our community park into organic gardening space.
To persuade	To persuade my audience to use the services offered by our campus counseling center. To persuade my audience to buy organic produce.

State your specific speaking purpose clearly. Begin your specific-purpose statements with the infinitive phrases *to inform*, *to invite*, or *to persuade*. These phrases clearly indicate what your general purpose is and what you hope to accomplish with your speech. Compare the following correct and incorrect statements of purpose.

Correct

To inform my audience of the history of martial arts in the United States.

To invite my co-workers to explore ways we could support local community organic gardens.

To persuade my audience to participate in Walk for the Cure.

Incorrect

I'm going to talk about martial arts.

Supporting community gardening.

Walk for the Cure is a good event.

Notice that the incorrect statements are unfocused and do not indicate the overall goal of the speech. Although it may seem that the incorrect statements leave greater room for a speaker's creativity, they are too vague to be of much help when you prepare your speech.

Keep your audience in the forefront of your mind. Remember, you are speaking to and for a particular audience, and you research and organize your speech with this fact in mind. Your specific purpose should clearly reflect the presence of your audience. To this end, be sure your specific-purpose statement includes the words *my audience* or a more specific synonym.

Notice how the correct examples encourage you to reflect on the makeup of your audience in ways that the incorrect examples do not.