

Informative Speaking

THE INFORMATIVE SPEAKING ASSIGNMENT

- Offers an opportunity to practice your research, writing, organizing and speaking skills. This is a type of speaking used by professionals.
- You will:
 - Thoroughly research and understand a topic
 - Create a clearly organized speech
 - Practice an enthusiastic, dynamic style of delivery.
 - Seek to provide interesting and useful information to the audience.

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MAJOR TYPES OF INFORMATIVE SPEECHES

- about objects
 - about processes
 - about events
 - about concepts
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- Categories are a starting point for work on a speech.
 - You can classify informative speeches many ways, but the speech you deliver will fit into one of these four.
 - Because of time constraints, you cannot discuss any topic in its entirety.
 - Focus your discussion of some aspect of your topic.

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SPEECHES ABOUT OBJECTS

- Focus on things existing in the world, including people, places, animals or products.
 - Some example: the Central Intelligence Agency, tombstones, surgical lasers, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the pituitary gland, lemmings
- A tight focus: how Franklin Delano Roosevelt tried conceal the physical damage suffered from polio.
- A tight focus: How tombstones are designed.
- A tight focus: The role of the CIA in overthrowing the Allende regime in Chile.

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SPEECHES ABOUT PROCESSES

- Focus on patterns of action.
- One type is the demonstration speech that teaches people how to perform a process.
- Another type explains a process in broader terms. The audience is more likely to understand the importance or the context of the process.
- A speech about how milk is pasteurized would not teach the audience how to milk cows, but could help the audience understand the connections between patterns of action (the pasteurization process) and outcomes (a safe milk supply).

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SPEECHES ABOUT EVENTS

- Focus on things that happened, are happening or will happen.
- Remember to relate the topic to your audience.
 - A speech chronicling history is informative, but you should adapt the information to your audience.
 - Provide some way to use the information.
- Examples: the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington, Groundhog Day, the Battle of the Bulge, the World Series and the 2012 presidential election.

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SPEECHES ABOUT CONCEPTS

- Focus on beliefs, ideas and theories.
- Speeches about concepts are more abstract than those about processes or objects.
- Take care to be clear and understandable in a speech about a concept.
- When selecting a concept, remember you are crafting an informative speech.

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SPEECHES ABOUT CONCEPTS

- Often, speeches about concepts take on a persuasive tone.
 - Focus your efforts toward providing unbiased information and refrain from making arguments.
 - Because concepts can be vague and involved, limit your speech to aspects that can be readily explained and understood within the time limits.
- Some examples of topics for concept speeches include: democracy, Taoism, principles of feminism, the philosophy of non-violent protest and the Big Bang theory.

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STRATEGIES FOR SELECTING A TOPIC

■ Think of your interests.

- If you love art, think of topics dealing with famous artists, art works, or types of art.
- If you have a job, think of aspects of your job or of your employer's business that would be interesting.
- You cannot substitute personal experience for detailed research, but your own experience can add vitality to your presentation.

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■ Learn More about an Unfamiliar Topic.

- Challenge yourself by choosing a topic you want to learn about and help others understand.
- If the Buddhist religion has always been an interesting and mysterious topic to you, study the topic and create a speech that offers an understandable introduction to the religion.
- Remember to adapt Buddhism to your audience and tell them why you think this information is useful to them.

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■ Think about Previous Classes.

- Think back to concepts covered in those classes.
- Consider if they could serve as unique, interesting and enlightening topics for the informative speech.
- In astronomy, you learned about red giants. In history, you learned about Napoleon. In political science, you learned about The Federalist Papers.
- Past classes serve as rich resources for informative speech topics.
- Use your class notes and textbook as a starting point. Add research and perhaps interviews.

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■ Talk to Others.

- Talk about potential topics with classmates or friends.
- Other people can stimulate ideas when you get stuck.
- Always keep the basic requirements and the audience in mind.
- While you talk, jot notes about potential topics and create a master list.
- From the list, choose a topic with intellectual merit, originality and potential to entertain while informing.

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FRAMING A THESIS STATEMENT

- Narrow your topic and focus your research in one specific area, saving you time and trouble.
- Selecting a topic and focusing it into a thesis statement can be a difficult process.
- **Thesis Statement Purpose**
 - The thesis statement clearly communicates your topic and purpose to the audience.
 - Make it clear, concise and easy to remember.
 - Deliver it to the audience and use verbal and nonverbal illustrations to make it stand out.

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STRATEGIES FOR FRAMING A THESIS STATEMENT

- Focus on a specific aspect of your topic and phrase the thesis statement in one clear, concise, complete sentence.
- Keep the audience in mind.
- Set a goal for the speech.
 - For example, in a speech about art, the thesis statement might be, “The purpose of this speech is to inform the audience about the early works of Vincent van Gogh.”
 - The thesis statement is worded conversationally and included in the delivery of the speech.

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THESIS STATEMENT AND AUDIENCE

- The thesis appears in the introduction of the speech — in the clarifier — to set an immediate topic and goal.
- Try to create a clear, focused thesis statement that stands out and could be repeated by audience members.
- Refer to the audience in the thesis statement; make clear that the most important goal is to inform the audience about your topic.
- Avoid being too trivial or simple for the average audience member. But avoid being too technical for the average audience member.
- Use specific terms that clearly establish the focus.

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RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC

■ Gathering Materials

- Do some research before you settle on a topic.
- In your research conduct interviews, write or call for information from a clearinghouse or public relations office, and consult books, magazines, journals, newspapers, television and radio programs, and government documents.
- Use many of the library's databases or talk to a reference librarian to learn how to conduct efficient research.

RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC

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TAKE NOTES

- When you come across a useful passage, copy the **source and the information** onto the notecard or copy and paste the information.
- Maintain a working bibliography:
 - You always will know which sources you have consulted.
 - The process of writing citations and creating the bibliography will be easier.
 - Determine what recording strategies work best.
 - Talk to other students, instructors, and librarians to get tips on conducting efficient research.

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CITING SOURCES WITHIN YOUR SPEECH

- When you need to cite information, include the writer, publication and date.
- For example: “Chip Scoggins wrote in the Star Tribune of October 26, 2015, ‘Basketball gave Flip Saunders a college education and a comfortable life.’ ”
- If you do not quote someone, you might say: “The Minnesota DNR website, accessed October 25, 2015, stated anglers can keep one walleye between 18 and 20 inches long, or one longer than 28 inches.”
- When you use someone else’s ideas, thoughts, or words, you must provide a source citation.

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PARTS OF THE INFORMATIVE SPEECH

- The zinger, getting the audience's attention
- The clarifier, including your thesis
- The nutgraph
 - Relates the speech to the audience
 - Offers a credibility statement
 - Previews the speech
- The accordion
- The echo