ESU SKILLS GUIDE



ADVICE FOR GIVING A SPEECH #esufestivalofspeaking

Choosing a Speech

Choosing a topic is not as simple as choosing (or being given) an area to talk about. It really means choosing what you are trying to persuade the audience to believe.

A speech about cars might persuade the audience that, "Modern cars are less good than vintage cars," or perhaps, "Cars should be banned." A speech about the environment might try to persuade the audience, "You should change your habits to reduce your carbon emissions," or perhaps, "People today are too obsessed with the environment."

Organising your speech

Thinking of your topic as something of which you want to persuade people makes it easier to work out what you want to say - think of material that will convince the audience.

Your speech will need an introduction, some main points, and a conclusion, just like a piece of writing. A good guide is to have two to four main points you want to make, and to outline these in your introduction as well as remind the audience of them in your conclusion.

Being persuasive

Logos (the Greek for 'idea'): Being persuasive means backing up your points with evidence and analysis. Are there facts, statistics, examples or analogies that will help the audience understans and agree with your point?

Pathos (the Greek for 'emotion'): You also need to engage your audience's interest and feelings. The use of humour, stories, personal experiences and powerful words and imagery helps you get your message across. Think about the techniques that advertisers use and use them in your speech.

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Ethos (the Greek for 'character'): Finally, remember your audience members need to trust you and the things you tell them. You want to seem confident, knowledgeable, fair-minded and authoritative.

Delivery

How you deliver your speech is just as important as what you say.

Voice: Make sure you speak loudly and slowly enough that everybody can hear and understand you. However, you will only keep the audience interested if there is variety in your voice - you need to alter the tone, speed and volume depending on the sort of point you are making.

Language: Use language that will help persuade the audience. This means choosing powerful vocabulary and strong sentences. Think about the way famous speeches use different rhetorical tools like repetition, asking questions, and alliteration.

Face: You can also use your facial expression to emphasise what you are saying - are you angry? happy? disappointed? Remember that everything you say will have more impact if you maintain eye contact with the audience.

Body: Finally, remember to use gesture and changes of posture carefully. Strong gestures should be used to emphasise your points, but swaying or fidgeting can be very distracting. Stand in a way that makes you feel confident and comfortable.

Tips for the nervous

- Don't write out your speech word for word you will end up looking down at the paper, not up at the audience.
- Remember to drink some water before you speak.
- Use pauses to your advantage and to collect your thoughts.
- Be yourself the best way to speak to an audience is the way you naturally speak to those around you.

Plan. Practise. Perform. Post!

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