



*The Art & Science of*  
**ORIGINAL ORATORY**

**Ashley Mack**



# THE ART & SCIENCE

*of Original Oratory*

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Published by  
National Speech & Debate Association  
401 Railroad Place,  
West Des Moines, IA 50265-4730 USA  
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Printed and bound in the United States of America

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# Acknowledgements

It would be impossible not to mention that this book was made possible by the incredible support and mentorship of a large community of educators, friends, and colleagues who work hard each and every year to provide quality forensics education to students across the country and around the globe. Knowledge is a shared commodity: passed down from mentors to students, through friends, and experiences. I have had the pleasure of learning from so many people over the years. First and foremost, I would like to thank Tony Figliola from Holy Ghost Preparatory for mentoring me and teaching me everything I know about oratory. Similarly, Meg Howell (Mountain View H.S., AZ) and Tracy Weaver were my coaches and mentors as a competitor, and I thank them from helping me get excited about oratory so long ago. My friends and colleagues at forensics institutes, universities, and high schools throughout the country contribute in so many ways to the perspectives I write about in this book. Special thanks to: Lydia Nelson, Jenny Cook, Gay Brasher, Randy Cox, and the National Speech & Debate Association.



# INTRODUCTION

## *What is Oratory?*

**F**orensics, or the science of words and rhetoric, seeks to dissect (much like its crime counterpart) the meaning of language through argumentation and performance. By examining the human experience through original speech writing, the interpretation of literature, or rapid-fire argumentation in debate— we become better communicators.

Original Oratory—considered by many to be the catalyst of forensics competition—seeks to do just that: tap into the human experience, and dissect societal problems in order to make the world a better place. By

identifying and examining social problems we expand and open up the floodgates to change.

**Cheesy?** *Maybe.*

**Fun?** *Yes.*

**Empowering?** *Absolutely!*

Though the rules for the category may be different in specific states and districts, generally, an original oratory is a speech that addresses a social problem, is written and memorized by the performer, and is no more than ten minutes in length. Above all else, an

oratory should reflect maturity, intelligence, wit, and hopefulness.

Public speaking has long been recognized as one of the hardest and most terrifying forms of communication. Mastering both written language and possessing the confidence and poise to deliver your speech to an audience is not an easy thing to do—this is one of the reasons that competing in oratory can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

The precarious relationship between artful delivery, eloquent writing, and thoughtful and logical construction reveals why it is so important to approach oratory is an art *and* a

science. It is an activity that requires creativity, passion, and vulnerability, while simultaneously requiring confidence, calculation, and logical reasoning.

Throughout this text, we will learn the roots of persuasive theory, explore how to select a topic, outline and write your speech, discover how to use humor effectively, and find out how to perform your speech so that it reflects you. As you hone your delivery skills and perfect your writing, always remember the precarious balance between being artful and scientific in your approach.

*In this chapter we will:*

- *Learn about the Rhetorical Situation*
- *Discuss how to appeal to an audience*
- *Explore how to examine audiences and adapt your speech to meet their desires and needs*

# CHAPTER 1

## *The Speaking Situation*

*“The first evil those who are prone to talk suffer, is that they hear nothing.”*

*—Plutarch*

### THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

**A**s an orator, you are attempting to introduce your audience to problems they may not know about, make them realize the error of their ways, and see the possibility for change. Considering that human beings and contexts are incredibly complex, persuasion can be difficult.

In order to help us better understand the complex situations where we try to persuade others, communication scholar Lloyd Bitzer defined the “rhetorical situation” in 1968. For Bitzer, opportunities for persuasion exist when there is an exigence, or an imperfection in social and political contexts that must be responded



to. For example, on September 11th, 2001 when terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President George W. Bush had to respond by giving a public speech to the nation where he reassured citizens and vowed to defend the United States. In this instance, the terrorist attacks constituted an exigence that demanded a rhetorical response by the President. This means that your speeches must respond to the immediate needs and problems facing an audience.

Moreover, in each rhetorical situation there are constraints that a speaker must adapt to and respond to in order to be effective and persuasive. Audiences hold beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and expectations that shape whether or not they respond to what you say in any given situation.

Bitzer's framework shows us how rhetoric is a conversation between the rhetor, the audience, the context, and the constraints—if the speaker wants to persuade the audience, the speaker has to listen to the audience, analyze the situation surrounding the exigence, identify constraints, and respond to those constraints in their speech.

When developing, writing, and editing your original oratory examining the rhetorical situation can help you be more effective and successful. Throughout this chapter, you will become familiar with methods of audience appeals, audience analysis, and audience adaptation that will help you assess the rhetorical situation you face and craft your speech to effectively persuade and engage your audience.

# APPEALING TO YOUR AUDIENCE

In ancient Greece, philosopher and orator Aristotle debated his long time teacher and mentor Plato over the character of rhetoric and persuasion. Plato believed that oratory was “mere rhetoric” and that it was used to bend the truth and manipulate audiences. Sound familiar? It should. This is a problem that still plagues our society. In 2005 Stephen Colbert called this “truthiness,” or the notion that we show little regard for truth in the face of emotional pull. However, Aristotle believed that oratory could be crafted into an art form—both persuasive and ethical.

Aristotle argued that people could not be ethically persuasive unless they possessed the ability to engage emotions and ignite a call to action for the audience. He introduced to us three rhetorical proofs: ethos, logos, and pathos. These proofs are necessary components of any speech because they appeal to the different faculties of an audience's needs and desires.

Aristotle was the first documented philosopher to interpret the audience and highlight the important role that it plays in determining how successful rhetoric is. Therefore, when writing or speaking persuasively, it is essential that we pay close attention to all three of these proofs and how they work together to dictate how and if an audience receives the message.

## ETHOS

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At first, speakers must establish ethos. Ethos refers to the credibility and moral competency of the speaker. Mainly, this proof expresses the qualification of the speaker to speak on the subject. When determining whether a given argument is valid or not, an audience member questions the ethos the speaker has established. Speakers establish ethos through their arguments and verbal/non-verbal delivery. Violations of ethos can entail some of the following:

- The speaker has a direct interest in the outcome of the debate (e.g. a person asking for money)
- The speaker has a *vested* interest in the outcome of the debate (e.g. a news company might want a particular political candidate to win because of their stance on media law, so you wouldn't be able to trust their anchors to be entirely objective).
- The speaker has no expertise (e.g. an actor or celebrity giving a speech at a political convention).

If the audience feels as though the speaker lacks ethos, it is unlikely that they will accept their arguments and claims throughout their

speech. Therefore, it is important that speakers make sure that the persona they are conveying before, during, and after they deliver their speech is professional, ethical, and mature. For oratory competitors ethos can be established through attire, actions in between rounds, or even the way a speaker carries themselves while speaking.

## LOGOS

Logos is the logical appeal that a speech or a speaker develops. Within modern society, appealing to logos requires the use of numbers, polls, and other mathematical or scientific data to appeal to the logical sensibilities of a given audience or individual.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Data are hard to manipulate, making speaker seem objective	Statistics can be framed in an unethical manner or taken out of context
Gives audience tangible descriptions of problems	Non-emotional
Increases ethos of speaker	Numbers may overwhelm the audience or they might not understand the connection to the argument at hand.

## PATHOS

Pathos is the use of emotional appeals to engage with the audience on a human-level.

Stories, powerful anecdotes, and emotional language work to evoke feelings, which can help engage your audience in the problem you are examining.

A speaker can appeal to the audience's emotions by:

- Using metaphor or story to relate claims to human experience; and,
- Using general emotion in the delivery and a significant amount of emotional/passionate items in the text of the speech.

When using as a closing device, pathos can be particularly powerful. Pathos is most effective when it is coupled with appeals to logic. Being overly emotional can also negatively impact a speaker's ethos and logos.

## CONCLUSION

As an orator, it is your job to incorporate the proper balance of ethos, pathos, and logos into your speech and delivery so that you can appeal to a variety of audience, mentalities, and perspectives. A speech that just appeals to the audience's emotions may come across as overdramatic, while a speech that using only logos appeals may come off as cold and inhuman. Considering this, having a proper balance of these rhetorical proofs will result in a more palpable and persuasive speech.

## AUDIENCE ANALYSIS & ADAPTATION

Aristotle explained that minds are a complex web—stimulated by different forms of information. Since different information triggers different minds, it is important to identify the types of audience members that you will come across in your rounds (and in life!).

### Who is your audience?

*Local Judges might be:*

- Former competitors, College Competitors, Parents, Coaches, Teachers

*National Judges might be:*

- Parents, seasoned coaches, former competitors who have been to Nationals, college competitors/coaches, and local hired judges (whom often reflect the flavor of that particular region).

Generally, audiences prefer someone who looks confident and has a winning smile; whose eyes reach into the souls of the listeners; whose speech demonstrates variety and passion; who comes off more mature than anyone else (thus establishing authority); who is in control of their body; who is well dressed; who has an intriguing topic; and who has developed the speech in an interesting way using varied support and emotional and clever language.

Yet, because, as Bitzer noted, every rhetorical situation is different, it is important for you to understand how to adapt to the audience in your particular region, and to the numerous audiences you might face in different regions if

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**It is important to identify the types of audience members that you will come across in your rounds (and in life!).**

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you compete nationally.

Considering this, the process of audience analysis and adaptation is critical to effective presentations. **Audience analysis** refers to the process of understanding who your audience is—their demographic characteristics, their orientation to/feelings about your topic, and so on. In this process, you will spend time thinking about who your audience is in any given round, what their expectations are, and what their needs are. **Audience adaptation** refers to the process of taking what you know about your audience (from your audience analysis process) and adapting your speech to that audience, keeping in mind the ethics of staying true to your own message while considering ways to be respectful of the people

you are speaking to. In order to be other-centered (that is, audience-centered), speakers must effectively adapt their speech's specific purpose and content to the audience. We can never know *everything* about anyone and audiences are often so diverse that you cannot please everyone. But you can do your best to critically assess and consider all positions.

## AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

As previously stated, audience analysis is the systematic gathering and analysis of information about the audience of a particular speech. You should not only do an audience analysis

at the beginning of each competition season for every speech you write, but also for every new region, state, or national tournament you might go to throughout the year.

There is an easy acronym that you can employ when seeking to gather information about your audience (see chart on the right). First, you want to **analyze** and identify who you are most likely going to speak to in a round of normal competition in your region or district. How many people generally sit in rounds? Are there going to be just judges? Competitors? Who are you judges most likely going to be?

Next, you must assess what the **audiences knowledge** or understanding is about the topic you are going to be discussing. This is important because if you discuss information an audience does not understand without giving the necessary background and context information, it might go over their heads. On the other hand, spending too much time on information that the audience already has an understanding of can lead to audience apathy and boredom.

After you have assessed audience knowledge, try your best to examine the **demographics** of your audience pool. Demographics are easily categorized characteristics of an audience, like their age, gender, race, religion, and income ratio. Demographics are incredibly important, but if you focus too much on the demographic aspect of audiences you may disregard other, more important aspects of your audience.

### AUDIENCE ANALYSIS ACRONYM

**A**nalysis (Who? How many?)

**U**nderstanding (Audience knowledge?)

**D**emographics

**I**nterest (Why are they here?)

**E**nvironment

**N**eeds (of audience? Presenter?)

**C**ustomized (specific needs?)

**E**xpectations

Next, try to gauge why the audience is there, or their **interest**. Are they competitors waiting for their turn to perform? Parents who were forced to judge because their child is performing? Coaches who are well informed and are required to judge? Former competitors who are personally invested in the event they are judging? Understanding the various reasons why an audience member is listening to your speech can help you identify the obstacles you may face in getting them to engage and be persuaded by your words.

Once you have assessed the reasons why your audience is there, you should assess the **environment** in which you are going to be speaking. This is a part of audience analysis process that a speaker must constantly be considering during each new round of competition. Does the room you are speaking in have a large echo? Is there a podium or large desk blocking the front of the room? Can you move it? Where is the audience sitting and how can you best engage them? Are there any external distractions (air conditioners, construction outside, people talking in the hallway, a bathroom nearby)? By critically assessing the environment where you will be delivering your oratory, you can better prepare and plan for how you will approach the situation.

Finally, you want to assess the **needs**, **customized needs**, and **expectations** of the audience. The needs of an audience are the things they absolutely need you to do in order for you to successfully engage and persuade

them. For example, if you are speaking to more parent judges, they might need for you to provide them with more pathos and ethos. While a debate judge who is observing your oratory round might need the speaker to provide more logos. The customized needs of an audience refers to any special needs in specific cases. For example, in certain regions many parents who are not fluent in English judge speech rounds. Competitors must understand this customized need in order to adapt their writing and delivery accordingly. The audience's expectations are the things that the audience expects for a speaker to do or say in a speech. For example, in some regions speakers must use certain organizational patterns or structures to be successful. This is because the judges and audience expect that all successful oratories are done in a specific way.

By performing an audience analysis you obtain the necessary information to make strategic and effective choices about your speech.

## AUDIENCE ADAPTATION

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Audience adaptation refers to the process of taking what you know about your audience (from your audience analysis process) and adapting your speech to that audience, keeping in mind the ethics of staying true to your own message while considering ways to be respectful of the people you are speaking to.

Public speaking is audience-centered: You rely on your audience and judges to respond

positively to your speech in order for you to be successful. It only makes sense, then, that you would adapt the purpose, content, and delivery of your speech to meet your audience's needs, expectations, and desires. You must take the information gleaned from your audience analysis and make strategic decisions about how to move forward with your original oratory. There are several questions that you can ask yourself to aid in this process:

- What is the purpose of this speech? In other words, what is it that you want your audience to learn from your speech?
- Why do you think it's important for your audience to care about your topic? Why is it relevant? How does it affect them?
- In what ways will you convince your audience that your topic is important for them to listen to? (Think about the type of research/support you will use to persuade your audience. For example, will you use any surprising statistics?)
- In what ways will you keep your audience engaged throughout your presentation?

(Think of your non-verbals, speaking style, presentational aids, etc.)

- How will you be adapting your speech based on what you know about the audience? What characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, or values (e.g., age, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, ability status, language, political views, etc.) are significant to consider? Why or why not?

## CONCLUSION

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Audience analysis and adaptation is an ongoing process. As you proceed through the year your speech and delivery should evolve as you obtain information and feedback from your audience through judges' ballots, comment cards, and your coaches and teammates. Understanding the processes of audience analysis and adaptation is also important when developing your topic, researching, outlining, and writing your speech. Every decision you make along the way should be made only after considering the audience for your speech.

*In this chapter we will discuss:*

- *What good topics are*
- *How to define your topic*
- *How to develop your topic into a thesis*
- *How to research and develop your speech*

# CHAPTER 2

## *Developing Your Speech*

*“You can speak well if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart.”*

*—John Ford*

### CHOOSING A TOPIC

**S**o you want to write an oratory? Ok. Doable. But where do you start? The best place to begin is by figuring out exactly what it is you want to talk about for ten minutes, dozens of times over the next year.

Oratoryland is a magical world where anyone can fix anything. So you have a really unique opportunity—you get to talk

about **WHATEVER** you want. You heard me. **WHATEVER YOU WANT.**

For most of you, this will be your only opportunity to speak extensively on a subject that you really care about. It is important, as noted in the previous chapter, that your topic addresses a real exigence that you and your audience are facing. Topics must establish an immediate emotional



NEED for change. As a result, it is better if the topic is something you are passionate about. Many times people start with a story or experience from their own lives or the lives of their family and friends.

You can also peruse headlines, magazines, and TV shows to try to find a story of someone who you believe has done something exemplary or perhaps something abhorrent. By beginning your search for a topic with real life examples, studies, or news stories, you guarantee that the ideas you are brainstorming have real significance for people and will be something that they respond to (they provide the “exigence” Bitzer argued was so necessary).

Once you have brainstormed several ideas and collected examples, it is important that you take several steps to ensure that your topic is thoughtfully developed.

## TEASE OUT IDEAS

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The best thing you can do is talk out your ideas. Take your ideas, examples, and studies to a friend, coach, or family member and initiate dialogue. Dialogue, according to theorists like Plato and Habermas, is one of the best ways that we can “widdle” an idea down to its essence or get to the root of a problem.

During this process, it is as important to identify what you are NOT talking about as it is to identify what you are. G.K. Chesterton once wrote that “A man does not know what he is saying until he knows what he is not saying.” Identifying what you are not talking about or arguing can help you clearly and effectively articulate the problem you are attacking in your speech.

## CONCEPTS VERSUS SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

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Since orators are talking about social problems to a broad audience, oratory topics are generally conceptual social problems instead of specific issues. Specific problems can be used as great examples of a larger conceptual problem, but they are not oratory topics themselves.

*In the chart below, you will note the difference between specific issues and oratory topics. Finding a specific issue that you care about can be a great way to lead yourself to an amazing oratory topic.*

Specific Problem	Oratory topic
Adults are taking on too much work.	We NEED to learn how to say no.
Women are not marrying as often because they are picky about whom they date.	We NEED to not be so picky.
20% of deaths in automobile accidents occur while individuals are texting while driving.	We are a society that is too distracted.
Only 10% of American claim to believe they can achieve their dreams.	We NEED to begin believing in belief!
Cyberbullying results in many teen suicides.	We are a culture of bullies.

Once you understand this difference, you can begin doing the difficult work of defining your topic. Work your way from smaller specific problems to bigger conceptual topics by

asking yourself what the larger social issue at hand is. What other examples of this problem exist? Are there other arenas of life where this problem occurs?

## SPIN IT!

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OH! There is one thing you should know before you begin: no topic is original. Not to burst your bubble, but every idea has been thought of before.

People have been bad listeners for CENTURIES! Fear will always cripple our opportunities. And love, will never make sense.

This does not mean that you should not do these topics. In fact, if something is still a problem, it is our job as social scientists to figure out WHY it is we still have not changed. The general rule is, if it's still a problem, it is definitely worth talking about, but if your audience thinks you are approaching a problem in a trite or clichéd manner, they might tune you out and ultimately ignore your call to action.

Therefore, the goal is to use spin (a communication tactic) to transform your subject (if it needs it) into a bright and shiny oratory topic.

*What's SPIN?*

Spin, also called framing, is a widely used media and public relations tool and gained a lot of attention during the 2004 Presidential election. In public relations, spin is usually a pejorative term signifying a heavily biased portrayal (in one's own favor) of an event or

situation that is designed to bring about the most positive result possible. While traditional public relations relies more on creative presentation of the facts, “spin” often, though not always, implies disingenuous, deceptive and/or highly manipulative tactics to sway audiences away from widespread (and often commonsense) perceptions. Worth noting is that the word “spin” is not the formal word for this strategy. Both academics and those who study and work in strategic communications more formally refer to this strategy as “framing.”

So you may be asking why we are talking about being dishonest in an event that requires that we use facts and honesty? Well, when I use the term, I am referring to renaming, and re-categorizing old topics to be new, shiny topics. Doing a speech on happiness may turn off some judges for being cliché, but doing a speech on how happiness gets more and more costly as we get older, is a new spin on an old number.

There are many ways that you can spin topics that may seem trite into being more thoughtful and fashionable. For example:

### **1. Flip it!**

Sometimes an excellent way to make a cliché topic bright, shiny, and new is to flip it on its head and argue its opposite. It might be a bit tired to argue that we are too judgmental, but what if you argued that we aren’t judgmental enough? Or that we should trust our first instincts and guts?

### **2. Wrap it!**

We can dress old topics in shiny new wrapping paper by utilizing new buzzwords. For example, Marie Agnello (2006 National Tournament Finalist) delivered a speech on the topic “One Hit Wonders,” which explores our societies tendency to disregard one time success as trivial. Marie’s topic is just a prettier and updated version of an age-old speech about the crushing pressure to be successful. In 2003, National Champion Lydia Nelson delivered a speech arguing that we treat people who are less attractive differently. While this is an age-old problem, Lydia made it interesting and new by naming this problem the Ugly Duckling Syndrome, or UDS. By framing problems in new and intriguing ways we can avoid being trite.

### **3. Put it in context!**

Many times, the best way to make sure that you are not doing a cliché topic is to look at the reasons why a problem still exists today, or what makes that particular problem sustain itself in modern times. For example, claiming that “we have empty friendships” might be an age-old problem, but as technology has blossomed and consumed our lives in the beginning of the twenty-first century, the ways in which our friendships become empty or detached have changed drastically through the use of social media. A speech that recognizes this would not be cliché, but a timely and thoughtful discussion of the subject.

## ASSESS WHETHER THE TOPIC MEETS QUALITY STANDARDS

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**VALIDITY:** Is this a problem for people? Is it real? (Basically, don't do a speech about aliens. Well, unless something has drastically changed since I wrote this book in 2012).

**RELEVANCE:** Does this topic affect me? My audience? How much? Is my audience going to accept that this topic is important? If they will not, how can I prove (or can I prove) that it is?

**DEPTH:** Can I find research, stories, facts, and other information about this topic?

**DIGESTIBILITY:** Is this topic someone can simply understand or grasp? Is it overly complicated and obtuse? What obstacles might I face communicating this topic?

## DEVELOP A PURPOSE STATEMENT AND THESIS

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Once you have chosen a topic, it is important that you develop that idea into a purpose statement and thesis.

There is an important distinction between these two types of statements. A purpose statement describes what you want to accomplish by giving your speech. This statement is not placed in your oratory, but is used by you as a writer to develop and hone your ideas.

The best way to write a purpose statement is to complete the sentence: "I want to persuade people to..."

For example, if my topic was about our inability to say "no," my purpose statement might be:

*I want to persuade people to stand up for what they want and say no when they need to or want to.*

In contrast, a thesis statement clearly states your full argument. Often, it contains an articulation of the problem you are identifying and what you want people to do about it. For example:

*We have become a culture of people afraid to say no; but we need to learn to stand up for ourselves and say no!*

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**A purpose statement describes what you want to accomplish by giving your speech.**

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## CONCLUSION

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Once you have followed all five of these steps you most likely will have a well developed and concrete topic, thesis, and purpose statement which will serve as the foundation for the development of the rest of your speech. In the next section, we will examine how to begin researching and developing this topic further by gathering evidence and data to support your claims.

## RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC

So you've come up with a fantastic topic...but you have no idea where to research information about it. An oratory without sufficient research material is like a fish without water—it will not survive. British philosopher and logician Stephen Toulmin argues that to be successful every argument requires sufficient grounds, or evidence, to persuade an audience. In this section we will go over different methods of research. By using a combination of these methods, you should be able to gather enough information to support any thesis (as long as it is ACTUALLY a problem that society suffers from).

### TYPES OF EVIDENCE

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First, it is important to note that there are many different types of evidence and you must provide the audience a wealth of diversity in data so that they see the depth and breadth of the social problem you are examining. While you are writing your oratory, you will come across lots of evidence, and it is your job to thoughtfully discern what to include and not to include. Therefore, you must analyze the definitions and strategies of the different types of evidence so that you can judiciously use support materials in your speech.

#### Statistics

Statistics are a measurement or set of measurements that seek to explain or describe an

issue or subject. Statistics are a useful way of clearly representing an issue or its properties. You can employ statistics to show that 1 in 4 individuals are doing a certain behavior, or you could say that 25% of society is plagued by this habit. There are two different types of statistics that you should know about while searching for evidence to support your original oratory.

First, descriptive statistics explicitly describe the characteristics and contours of a person, place, population, or subject. This type of statistic seeks to quantify the most significant qualities of a subject. For example, every 10 years the United States performs the census, which attempts to count every citizen in the US and cite their religion, demographics, geography, gender, and so on. When the U.S. Census cites that 51% of Americans are women, that is a descriptive statistic. This type of statistic is incredibly accurate, as it seeks to explicitly represent the subject it is examining.

But there is another type of statistic called an inferential statistic. This type of statistic comes from studies, polls, or surveys that look at a small, random sampling of the population and then draw conclusions about the general population based on those findings. For example, let's say that a scientist has composed a study to examine the prevalence of stage fright in speech and debate students. The scientist randomly surveys 1,000 students from diverse

geographic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds and finds that 25% of the participants suffer from stage fright. When the study reports that 25% or 1 in 4 students in speech and debate suffer from stage fright, this is an inferential statistics because its a conclusion that is drawn on an inference not on the data itself.

There is a wide variety of statistical information available, and this type of evidence is highly valued by audiences. However, statistics can be used to mislead audiences by making problems seem bigger than they actually are. So it is important that you use statistics ethically and honestly.

## Examples

Examples are perhaps the most widely used form of evidence in original oratory. Examples can be very useful in not only bringing to life problems but also help to show the depth of an issue. There are several different types of examples that you can use in your speech.

*Factual examples* are references to real people, objects or events that have happened in the past. For example, if I reference the incredible ingenuity of the late Steve Jobs to emphasize a point about being creative and stepping off the beaten path, I am using a factual example to support my claim. For example, Kelley Siart writes in her 2008 oratory about our fear of hearing and telling the truth:

*“The truth isn’t always what we want—a fact recognized by the Ohio State Uni-*

*versity Medical School which has a specific course that teaches its students the right way to deliver bad news. Which means, no more, “Shhehhh, you know that birthday you were looking forward to?” Although most truths, aren’t **this** scary, we have trained ourselves to fear the unknown.”*

By referencing the specific example of the OSU Medical School, Ms. Siart was able to bring to life her argument that telling the truth can be difficult.

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**Statistics can be used to mislead audiences by making problems seem bigger than they actually are. So it is important that you use statistics ethically and honestly.**

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Unlike factual examples, *hypothetical examples* create or reference an imaginary situation that enables visualization. Often oratory speakers use hypothetical examples in their introductions (as Attention Getting Devices) in order to humorously help the audience visualize and grasp the problem they are addressing. Hypothetical examples are also useful when trying to quickly bring to life an issue for the audience. The 2007 National Champion Anthony Francomacaro used a hypothetical

example to create imagery and provide comic relief when he wrote: “Instead of spending countless hours instant messaging, call a friend, invite them over. Give old Mr. Wilson from across the street an invite to your next Cher sing along...Well maybe not...”

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**Factual, hypothetical, case study, or narrative examples can help to ground your original oratory in the real world by providing descriptive and specific connections to human existence.**

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A *case study* is a factual example that illustrates a concept so well it is detailed extensively. Case study examples are used less frequently, but when they are appropriate they can be incredibly helpful. In 2003, National Champion Lydia Nelson used a case study example about the popular film *A League of Their Own* throughout her speech to illustrate her point that pretty individuals are often treated with more respect. Ms. Nelson referenced the example many times throughout her speech, using it as a transitional device (see her use of this case study).

Finally, *narrative examples* are descriptive stories that illustrate a point. Narrative examples are particularly useful when a speaker is trying to use pathos appeals to show the audience the

seriousness of a particular problem. Narrative examples can be personal examples, stories from a friend, or stories that you read about in newspapers, blogs, or on television. In her 2006 National Final round speech on our willingness to dismiss success, Marie Agnello tells the story of the paramedic Robert O'Donnell who rose to fame after saving Jessica McClure, known as “baby Jessica” from a well. Agnello writes:

*“And misfortune is exactly where our fits of fame lead. In 1987 baby Jessica McClure fell down a 22-foot well in Midland, Texas. Her survival unfolded across the headlines of CNN. But amidst the horror was a man who has long been forgotten. 3.1 Million households watched as Robert O'Donnell, a local paramedic, emerged with Jessica in his arms— a national hero. This reluctant bystander was now wrapped in a whirlwind of media interviews, book deals, and made for TV movies. But when the reporters stopped calling, O'Donnell felt trapped in his heroism and the stress of repeating it. As his mother told the New York Times, “It was the greatest moment of Robert's life, and it was the worst thing that ever happened to him.” Eight years after saving Jessica's life, he took his own. As A.E. Housman once wrote in the poem “To An Athlete Dying Young”, “Runners whom renown outran,/And the name died before the*



*man.” Nowadays, it is better to die and be known than to die in obscurity, even if that means an untimely death. Robert O’Donnell suffered an untimely death. He is, like all of us, a runner. And when we cannot keep up with our own success, when we never reach the 16<sup>th</sup> minute, it is sometimes better to have never succeeded at all.”*

Agnello tells the story of O’Donnell’s untimely death as a way of highlighting how our focus on continued and sustained success can harm us greatly.

Factual, hypothetical, case study, or narrative examples can help to ground your original

oratory in the real world by providing descriptive and specific connections to human existence.

## Analogy

An analogy, or the strategic comparison of two things, can function as useful and illustrative evidence. There are two types of analogies, literal and figurative. A *literal analogy* is when you compare two objects that have overtly similar characteristics. For example, when I say that “the cobblestone streets of Boston’s north end remind me of the streets of Madrid” I am making a literal analogy. A *figurative analogy*, on the other hand, is when you compare two objects that are distinctly different, but share similar qualities. When Forrest Gump famously

quipped, “Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get,” he was making a figurative analogy. Both figurative and literal analogies can be useful in help the audience see the depths or characteristics of the problem, subject, or object you are discussing.

## Testimony

Another useful type of evidence is the use of testimony to support claims. Testimony is a formal written or spoken statement that

serves as evidence of a claim. There are several different types of testimony that you should be aware of when seeking to use quotations or testimony to support the arguments in your oratory. *Authoritative testimony* is given by a credible authority or expert (e.g. when a forensics specialist testifies in court that they believe it is impossible for a defendant to have shot a victim based on the projection of the bullets, that is expert testimony).

*Lay testimony* consists of the opinion, feelings or experiences of someone who has personal involvement with or sentiments about a subject. For example, when teenager Trayvon Martin of Florida was shot in 2011, his mother joined Mayor Bloomberg of New York City in a video calling for increased gun control laws throughout the country. Although she is not an expert in gun control, her personal experience with her son’s shooting gives her testimony relevance.

Finally, *nominal testimony* is when a well-known person makes a general statement that can be related to your subject. For example, if I was trying to support my claim that we need to be proactive about our happiness and I quoted actor Neil Patrick Harris as saying, “When I’m sad I stop being sad and be awesome instead,” I would be using nominal testimony.

## Finding the Balance

It is important, as was previously noted in the audience chapter, that you have a balanced approach to using evidence. Generally speaking,

### HARD EVIDENCE

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- **Facts**

- **Actual Events**

*Over 3,000 people died in the 9/11 attacks.*

*Mark Little was the father of two sons, Matt and Ryan.*

- **Statistics**

*According to a recent Gallup poll, 65% of Americans feel lonely when they are with someone else.*

- **Scientific Research/Studies and Fair Polling**

*1 out of 4 people lack someone to confide in.*

- **Dates**

### SOFT EVIDENCE

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- **Testimony**

- **Examples**

- **Quotations**

you can break the different types of evidence into two categories: hard evidence and soft evidence (see chart below). You should do your best to use both types equally throughout your speech.

## THE FOUR R'S TO SUCCESSFUL SOURCING

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Now that you have a clear understanding of the different types of evidence that you can use in your oratory, it is important that you understand how to best assess sources that will provide this information. There are Four R's that are useful when assessing whether or not a source should be used.

### Relevant

The piece of evidence needs to make sense with your argument and possess relevance. Using a piece of evidence that claims that every morning the sun does not really set at night, it merely **TURNS** into the moon, is not going to help you if your speech is about yodeling. Granted, not much will help you, but nonetheless, the point is make sure your evidence is connected and relevant.

### Recent

Sources should be recent, up to date, and timely. The general rules are:

- Quotations are timeless

- Articles have a two-year shelf life. Meaning, if its 2012, you shouldn't use news articles before 2010.
- Studies and statistics have a longer shelf life, as long as they are still relevant, un-contested, and you can explain their maintained recency. For example, a source that states that 25 million people use MySpace from 2004 is probably outdated since not as many users are on that site today.

### Reliable

Sources that you use must be reliable and tested over time. While scientific studies provide us great information, even science proves to be flawed sometimes. It is important that you make sure to *double-confirm* that sources, studies, and information you use is accurate and reliable. For example, a domestic violence study conducted in the 1960's discovered that men suffered as much domestic violence as women. **HOWEVER**, years later, this study was considered obsolete because the study forgot to take into consideration that the "violence" being perpetuated against men, was often women fighting back self-defense. If you were to use this study today without double-confirming that it was still considered to be reliable by other scientists and the general public, it would be an unethical use of the study.

## Re-usable

Don't get caught up if you cannot find a study or statistic that supports every component of every part of your argument. Sometimes you can use a piece of evidence that doesn't prove your thesis exactly, but supports what you're saying in a particular argument or sub-point. It is your job as a persuasive speaker to make an argument for why a conglomerate of statistics and facts prove your main thesis correct. For example: if your speech is on success, and you might find a statistic that says that pressure on kids is increasing suicides, that fits if you make sure to connect that evidence properly to the claim you are making.

## WHERE CAN YOU FIND RESEARCH?

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### NEWSPAPERS, PERIODICALS, & MAGAZINES

Searching newspapers and periodicals throughout the year can help you find relevant and updated examples. I suggest creating a box or file cabinet/folder full of articles that may be used in the future. The New York Times, The New Yorker, The Economist, UTNE, and the US News and World Report are all great resources for finding studies, stories, and examples for your oratory.

### THE GOOD OL'FASHIONED LIBRARY

The Library, though seemingly obsolete because of the Internet, sometimes gives us some

of our best information. Searches sometimes never enable us to see books that can lead us into an entirely new direction. Spend a few hours in the library, roaming through books in the social sciences section looking up books that have to do with your topic, and checking out the books in the section(s) surrounding the book you do find. Sometimes you will be surprised at what you find.

## ONLINE

There are several different types of online research engines you should be familiar with as you begin the process of writing your oratory.

### Google

The most basic, and most accessible form of online searching is the Google search at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Follow these steps to successful Google searches.

1. Enter topic into the Google search engine. E.g. One Hit Wonders
2. Sift through the search results. If too many place topic in quotation marks (e.g. "One Hit Wonders").
3. Type in other terms that are connected to the topic. E.g. Success, failure, pressure to succeed.
4. Go to "Advanced Search" in order to help you define your search even more (see below for an interactive tour of the advanced search engine).

Before you begin, you should do always do a general Google of your topic. Chances are good that there will be a few websites that could give you a jumping off point for further investigation. To go deeper into the research you will need to do quite a bit of brainstorming and poking around on the Internet.

## Google Book Search

**<http://books.google.com>**

Google Book Search is a great new way to find more information on your topic. Google now offers this way to look inside the contents of a book and check to see if you can find WHOLE BOOKS that deal with your topic.

## Google Scholar

**<http://scholar.google.com>**

Google Scholar is a search engines that sorts through academic scholarly articles. As with the Google Internet search and book search there is an Advanced Search option that is very useful.

**Lexis Nexis** (and other online scholarly databases: JStor, EBSCO-host, etc...)

Lexis Nexis is an online database that searches periodicals (newspapers, magazines, TV news transcripts). JStor is another online database that searches Academic journals, and EBSCO-host searches periodicals, press releases, periodicals, and study releases. All of these databases search similarly to the Google search. But because they are more specific,

subscriptions to them are incredibly expensive. Your schools generally purchase some form of online database. Check out at your library which databases are available to you.

If you are looking for specific reports on specific incidents, LEXIS is really wonderful. You can do a guided news search.

## Online Newspapers

One of the best tools you have available is newspapers and TV shows that have online editions, such as the New York Times, Slate Magazine, Altnet.org, and the New Yorker. These websites offer up to date archives of their shows and print editions in order to give you more opportunities to obtain information. By searching their websites, and popping in on them every once in a while you can get a good grasp on some solid examples for your speech.

## CONCLUSION

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Researching your topic and finding the appropriate support materials to enrich your oratory will be a year long process. You should continue updating sources, keeping your eye out for relevant examples, and seeking new statistics throughout the competition season. Ultimately, your evidence should be used ethically and should help to increase your ethos, logos, and pathos. In the next section of this chapter, we will discuss how to build and construct arguments in your oratory.

# ARGUMENTATION

Now that we've discussed how to develop a clear topic and research effectively, it is important that we get a firm grasp on how to construct, assess, and refine arguments and claims in your speech. Oratories are persuasive speeches that must make clear arguments and support them sufficiently. Argumentation is the action or process of reasoning systematically in support of an idea, action, or theory.

## TOULMIN MODEL OF ARGUMENTATION

**Claim:** The position advocated in an argument.

**Grounds:** The evidence supporting the claim of an argument.

**Warrant:** The principle, provision, or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds to the claim.

**Backing:** The speaker provides extra support, justification, or reasons to back up the warrant.

**Rebuttal:** The speaker provides exceptions to the claim. Here, the speaker provides counter-arguments and/or counter-examples to their claim and refutes them. Providing a rebuttal shows the audience that you recognize other perspectives. Rebuttals also function to proactively answer any looming concerns that the audience might have.

**Qualification:** The speaker qualifies or admits the limits of the claim, warrant, grounds, or backing.

British philosopher and logician Stephen Toulmin studied courtroom arguments in order to identify the necessary components of a persuasive claim. Through his research he identified six elements of persuasive argumentation: The 1) Claim; 2) Grounds; 3) Warrant; 4) Backing; 5) Qualifier; and, 6) Rebuttal.

The claim, grounds, and warrant are fundamental to any argument, while providing backing, rebuttals, and qualifiers are optional.

Toulmin's model reveals how important the internal structure of an argument is. When one of these elements is missing, it is unlikely that people are going to be persuaded to accept your claim.

The warrant is perhaps the most important, yet often ignored, element of Toulmin's model. The warrant is the primary premise of an argument, and shapes the relationship between the claim and the grounds. While there are an infinite number of ways that the use of evidence to support a claim can be warranted, below are some of the most common.

## TYPES OF WARRANTS

*Causality:* An event is the result of, or is affected by factor X.

*Sign:* Certain types of evidence are symptomatic of some wider principle or outcome.

*Generalization:* What is true for large sample is true for everyone, or can be inferred to be true.

*Analogy:* What was true in a case before hand is also true in this case based on similarities in cases.

*Authority:* Person X or text X is or is not an authority on this subject. Are they objective?

*Principle:* Identifying a principle that is widely accepted as valid and showing an instance when that principle applies.

Each and every time that you make an argument in your oratory, you must make sure that you not only have a clear claim and evidence to back it up, but that you are connecting that claim properly to that evidence by using a logically sound warrant. To illustrate the use of Toulmin's model in action, we can break down an argument made by Sonia Chokshi, in her 2010 speech *My White Knight*.

During the solution section of her speech, Ms. Chokshi makes the following argument:

First, we must be able to recognize the happiness that we get from our relationships not from the number of Milano Blahniks we've got stashed in our closet. Cus trust me, huggin' a stilleto isn't the least bit comforting. According to the 2003 Framingham Heart Study, a person is 25 percent more likely to be happy if they live within one mile of a friend. But even if you aren't BFFs with your next door neighbor, you should still invest more of your time in the friends and family that do support you, because true happiness lies with them.

The **claim** here is that "we must be able to recognize the happiness that we get from our relationships not from the number of Milano Blahniks we've got stashed in our closet."

The **grounds** that Ms. Chokshi uses to support this claim is the 2003 Framingham Heart Study.

Now, how does she **warrant** the use of this evidence to support this claim? Implicit in her use of this evidence is a causality warrant: Our happiness is affected by our proximity to our family and friends.

Ms. Chokshi even provides a **rebuttal** when she states that, "But even if you aren't BFFs with your next door neighbor, you should still invest more of your time in the friends and family that do support you, because true happiness lies with them." Here, she acknowledges the counter-argument that not everyone can live by their close friends, and rebuts that even if you lack proximity you can invest more of your time into them.

By invoking Toulmin's model when writing your original oratory, you will craft more cohesive and sound arguments that are more likely to be accepted by an audience.

## LOGICAL FALLACIES

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In order to effectively create logically sound arguments, we not only need to use Toulmin's model to guide our creation of arguments, but we need to also be aware of logical fallacies that can be made in arguments. Logical fallacies are common arguments that can often sound plausible, but rely on false or invalid premises or inferences (bad warrants). There are many kinds of logical fallacies, but we will focus on addressing the most common logical infractions.



*Hasty generalizations:* A claim drawing a conclusion from too few examples. Example: “Britney Spears had a mental breakdown, so it’s safe to assume all pop princesses are on the brink of insanity.”

*Ad-hominem (Name-Calling) fallacy:* Attacking a person for characteristics unrelated to the argument that person is making, in order to disprove the argument. Example: “Your argument is bunk because you’re a loser.”

*Strawman fallacy:* Building a mock-up or “strawman” version of an opponent’s argument so as to attack that weaker version in order to prove the correctness of your own position. Example: “My opponent favors waving the white flag of surrender in Iraq!”

*Appeal to ignorance:* Because the outcome of a controversy is unknown, we should support

the position presented. Example: “You can’t prove my plan won’t work, so we should do it.”

*Bandwagon fallacy:* Because a position is popular, you should support it. Example: “Drive yourself home! Everyone drives drunk and most of my friends have come out just fine!”

*Genetic fallacy:* Because something has always been a certain way, it should continue to be that way. Example: “Boys always ask girls to dances, so girls can’t ask boys.”

*Appeal to authority:* There are two versions of this fallacy: 1) Because someone is an expert, their position is assumed to be correct; 2) Citing someone who is popular but not an expert as the basis of the argument (e.g. celebrity product endorsements).

*Sequential Fallacy:* Building an argument on the assumption “After this, therefore because

of this,” (“*Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*”). To put another way, arguing that because something A happened before something B, something A caused something B. Example: “There can be no doubt that the Great Depression was caused by Herbert Hoover. Seven months after he became President, the stock market crashed.”

*Begging the Question:* Basing a claim on circular or tautological reasoning. Example: “If we aren’t supposed to eat animals, then why are they so delicious?” – Stephen Colbert

*Persuasive Definition Fallacy:* Using skewed definitions that are unique to the person offering them so as to support the position they advocate. Example: “Real women have curves.”

*Ambiguity Fallacy:* Using a term without clarifying specific meaning, thereby causing confusion and inaccurate claims. Example: A sign seen in 2001 read “Support this petition to end women’s suffrage.”

*Composition Fallacy:* Making an argument on the premise that if two things share some characteristics, they must share other characteristics as well. Example: “Witches burn because they’re made of wood.”

## CONCLUSION

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By becoming aware of the elements of persuasive argumentation outlined by Stephen Toulmin and the common logical fallacies made in argumentation you can develop stronger and more ethical arguments for your original oratory.



*In this chapter we will discuss:*

- *Introductions and Conclusions*
- *Persuasive Organizational Patterns*
- *Internal Structure*
- *Outlining Your Speech*

# CHAPTER 3

## *Organizing Your Speech*

*“If you have an important point to make, don’t try to be subtle or clever. Use the pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time; a tremendous whack.”*

*—Sir Winston Churchill*

### ORGANIZING YOUR SPEECH

**K**enneth Burke argued that a good persuader is able to unify individuals who are seemingly unconnected to each other through rhetoric. He contended that persuasion is rooted in identification—a rhetor presents a “problem” which aligns individuals who normally

would not identify with each other. Therefore, within each set of arguments a rhetor or writer must clearly introduce to the audience the problem the action is creating by outlining: 1) what impacts is this action having on the greater population; 2) the reasons why the action is

taking place, or the causes; and, 3) ways that the audience can combat the social problem. In this section we will explore methods of persuasive organization that will aid you in constructing your speech to address these issues.

Because of the work of foundational theorists such as Kenneth Burke, we know that there is a certain “system” that is involved in effectively writing or speaking persuasively. In order to persuade the greatest number of individuals, our rhetoric must include certain things. With regards to oratory, this means that we must have structure, and sub-structure, as well as a progressive articulate of the “problem.” The event of original oratory has taken shape over time and this meant that norms

began developing in order to decipher “good” speeches from “bad” speeches. One of those normative qualifiers is that speeches must have clear structure or organization. While all argumentative papers and speeches ought to have organization, Forensics has developed norms that call for specific and concrete structure. Without it, your judges may be unable to follow your argumentation because they are *expecting* certain formats. In this chapter, we will be discussing the structure and organization of original oratory speeches. We will begin by outlining the components of a good introduction and conclusion, move on to discuss how you can structure main body points, and finally, discuss internal and sub-structure.

## INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Psychologists have long noted that the human mind is subject to both primacy and the recency effects in speaking situations (Miller and Campbell 1959). The *primacy effect* is the notion that what we hear or are introduced to first needs to be accurate, engaging, and clear since we make long term judgements based on this information and are more likely to retain what we hear first (Atkinson and Shiffrin 1968). The *recency effect* is the notion that what we hear last occupies a place in our short-term memory and is more likely to be recalled as a result (Atkinson and Shiffrin 1968). These psychological discoveries are useful when crafting your original oratory

because they reveal the importance of developing a strong introduction and conclusion.

All oratories must have a clear introduction and conclusion. Introductions are designed to highlight the problem you are addressing clearly and give the audience a sense of where you are going, whereas conclusions are designed to digest and review main points made and provide closing statements that will provide lasting positive impressions. In this section, we will articulate the necessary components of introductions and conclusions so that you can craft an engaging beginning and memorable ending.

## INTRODUCTIONS

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Over the years, persuasive experts have identified the necessary components of an introduction. List below are the necessary pieces of the introduction puzzle. Sometimes, components like the thesis and statement of significance can be intertwined or can switch places, but for the most part they appear in the introduction in this order.

- Attention-Getting Device (AGD)
- Link to Topic
- Thesis
- Statement of Significance
- Roadmap
- *Optional: conclusive sentence*
- *Optional: concessions*

In order to illuminate how you can effectively use these components to develop an engaging introduction, it is important that we define them in more detail.

**Attention-Getting Device (AGD):** AGD's are designed to immediately engage the audience in your speech. They can be humorous or dramatic and can be any of the following:

- A personal story
- An illustration
- A few short examples
- A startling statement
- A poem
- A lyric
- A humorous hypothetical (*a story that approximates real life events, but is humorous*)
- A rhetorical question
- A clever device:
  - » Using foreign language

- » Using mime
- » Pretending you forgot your speech
- Beginning with the ending and sitting back down
- Pretending your lost your ring and having the audience help you look for it
- Indirection (*misleading the audience into believing you are talking about one thing when you are actually discussing something else.*)

**Link to Topic:** While the point of an AGD is to catch the attention of your audience, you need to link that to your topic. Usually it is a comparison of the behavior/example in the AGD to the behavior you are arguing is a problem.

**Thesis:** State your argument and what you are attempting to persuade us to do.

**Statement of Significance:** Why is this topic important? Why should I listen? State some statistics or facts here to prove that this is a real problem, and give it immediacy.

**Roadmap:** This is the sentence that lets us know where you will be taking us in your speech. You state your organization so that judges and audience can follow your speech. It does not have to be completely direct, but it is best if we can follow it (e.g. "We will look at the problems causes and solutions of our ....").

**Optional Conclusive Statement:** A Clever punch line or clincher that finishes off your introduction paragraph.

**Optional Concession:** Predict the questions that judges might ask. If YOU think of it, chances are they'll think of it. You can answer it, or concede to it, offering an explanation of why, in the face of this problem, you are still correct—effectively knocking it down.

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## Example

### **AND THE WINNER IS...**

*Matthew Khoury, Fordham Preparatory School*

*3rd place, 2011 National Speech & Debate Tournament*

**AGD:** In the corner of my room I have quite the collection of achievements. There's this beautiful teal ribbon, with a black and white chicken on it, which, reads "best hatch"...yes, I hatched the most chicks in my class. I also have a mug, which was once red, but after one trip to the dishwasher is a tasty looking flesh color. And my favorite, a 2 by 3 inch, deceptively useful paperweight. Following those disappointing rewards I spent the remainder of my freshman.. and sophomore year searching for the one thing I didn't have in my room...a girlfriend...I mean a trophy. It took until the second to last tournament of sophomore year for me to finally get it. I had what I truly wanted, someone to cuddle with that didn't run up my phone bill, or yell at me for wearing the color yellow. A virgin mounted on my shelf that couldn't leave me. I had a shiny, engraved, curvaceous, plastic girlfriend...I mean trophy.

**Link to Topic:** Now my love for trophies is not an uncommon thing.

**Statement of Significance:** I'm pretty sure that all of you share this love with me, I mean; I don't see any of you politely declining a trophy at the awards ceremony. But, when you college interviewers asks you why you did speech and debate, I don't suggest you tell them it was for the trophies. So if we clearly want these trophies, why are we embarrassed to admit that they motivate us?

**Thesis:** We need to re-evaluate our relationship with these golden plastic women.

**Roadmap:** We'll start by going back to the good old days where a trophy was really a trophy; then, see how an over abundance of trophies, both figurative and literal, has turned us into a society with a false sense of entitlement; and finally, we'll dust off the shelf and re-discover a place of honor for our hard work, for trophies are necessary symbols of excellence and achievement.

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## Example

### ***A History All Its Own***

*Daniel Carissimi, Carroll High School, TX*

*2nd place, 2005 National Speech & Debate Tournament*

**AGD:** Last year I was assigned a project on Communism. So I did what anyone with my capabilities would do, I read the definition And I am going to tell you something about communism that I learned personally: It is red hot! Karl had put Marx all over me! I quickly and decisively toppled the Student Council and started The New Council. We had a motto actually, it was: “Stop Stalin; start Lenin your time to the Council.” Prep rallies got intense, what with the book burning and then those furry hats with the little flaps that came down. The movie *Miracle* starring Kurt Russell was unfortunately banned, it was too patriotic. I take that back, all movies starring Kurt Russell were banned, they are awful. However randomly one day, my history teacher gave me a mandatory reading assignment on the USSR, and I realized something...communism doesn't work. I mean I was totally surprised, history had offered a practical solution to a misinterpretation on my own part. And I never studied the history because my philosophy was, it's gone, it's never coming back.

**Link to Topic:** And it seems I'm not alone.

**Statement of Significance:** Authors William Strauss and Neil How, in their book, *The Fourth Turning*, portray a generation, that's us kids, that view history as a mere speed bump on course to success, stating “History is not the subject high school students find of least interest or worth.”

**Thesis:** But what we seem to be forgetting, is that when we become numb to lesson of history, we lose the wisdom of experience and set up futures that are destined for the failures of the past.

**Roadmap:** So in order to better understand just how practical history is, we must first go back and explore the causes behind our lack of appreciation; then, examine the implications it has on the present; so we can finally look to the future for some practical solutions.

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## Example

*“I Have a Question”*

*Alphonse Mshomba, Holy Ghost Preparatory School, PA*

*3rd Place, 2009 National Speech & Debate Tournament*

### **AGD**

How many licks does it take to get to the center of a tootsie pop? Bet you don't know. Why do they call it getting your dog fixed if afterwards it doesn't work anymore? If you had one week left to live what would you do? I am a very curious person. I ask so many questions that as a result in math class my teacher makes me think about the importance of my questions for thirty seconds before I am allowed to ask them. In biology, I was allowed only three questions per class. My government class, by unanimous vote, decided to host a national Alphonse Mshomba (that's me) Can't Ask Questions Day. And my school newspaper is even writing an article about me and my questions entitled "Wait, What?"

It's safe to say that I ask more questions than any other person at my school, and that I take a lot of flack for that. But what's wrong with asking questions? I mean, I would say nothing. The problem is that too many people would disagree, because they don't ask questions and don't appreciate when others do. However, questions are essential, whether asking friends how they feel, neighbors how they can help, or politicians to justify their actions.

### **CONCLUSION**

As the late American businessman Bernard Baruch once said, "millions saw the apple fall but Newton asked why?" And as the ever curious Alphonse Mshomba likes to say, "Millions saw the tootsie pop commercial and wondered, 'how many licks does it take to get to the center of a tootsie pop?' But I, I have the answer, and maybe I will tell you that answer...but only if you ask."

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## CONCLUSIONS

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When writing your conclusion you do not need to follow as many specific steps as you do when writing an introduction, but your conclusion should contain at minimum:

Bring us back full circle—Bring us back to the AGD, bringing the argument to a full circle.

Restate your thesis, and/or the points you've gone over.

Encourage us to act one more time!

INSPIRE US! Make this one of the more beautiful and eloquent points of your speech!

End Creatively! Make sure that the last line is something that we can remember.

## PERSUASIVE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

There are an infinite number of ways to organize the main body points of a speech or paper: all logical, and all wonderful. However, within national forensics competition there are three widely accepted forms of persuasive organization: Problem/Cause/Solution; Cause/Effect/Solution; and Two Prong. These organizational patterns (sometimes called “structures”) are used because they are the easiest to verbally recognize and follow in a short ten-minute time period. All of these organizational patterns require an introduction and conclusion, while the main internal body points vary. In this section we will break down these organizational meth-

ods, and discuss how you might approach writing your oratory in an alternative format if these patterns do not seem to fit correctly.

### *Things to keep in mind:*

- The organizational pattern you choose has to be right for your speech. Don't automatically bottle your speech into the problem-cause-solution formula, (although some speeches do fit into this). Your topic and arguments will guide you to the structure that is right for your speech.
- Regardless of set up, all speeches need to present a societal problem and offer causes and solutions (even if implied).
- Remember that you can make an old topic new through organization.
- Your organization helps to create the emotional anticipation and build in your speech. Use it strategically and thoughtfully to aid in this process.

The most basic oratorical structure is the Problem-Cause-Solution format. This format is perhaps the most popular because it is a straightforward way to present a problem that offers analysis (causes) and solutions. Remember, that more often than not speeches are just like five-paragraph essays. In addition to the introduction and conclusion, a PCS speech has three main points:

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**TIP: Once you have chosen a topic, try brainstorming and outlining the problems, causes, effects, and solutions. This will help you see what type of structure is best for your topic. If you are having trouble thinking of problems, but have a wealth of causes and effects, perhaps CES is the best format to use. If you can identify two very clear causes and are having difficulty outlining specific effects or problem sub-points, perhaps you should use a two-prong approach.**

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### Introduction

- Attention Getting Device (AGD)
- Link to Topic
- Thesis
- Statement of Significance
- Roadmap

### Problem

- Transition
- Problem One
- Problem Two
- Conclude point

### Cause

- Transition
- Cause One
- Cause Two
- Conclude point

### Solution

- Transition
- Solution One
- Solution Two
- Conclude point

### Conclusion

- Transition
- Review main body points
- Conclusive Statements

1) a problem point where you explore the depth of the problem with the topic you are exploring; 2) a cause point, where you delve into the why the problem is occurring; and, 3) a solution point, which offers realistic and specific solutions.

PCS is most often used when the problem that you are presenting is not easily definable or identifiable. This means that you want to spend extra time upfront explaining exactly what it is that you mean when you say that we suffer from “UDS” as Lydia Nelson does in her 2003 National Tournament speech “A League of My Own.”

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## EXAMPLE

### The 16<sup>th</sup> Minute

Marie Agnello, Snellville High School, GA

2006 National Speech & Debate Tournament Finalist

#### INTRODUCTION

**Attention-Getting Device:** When I was in seventh grade, I made my debut—on the home-room announcements show. Not for my birthday or anything bogus like that. No. A kids' magazine had published MY short story, one acclaimed as a masterpiece—in the greater Northeast Atlanta Southern Gwinnett County Snellville area. Yup, I was feeling pretty darn good about myself. Until that magpie Troy Snitker, who hadn't achieved anything—and hasn't done anything since—stormed my lunch table. He yelled, “One story? That's just luck. When are you gonna put out a book?” Soon the other kids started demanding a book, not my short story, which I'd worked so hard for. All I could think was “When I do write that book, NONE of you are making the acknowledgements page.” But then I got home, and the anger faded to sadness, the joy of achievement to the burden of expectation. I wished I'd never WRITTEN my story. A has been by seventh grade.

**Link to Topic:** Unfortunately, I'm not alone. Like countless others before and since, I bought into one of our culture's most destructive buzzwords: one-hit wonder.

**Thesis:** You see, we've become the ultimate “what's next?” society. Where the crushing pressure for REPEATED success trashes single—yet singular—achievements.

**Statement of Significance:** Even worse, it keeps us from achieving ourselves. Andy Warhol said “In the future, everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.” That sounds so alluring: The promise of glory, the opportunity for fame...[I'm gonna live forever.] But our “What's Next” society values only our follow-up gig, and 15 minutes is hardly enough.

**Roadmap:** By examining our sequel-it is and its causes, we can find solutions that will help us survive the 16<sup>th</sup> minute... [We're going to learn how to fly!!!]

#### PROBLEMS

But why is success a problem in the first place? I mean, you might think that it's a pretty good “problem” to have. But being successful or desiring success is not the culprit. It's the expectations spawned by success. Dr. Dan Darnell, a representative from Counseling and Psychological Services at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill explains that, “You're riding high

when things go as you planned. But you're only as good as your next performance, so you better not relax. One mistake and you feel like a failure regardless of any past successes." Whether it's a child's first home run in Little League, a father's PTA volunteer of the year award, or an author's Pulitzer Prize winning novel. One success is good, but several successes are better. One time success is now the new failure. So we Troy Snitker-ize even the noblest accomplishments. Piano and Roger's Pompidou Center in Paris, Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind", Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., Jimmy Carter—a *one* term president who, after his presidency, became one of the world's greatest peace keepers, Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird". Imagine these works reduced to the equivalent of pop culture's one hit poster child, the insufferable Norwegian men of A-Ha, with their single "Take on Me." Or, worse, imagine Margaret Mitchell and Jimmy Carter competing on "Hit Me Baby One More Time," this season's smash reality show, which offers one hit wonders a shot at, quote, "rebirth."

## CAUSES

Somewhere between the desire to be successful and the euphoria that follows achievement, we became a society crazed with success stories. Our problem is caused by two simple things about us: We enjoy other people's successes, and we enjoy other people's failures. It's easy to build someone up. We like to reward things that are good and novel: Vogue's new "it girl," Rolling Stone's hot new musician, this week's heroic crime-stopping citizen, and ourselves when, say, we break 150 in bowling. But we burden ourselves with ridiculous expectations. Rather than rejoicing in the talent of a new author, we proclaim that they are "the next John Grisham", and expect them to live up to the title. When S.E. Hinton wrote the youth classic "Outsiders", she was only 17, and already the world couldn't wait for her next book. For three years she struggled with writer's block brought on by pressure to perform, to the point where her boyfriend had to make her write two pages a day to complete her next novel. And when people don't deliver a second time around, we delight in their failure. It assures us to know that successful people aren't perfect. We all want the Midas Touch, but few of us have it. Pretty much just Oprah has it. And let's face it—we all want to be Oprah. Therefore it brings us comfort when a person falls from their pedestal. The Germans have a concise word that verbalizes this feeling—*schadenfreude*—pleasure at the misfortune of others.

## SOLUTIONS

And misfortune is exactly where our fits of fame lead. In 1987 baby Jessica McClure fell down a 22-foot well in Midland, Texas. Her survival unfolded across the headlines of CNN. But amidst the horror was a man who has long been forgotten. 3.1 Million households watched as Robert O'Donnell, a local paramedic, emerged with Jessica in his arms— a national hero. This reluctant bystander was now wrapped in a whirlwind of media interviews, book deals, and made for TV

movies. But when the reporters stopped calling, O'Donnell felt trapped in his heroism and the stress of repeating it. As his mother told the New York Times, "It was the greatest moment of Robert's life, and it was the worst thing that ever happened to him." Eight years after saving Jessica's life, he took his own. As A.E. Housman once wrote in the poem "To An Athlete Dying Young", "Runners whom renown outran,/And the name died before the man." Nowadays, it is better to die and be known than to die in obscurity, even if that means an untimely death. Robert O'Donnell suffered an untimely death. He is, like all of us, a runner. And when we cannot keep up with our own success, when we never reach the 16<sup>th</sup> minute, it is sometimes better to have never succeeded at all. Author Eric Hoffer, in his book The Passionate State of Mind, explains "The fear of becoming a 'has been' keeps some people from becoming anything." No one wants to succeed in a world where all you have to give is never enough. How can we combat our fear of the 16<sup>th</sup> minute? Well, we must face it headlong. Straight into it. Because the solution is not to only want 15 minutes, nor is it to avoid success or put forth a mediocre effort. Rather, we must divorce ourselves from others' triumphs, and in the process, redefine success. If success did not breed expectations, than we would feel freer to pursue it. We need to start taking achievements for what they are—victories, inspirations. It takes talent and hard work to accomplish something even *once*. David Galenson of The National Bureau of Economic Research conducted a study called "One Hit Wonders: Why Some of the Most Important Works of Modern Art Are Not by Important Artists" where he introduced us to Grant Wood, a self taught American artist from Iowa, who used his Midwestern roots to paint American Gothic in 1930. The austere couple with a pitchfork in front of a farmhouse stands as an American icon. Best of all, the acclaim of American Gothic did not stifle Wood's artistic efforts—even when they did not sell, he kept painting. He once told a friend that he "really found himself" in the 1930s, during the time *after* American Gothic. Henry Ward Beecher, one of the greatest American poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, advises that success is "Nothing more than doing what you can do well; and doing well whatever you do, without a thought of fame."

## CONCLUSION

By the time Troy Snitker and I reached High School I stopped binding others to expectations, as I had once been bound. I was finally able to dismiss other's attitudes towards me as schadenfreude—and I moved on. Because even if we never see our 16<sup>th</sup> minute, our 15 minutes, or even our 10, will always be worth it. Once we look beyond the stagnant definition of a one hit wonder, we'll finally realize that if we never quit, then *truly*, we have never failed.

## CAUSE-EFFECT-SOLUTION

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The Cause/Effect/Solution (CES) organizational pattern is similar to PCS in its five-paragraph format, however, the problem is usually easily definable (meaning, your audience knows that “People are working too much”). Therefore, exploration of the causes and EFFECTS that the problem creates is pressing. Persuasively, this method is also very effective because it can follow dramatic structure and allow for a “climax” at around the seven minute point of your speech.

### Point-By-Point CES Outline

#### Introduction

- Attention Getting Device (AGD)
- Link to Topic
- Thesis
- Statement of Significance
- Roadmap

#### Cause

- Transition
- Internal Preview
- Cause One
- Cause Two
- Conclude Point

#### Effect

- Transition
- Internal Preview
- Effect One
- Effect Two
- Conclude Point

#### Solution

- Transition
- Internal Preview
- Solution One
- Solution Two
- Conclude Point

#### Conclusion

- Transition
- Review main body points
- Conclusive Statements

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## EXAMPLE

### A Rave Review

*Chris Wideman, Trinity Preparatory School, FL*

*2008 National Speech & Debate Tournament & NCFL Quarterfinalist*

#### INTRODUCTION

**AGD:** I know everybody’s done this before, but you ever just look at your fingers and like notice how crappy they are? I mean mine, for example are ill proportioned. I mean my ring finger isn’t supposed to be longer than my index finger, because the index finger’s supposed to be the more powerful, longer one, but I realize that mine kinda suck. Also my index finger’s kinda bent towards my middle finger a bit too much. And then on the back they’re all

like...wrinkly and stuff. Or like the word because...like the longer you look at it the weirder it looks. Like that is not how you spell because!

**Link to Topic:** It's not b-e-c-a-u-s-e...oh crap...let me explain...I know what you're all thinking right now, that I'm some really messed up guy who's more self-conscious than a twelve-year-old girl, and although that might have been quoted about me before—I'm not alone in my over-obsessive self-analysis. Best-selling author Dr. Margaret Paul explains in her article, [Addiction to Self Judgment](#) that "We aren't aware of how often we judge ourselves as bad, wrong or inadequate."

**Thesis:** We have become our own biggest critics—ruthless down to the nitty-gritty details, and often incredibly paralyzing.

**Statement of Significance:** An APA study published in 2006 suggests that excessive self-criticism is directly linked to depression; it seems that we just can't seem to turn off this little voice in our heads. Criticism, in its natural Aristotelian form, is a practice used to improve and empower, not to belittle. Therefore, we must find a way to conquer our inner critic.

**Roadmap:** In order to do this, let's first examine why we are so critical of ourselves, then uncover the dire effects of our excessive scrutiny, before we can perhaps finally discover some ways to stop the presses, and write ourselves a glowing review.

## CAUSES

Now, a speech criticizing criticism sounds a little oxy-moronic, but criticizing a speech criticizing criticism is even more ridiculous. Wrap your mind around that one. In the mean time, we have to explore why it is that we've become so self-critical. First, we constantly feel like we have to be progressing. If we are not moving forward we feel like we're moving backwards. The Conference Board reports that Americans are growing increasingly unhappy with their jobs when they don't get promoted, as 50% have reported their dissatisfaction with stagnation. In order to combat this discontent, we begin to critique and analyze every aspect of our lives in an attempt to advance. Second, we are bombarded with images of the "ideal," which we constantly compare ourselves to. The June 2007 *Journal of Personality Assessment* explains, that self-criticism is a quest for validation from our culture and its ideals. These unattainable ideals are everywhere: on the billboards on the drive to work reminding of us of new ways to shed pounds, the internet ads pointing out how imperfect our skin really is, and the covers of

magazines graced with skinny double-digit models. We just melt when we feel inferior in comparison. So we beat ourselves up – scrutinizing everything that doesn't seem to fit.

## **EFFECTS**

After my last girlfriend broke up with me in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I thought I'd do my future girlfriends a favor, by writing myself a horrible review and sending it into the New York Times, it came back saying, "Return to Sender – individual not important enough for major newspaper distribution." They don't know who they're messing with! No actually, they don't know who I am, that's why they didn't publish it. Now, even though my review was never published, there are two effects that stem from this criticism. First, we hold no restraint when criticizing ourselves, so we are the most relentless and ruthless. Dr. Deidre Donaldson argues that, "self criticism is the cognitive variable most strongly associated with hopelessness." We lose hope for ourselves— and then attack and attack, over and over, so much so that we're never satisfied, we're never good enough. But we're not just unsatisfied—our unrestricted self-criticism actually paralyzes us. The *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences* of March 2006 asserts that self-criticism is the largest cause of avoidant coping. Due to fear, due to an incredible amount of self-doubt we hold back; avoid risks, miss opportunities, and lose out. My older brother, according to every girl he's ever met, is really good looking. Being that we swim in the same gene pool, I hoped for a shade of the success he had, but always seemed to fall a little short of his shadow. My insecurities drove me mad to the point where I truly believed my hands were ill proportioned. Ya, that wasn't a joke, I'm *actually* that ridiculous. I was self-conscious about my voice and braces; my grades dropped and papers didn't get turned in. Hanging out with friends became a stressful obligation due to my constant worry. I felt stuck. One day, a friend asked me for advice about girls. After laughing in his face for a good five minutes, I realized he was serious and asked him what he was talking about. Well, after kicking back over a few beers— of root, of course— we realized that we are critiquing ourselves for not accomplishing the things we want to. But it is our insecurity and self-consciousness about those things that keep us from succeeding in them. Henry Ford once asserted, "whether you believe you can do a thing or not, you are right."

## **SOLUTIONS**

At my lowest point, everyday felt like a roast on Comedy Central. I'd look at myself in the mirror and scream, "GOSH! Look at you! Was anyone else hurt in the accident?" No, I was the only one in the ugly car. But before this speech crashes and burns, lets find some

solutions. First, we have to take a balanced approach to self-improvement. It's okay, and even important, to critique ourselves, as long as we keep remembering our strengths. When we start to feel as though we aren't good at anything, it's probably time to take a step back and look at our real strengths and weaknesses. I might not get all the ladies, but I do make a mean green bean casserole, *and* I haven't lost a game of Egyptian Rat Screw in over three years! Second, we have to remember that ideals aren't real. Otherwise we'll spend our lives trying to fight a futile battle against bogus images. Kurt Cobain may not have made the greatest life coach. After all, he did marry Courtney Love...but he once declared, "Wanting to be someone else is a waste of the person you are." And he was right. When we constantly reach for the ideal, we crucify individuality. An ideal, by definition is something that only exists in our imaginations. Paul Potts was anything but the ideal. When he first walked onto the stage of "Britain's Got Talent," Simon Cowell rolled his eyes at his shabby appearance and squirmed when a timid broken smile crept over Paul's face as he declared he was going to sing opera – he was more likely to be a good blooper than a success story. But when the 36-year-old cell phone salesman, who always saw himself as "a little bit different," began singing, even Simon stopped "Cowell-ing": When asked about why he didn't share his gift with the world before, he said, "I struggle with self confidence. All my life, I've always felt insignificant. After my audition, I realized I am somebody, I am Paul Potts." After winning the competition he became an international sensation—everyone felt connected to his struggle with confidence. That's why I loved his story: it made me feel like I had a chance. J.C. Hare was right when in 1848 he wrote, "Be what you are. This is the first step towards becoming better than you are."

## **CONCLUSION**

I think I'll cancel that hand surgery and accept that my hands are part of who I am. See, we may pull ourselves down, but we can have a hand in our own success. We are beautiful the way that we are – don't let your self-doubt paralyze you. If you believe in yourself just once, you will begin to see yourself in a different light—as someone who can be successful. Nike had it right, "just do it." My fingers aren't really deformed, if I turn my hand like this, they look fine...well actually they look pretty good now... it's all in the lighting.

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## THE TWO-PRONG APPROACH

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Organizing a speech using a two-prong structure differs from both PCS and CES because here you can offer two ways in which the problem plays out, or two causes for a problem; these two “prongs” are followed by an implication section, which crystallizes your speech. Once your short implication section is complete, you offer your audience some solutions. Many people prefer this type of structural pattern, or something similar to it, because it offers clear logical structure that flows well and has a dramatic climax, yet, as a coach of mine always said “doesn’t smack you in the face with its mechanics.”

In an effort to show you, the reader, how to write a speech like this— I have attempted in the following outline to “break down” how one might structure a speech that uses a two-prong structure.

### Point By Point Two-Prong Outline

#### Introduction

- Attention Getting Device (AGD)
- Link to Topic
- Thesis
- Statement of Significance
- Roadmap

#### Prong 1

- Transition
- State main idea or thesis of prong

- Explain it (use short examples or hypothetical examples here to illustrate problem for audience)
- Prove it (Share statistics, studies or quotations from experts)
- Impact it (Explain why what you are discussing is a bad thing, often people use an extended story as an example)
- Restate main idea and impact how its connected to thesis of speech

#### Prong 2

- Transition
- State main idea or thesis of prong
- Explain it (use short examples or hypothetical examples here to illustrate problem for audience)
- Prove it (Share statistics, studies or quotations from experts)
- Impact it (Explain why what you are discussing is a bad thing, often people use an extended story as an example)
- Restate main idea and impact how its connected to thesis of speech

#### Implications

- What are the implications of all this?
- What does this say about society? How does this impact us? What does all of this mean?

#### Solutions

- Transition
- Solution One
- Solution Two

#### Conclusion

- Transition
- Review of main body points
- Conclusive Statements

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## EXAMPLES

### **Make-Real**

*Anthony Francomacaro, Holy Ghost Preparatory, PA*

*1<sup>st</sup> place, 2007 NCFL Nationals*

*1<sup>st</sup> place, 2007 National Speech & Debate Tournament Nationals*

### **INTRODUCTION**

**AGD:** My best friend's name is Leopold Stefan Defanti. Sometimes I call him LSD, he doesn't really like that, so I normally call him Leo. Leo and I do everything together. We play basketball together, pump iron together, have sleepovers together, pillow fights together, take baths together...uh, did I mention he's imaginary?! Yes, I am 17 years old and I have the smartest, funniest, most outstanding friend that's ever existed...without existing. He's always been there for me, in good times, and in bad, he was around so much, it was like he wasn't even there. When I looked under my bed to discover the gruesome, pussy faced, 12 eyed, 6 legged monster that I call Cher, my imaginary amigo was there to kick its butt, before Cher said "I Got You ...Babe". Yup, Leo has ALWAYS been a true friend.

**Link to Topic:** But, despite playing an integral role in my life, Leo...as I've already stated... isn't real. I know, but I'm not the only one with an imaginary friend. It seems that in our world, despite increased communication, technology, and heartbeats...even *real* real friends are hard to come by.

**Thesis:** Today, our superficial idea of friendship has made our relationships unfulfilling, and often more isolating.

**Statement of Significance:** In 2004, Duke University conducted a study reporting that over a quarter of Americans believe they don't have a single person they can confide in, not one. But, when asked how many friends they have, they say they've got plenty.

**Roadmap:** This superficiality in friendships occurs for two main reasons First, technology, in the form of cell phones, blackberrys, and instant messaging, allows us to create the illusion of friendship. Second, we too often define friendship as a matter of quantity rather than quality. So here, and now let's exam in depth each of these factors, then look at the im-

plications, and finally let's explore the great expanse of our own imaginations and see if we can't find a means to make our imaginary friends, real.

### **PRONG 1: TECHNOLOGY CREATES ILLUSION OF FRIENDSHIP**

Albert Einstein, a great man and even greater hair stylist, philosophized, "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity." And it's true; technology allows us to create the illusion of friendship, while simultaneously disconnecting us from it. A June 2004 issue of the New York Times reports that Over 30 million adults say they've been in a long term relationship, so what if it's online with someone they've never met. But hey we're doing fine, right? We have over two hundred and fifty pals on our "buddy" list, and that's not even counting our 300 "friends" on Myspace, Friendster, and Facebook. But you see... that's just the thing. These internet contacts however, lead us to believe we have a network of friends, but these friends are as imaginary as my buddy LSD. Why? Well, The Journal of Adolescence tells us that online we only talk to please. Because we have all the time in the world to think out every sentence, instead of saying what we feel, we say what we THINK is "cool" or what we THINK people want to hear. Our online friends do likewise. For example, you finally get a chance to meet that guy you've been talking to online since forever, you're just praying that your conversations in real life will be as exciting as the one's you've had over the computer, only to find that ..OMG.... he's L-A-M-E..... TTY NEVER.

### **PRONG 2: FRIENDSHIP IS NOW DEFINED BY QUANTITY NOT QUALITY**

Now of course we can't always blame technology for our problems, even though robots will inevitably take over the world...and you thought my gestures were just awkward. Our second problem, lies in the fact that we are a culture that believes the more we have the more successful we are. The allure of popularity transforms friendship into a selfish journey for status. I mean honestly who among us doesn't want lots of friends? But our "schmoozing to be known" behavior results in insincere relationships and very few or no deep true friendships. We know so many, yet trust so few. Take Elizabeth for example, she was a junior at an all girls academy and had it all, a spot in the A group at school and a great family life. But she started having problems with her boyfriend. She asked her friends for advice, but they don't have time for her. So, she bottles up her emotions, her worries, her stress. To cope, she starts drinking. She finds relief in smoking and at the peak of her depression, cutting. Until one night she literally breaks down. Tears streaming down her face she looks me in the eyes, and says, "Ant, I have a problem." My sister had no one. No one to talk to,

no one to vent to, no one to cry to, so she came to me, her annoying little brother who was the last person in the world you'd expect. She told me everything, she had been suffering for months because the friends she thought loved her were...imaginary, only in it for the appearance of popularity and friendship.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Since 1984, 50 percent more Americans say they confide in only their spouses, 58% fewer consider their neighbors friends and now in 2005, 50 percent of all marriages in the U.S. end in divorce. So we have all these statistics about relationships and internet friendships, but what do they mean? What do they tell us? They show us that we as a society are subtly recognizing our lack of intimacy and trust. We know that we need friends so we respond with our laptops and blackberry's and make dozens of virtual friends that never truly fill the void. And so, the question arises, how do we attain the friendship that we so desperately need.

## **SOLUTIONS**

So, how do we start? First, we need to abandon our comfy computer chair, despite its gentle leopard skin cover, and step into the real world. Instead of spending countless hours instant messaging, call a friend, invite them over. Give old Mr. Wilson from across the street an invite to your next Cher sing along...Well maybe not...But what we must understand is that friendship requires proximity. It requires presence; it requires face to face interaction and dialogue. When we speak only on the phone or through the internet, we are not truly ourselves, but when we meet in person, and all of our flaws and vulnerabilities are exposed, it is then that real and sincere friendship can be born. What I'm saying folks, is that we can't hide behind our computer screens anymore. Our 300 virtual friends who don't really know us won't suffice. Remember what a true friend really is, a person who knows you very well, but likes you anyway. Its time we take the first step...literally... towards camaraderie and commitment. Now this kind of commitment and friendship requires risk, the risk of opening yourself up to another person. And that risk is beautifully demonstrated in the story of Linda Shaw. Linda Shaw, a breast cancer patient, was placed in a hospital room with an 85-year old woman, Mrs. Casey. The two women quickly struck up a conversation, and Mrs. Casey told Linda her life story, she'd had a wonderful life, with no regrets. Before falling asleep, Mrs. Casey told Linda that she would thank God for sending her to that room that evening. Later that night, Mrs. Casey passed away. As Linda herself states, "I knew her for 13 hours... I learned more from her in that 13 hours than I learned in my whole life from everybody I've

known.” In a single night they found each other and lost each other, but what they really found was friendship, the kind of friendship Aristotle spoke about when he said, “friendship is a single soul dwelling in two bodies.” Friendship by Aristotle’s definition is not found with the simple click of a mouse or in the brevity of cell phone chat, but rather in the sharing of our lives with men and women we know and have allowed ourselves to trust. In order to attain Aristotle’s Friendship – we must be willing to put our very souls on the line just as Linda and Mrs. Casey. Linda let someone in and she had the time of her life. And now, its our turn.

## **CONCLUSION**

So my Buddy Leo and I, we had some good time and some bad times, but to me Leo was always the epitome of a true comrade. Well, at least to my 5 year old self. But I’ve grown... and I’ve learned. Maybe if we all took a little time to examine the meaning of the word friend, true companionship would no longer be a fantasy. To quote the high, the mighty, the way over-referenced Doctor Seuss, “ Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.” Let’s learn to be ourselves, just be you: gorgeous, intelligent, wonderful you. What are we waiting for? Let’s transform friendship back into a gift and give it to those who matter. Ya know some say I’m getting a little too old for an imaginary friend, and well... they’d be right, we are all getting too old for make believe

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## **My White Knight**

*Sonia Chokshi, Hillsborough High School 2010*

## **INTRODUCTION**

**AGD:** I had it all planned out. I would be wearing a gorgeous dress, accompanied by all my best friends, and waiting for the man of my dreams. So when Brian asked me to the senior prom my sophomore year, I was ecstatic! But the vision of my dream prom was shattered when Brian came to pick me up in a blue Mustang. Hello, Prince Charming rode up on a white stallion! Wrong horse, Brian. When he rang my doorbell, I thought things might take a turn for the better, but I was wrong. Not only did he bring red roses instead of my favorite flower, the Zebrina Hollyhock, but he only brought a dozen! By the end of the night, I was severely unhappy and disappointed and my dream date had turned into a nightmare. He didn’t dance with me during every song... he “had to go to the bathroom” during one of

them. He forgot to refill my drinks when they were finished. How rude! Needless to say, I wasn't as happy as I thought I would be.

**Link to Topic:** But a quick scan of the pouty wallflowers led me to the realization: it's not just me who has a happiness mix-up.

**Thesis:** According to Ed Diener, co-author of *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*, "people misunderstand happiness now more and more."

**Statement of Significance:** A study conducted in 1996 revealed that since 1975, despite our advances in technology and wealth, our overall happiness has not changed. It seems as though 10 years later, much of our mentality has still remained the same.

**Roadmap:** To tackle this happiness misunderstanding, we must first, examine how we quantify happiness through tangible items, then discuss how our aim for perfect happiness is leaving us unsatisfied, before looking at the implications and finally, solutions.

### **Prong 1: WE TRY TO QUANTIFY HAPPINESS**

$P+5E+3H$  isn't a simple quadratic formula, This is the formula for happiness as created by a University of Illinois professor, Sounds ridiculous, I know. You see, as humans, we like to think tangibly rather than abstractly. We need to quantify *everything*. Through pain scales, intelligence quotients, and even clocks, we attempt to turn the abstract into something we can see and feel because thinking conceptually is scarier than being the last potato chip on earth. Because everyone would want to eat you. We've begun to believe Harvard Business School professors Robert Kaplan and David Norton's words: "if you can't measure it, you can't manage it." Since happiness is such an abstract concept, we attempt to squeeze it into a box, to more easily understand what it means. In the process, we have invested happiness in money, success, beauty, material possessions, fame, and sometimes our old friends Ben and Jerry. When 73% of Americans would rather have more money than raise successful children, according to 2004 and 2006 Gallup and Newsweek polls, something is seriously wrong. To us, tangible items seem to be the way for us to grasp the meaning of happiness in our lives, especially when happiness seems to have disappeared. Kathy, Dan, and Jessica were a happy family living in a house on Long Island, New York. But when September 11 left Kathy without a husband and Jessica without a dad, the mother and daughter began a downward spiral. Instead of investing her happiness in her daughter, Kathy began shopping addictively, burning through the \$4.2 million given to her by the government Victims'

Compensation Fund. Jessica, meanwhile, splurged on online shopping sites. Kathy admits that she didn't actually want these material items, but shopping was her way to cope. Since Kathy and Jessica were stripped of one of the major sources of happiness in their lives, they searched for happiness in something they believed was stable and unwavering—but found fleeting satisfaction rather than long term and meaningful happiness.

## **Prong 2: WE HAVE CREATED A DISNEY-FIED DEFINITION OF HAPPINESS**

Lord Layard, Professor at the London School of Economics points out “There’s a problem with the word happiness. When you use the word happy, it often has the sort of context of balloons floating up into the sky or something frivolous.” This brings me to my next concern: we have created a “Disney-fied” definition of happiness. We think that we’ll find happiness “just around the river bend” or on “second star to the right,” but happiness is a more complex and dynamic emotion. Eric Wilson, professor at Wake Forest University, states that today, we are attempting to “annihilate melancholia” and create “a brave new world of persistent good fortune, joy without pain, and felicity with no penalty.” But what we must understand is that we can find happiness through pain and sorrow. A study published in the January 2009 *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* even suggests that depression can lead to overall wellbeing because it causes us to focus and streamline our goals. But when we are searching for the perfect Disney happy ending, we can't recognize happiness when it is right in front of us. Often, we corrupt our chances to be happy by striving too hard for perfection. When my father was younger, my grandmother always pushed him to be the best, the top, number one. During his schooling my father was forced into “all work, and no play.” 40 years later, my father wishes he could have cherished his childhood, but because my grandmothers' view of perfect happiness included perfect children, he lost out on memorable childhood experiences. My grandmother wasn't satisfied with her already extremely bright children, she thought *that* perfection would make her happier.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

A study conducted by the University of Illinois determined that true happy people live up to nine years longer than depressed people. And although in the last half century we may have gained a higher standard of living, we are no happier than our grandparents were fifty years ago. In fact, what we think of as “happiness” is empty and unfulfilling, leaving us wanting more and more. Without happiness, our lives have no meaning. But unfortunately our misconstrued perception of happiness has kept happiness just out of our reach for too long.

## SOLUTIONS

What can we do about this happiness misunderstanding? We must learn to invest ourselves in what really will bring us long-lasting genuine happiness. First, we must be able to recognize the happiness that we get from our relationships not from the number of Milano Blahniks we've got stashed in our closet. Cus trust me, huggin' a stilleto isn't the least bit comforting. According to the 2003 Framingham Heart Study, a person is 25 percent more likely to be happy if they live within one mile of a friend. But even if you aren't BFFs with your next door neighbor, you should still invest more of your time in the friends and family that do support you, because true happiness lies with them. Second, help others. In several studies, positive psychologists Sonja Lyubomirsky, Laura King, and Ed Diener discovered that happy people are "less selfish, spend more time helping others, [are] more likely to be engaged in community service activities, and [are] generally more empathetic." By acting altruistically, we not only boost the happiness of those individuals we are helping but also our own. Finally, we need to revise our perception of happiness. We must be comfortable embracing happiness in all its abstract and messy glory, like Nick Vujicic, an man born without arms and legs. Despite his severe physical disability, Nick has learned how to brush his teeth, surf, play cricket, and most importantly, find true happiness. Nick explains that around the age of twelve he received a wake-up call, "One of the first lessons I have I earned is not to take things for granted," he says, "I love living life. I am happy." Today Nick spreads his message around the world working as a motivational speaker. Admittedly, most of us will never face anything as extreme as Nick's experience, but this does not mean that we can't find be inspired by his story to find happiness in the one place we always fail to look: ourselves.

## CONCLUSION

I may have treated my prom date Brian a teensy bit harshly, but now that I know what truly makes me happy, the person, not the car or flowers, this year, at my senior prom, I'll be more happy as the night comes to a close. We must all define our own definition for happiness, one that may not be concrete or flawless, but one that will bring us true joy.

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### **Stuck in a Moment**

*Amy Shackelford, Trinity Preparatory School, FL*

*3rd place, 2010 National Speech & Debate Tournament*

**AGD:** You know those stories your parents tell you about? About those glory days. My dad always whips out this picture of him at seventeen with a six pack, and says something like, “Amy, when I was your age...I was captain of the tennis team, I was on the honor roll, I helped put my brother through college by mowing lawns, all while romancing your beautiful mother. You know we met on the tennis court...and that’s where I stop him. Because there is something unsettling about picturing your dad in short shorts. But he’s got me thinking...my glory days are apparently in their prime right now...It’s Saturday, I got up at 6 this morning, I’m wearing a suit...my kids are going to think I’m awesome. Ok so I may not have a specific glory moment just yet, but I do have a specific horror moment. Back in 9th grade I was passed a note in French class that read, “If you could kiss anyone in this room who would it be?” And because it was during the world of warcraft phase in every teenage boy’s life at the time, I realized how limited my choices were. So, I decided to go for a laugh...I wrote down my teacher’s name instead. Because of his weird obsession with chia pets and Barbara Walters. I knew my friend wouldn’t take me seriously, but my teacher did...when he snatched the note and read it aloud to the class. “Did you write this?” “Oui?”

**Link to Topic:** We have all had these moments. Moments where we feel temporarily stuck.

**Statement of Significance:** A May 8, 2006 New York Times article explains that we are more fixated on the past than ever before.

**Thesis:** You see we’ve begun to live our lives like some sort of movie. Rewinding it countless times and failing to ever press the play button.

**Roadmap:** So in order to write a new ending to this sad story, we must tune into the two different ways in which we get stuck in a moment. We either relive our glory days or replay our past mistakes. Then, we can solve this problem and understand what U2 truly when they sang, “It’s just a moment, let it pass”

### **Prong 1: WE RELIVE OUR GLORY DAYS**

First, we often dwell on those great moments that we wish we could play over, and over again. “Author Jason Craig explains in his essay, Why We Dwell in the Past. “we like to relive our heyday because for a blink, it feels like we’re there again. But just that quickly, it passes, and we’re left the aching memory that what’s past is gone forever.” David Hasselhoff, Baywatch is over, it’s time to put a shirt on. And when we are so fixated on our glory days, we miss out on the opportunities just ahead. A basketball great watching their highlight reel misses a calling

to coach, a washed up model flips through yesterday's catalog rather than mentoring tomorrow's youth, and George Foreman, naming your five children, George so they can serve as constant reminders of how cool you, George, were—is a bit over the top.

And these moments don't have to be those stereotypical high school days. They are moments we hold onto because our lives just don't seem as good as they did then. Ultimately not just affecting certain people but entire communities.

During the 1960s the United States made almost all of the world's best automobiles a distinction they held onto for over 30 years. As recently as the 1990s, The big Three, Chrysler, Ford and General Motors were the makers of over 70% of the world's cars according to a 2009 Dollars and Sense magazine article. However, after the 1960s, despite changes in the economy and the rising cost of fuel, these companies continued to cling to what had worked before while Europe and Japan created smaller, more fuel efficient cars. American manufacturers now account for less than half of the world's automobiles, their inability to change has left them lagging behind their foreign competitors and now these former industry leaders account for 25 billion dollars of the current government bailout. But more importantly, people are losing jobs, families—a source of income and entire towns without an industry.

### **Prong 2: WE REPLAY OUR MISTAKES**

But it's not just the glory days that stand in our way of the play button, sometimes it's our less glamorous moments. That time your mom thought it was totally cool to put not just one but 8 headgear pictures into the graduation slideshow or maybe that other moment when you realized you'd never fit in, because let's face it, rolling backpacks were never cool. In the more serious moments, acclaimed psychologist Loren Toussaint explains that “we rarely recover because forgiveness of self holds the most powerful punch which in return leaves our lives stuck on pause.”

In the late 1800s, there was a man, John Gray, who owned a very loyal dog, named Greyfriar's Bobby. The dog watched over his master for two years, never leaving his side. When Gray passed away, Greyfriar's Bobby spent the rest of his life sitting on his master's grave, fourteen years. And while his loyalty is touching, this dog could have been living his life. Not only did this dog get stuck in a moment but society did too when they heard the story. It was made into a book, movie, even had a bar named after it. Because nothing says drink

up like doggie depression! I mean, since when did we need to romanticize the notion that never letting go is okay?

Todd was your all American kid. Quarterback, handsome, good grades. One night after a Friday night football game, Todd was in the shower during a terrible lightening storm. Poor wiring mixed with a lightening strike collapsed Todd. They had to amputate his right arm and right leg. In the span of a couple hours, Todd's dreams had been crushed. He would never walk again. He spent the next three years stuck on that moment—asking himself those “what if” questions, until finally he couldn't live his life stuck in that moment any longer. He wedged himself in between the dresser and his wall, writing on his suicide note, I wanted to die standing up.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

Clearly, whether it's moments of glory or pain, when we get stuck in a moment, it can have disastrous consequences. Beverly Eckert was the wife of one of the victims of 9-11. She could have become trapped. Instead, Beverly headed up the Family steering committee for the 9/11 Commission, and supported families affected by these horrible attacks. Despite the success and attention from her achievements, Beverly forged onward.

### **SOLUTIONS**

And we can move on too. To get over our glory days, we can remember what Madonna said, “Reinvent yourself often, be fresh & relevant.” Author Jason Craig explains, “There is... a difference between people who dwell on the past and people who dwell in it.” It's ok to revisit moments as long as we realize that what is past, is gone forever. It's time to step out of those yearbook photos and those short shorts and breathe in a new reality of an even better future.

And when it comes to those moments where we can't forgive ourselves, Psychologist Elizabeth Kulber-Ross tells the true story of a cleaning lady at a Chicago hospital. It seemed that every time she left the room of a dying patient the patient was happier. Dr. Kulber-Ross aimed to find out why. She told her that her three-year-old son had died in a public clinic, a couple years ago, waiting for treatment in her arms. She said, “Dying patients are just like old acquaintances to me. I'm not afraid to touch them, talk to them.” Ultimately she was promoted to special counselor to the dying where she treated patients with the best med-

icine, showing that she cared. So let's not forget those times, let's remember them, learn from them, and make a better moment for ourselves and others.

## CONCLUSION

Even though my dad loves bringing up his “glory days,” I sure am glad he isn't stuck on them anymore, because trust me, those short shorts would be pretty tight by now. And even though my French teacher never looks at me the same, or really at all, I learned a very valuable lesson: if we don't live for today, the movie of our lives will be filled with re-runs of yesterday. You see, we are going to have successes and we are going to have failures, but the true glory is our ability to keep living our lives no matter what happens. Just remember: “it's just a moment; let it pass.”

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## ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES

Despite the fact that there are some structures that are more popular than others, you do have the freedom to use an alternative organizational pattern for your original oratory. The possibilities are endless here, and for the sake of brevity, I cannot cover every type. Instead, I want to reiterate that organizational patterns have a function: They keep your ideas and logic organized, and they provide the necessary information in a way that is digestible to any audience who can only hear your arguments.

While the organizational patterns I have outlined previously will illuminate the best parts of most topics, sometimes you have to get creative. Creativity isn't something you can bottle, and it is certainly not something that I can outline or bullet-point. In order to illuminate when it might be appropriate to use an

alternative organizational pattern and how you might go about doing it, let me turn to a story.

Joshua Gad from The University School in Florida won the 1999 National Speech & Debate Tournament in Phoenix performing an original oratory that encouraged the audience to “take risks.” He modeled this behavior not just by taking risks in his delivery and performance choices (like sitting down on the ground during the final round), but also in his approach to structuring the speech. Instead of focusing on proving the problem existed or delving deep into the causes of why we do not take risks, Gad wanted to define what risk-taking was, delineate for the audience the difference between positive and negative risks, and encourage us to cease the moment and take intelligent risks. So he structure his speech around those three main ideas. He still had a clear introduction and conclusion, as well as all of the necessary

internal components (sub-structure, transitions, evidence)—but he did not follow a PCS, CES, or two prong approach. His first main body point identified what risks were, his second illuminated the difference between a bad risk and a smart risk, and finally, he spent time inspiring us to take smart risks.

Over the years, many students throughout the country have taken different approaches to writing original oratory speeches; some with success, and others with not so much success. Some speeches have three main body points each dedicated to a different facet of the problem, others have explored the problems, effects, and solutions. The most important thing I can emphasize is that you choose an

organizational pattern that best highlights the things that you think are the most interesting/important, and that presents the most logically consistent argument for the audience. One could argue that Mr. Gad could get away with not spending as much time in his oratory proving that people do not take risks, because it is a generally acceptable idea that we fear risk-taking. While a student doing a speech on a less generally accepted idea (let's say, that we are a culture of bullies), might need to spend time in their speech proving to the audience that this is a problem. Ultimately, you should spend time brainstorming and researching your topic, and let that information and those ideas guide your choice of an organizational pattern.

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## EXAMPLE

In 2009, Morgan Booksh from McNeil High School tied for first place at the National Speech & Debate Tournament. Mr. Booksh wanted to encourage people to value non-verbal communication in an increasingly digital world. As you will see below, Mr. Booksh still has a clear introduction and conclusion, as well as all of the necessary internal writing components (sub-structure, transitions, evidence); but, his main body points are: 1) what is non-verbal communication; 2) how non-verbal communication is lost in a digital world; and, 3) how we can overcome the digital barrier.

**n0nv3rb1 comUnKshun lolz :P**

*Morgan Booksh, McNeil High School, Austin TX*

*2nd Place, 2009 National Speech & Debate Tournament*

### INTRODUCTION

**AGD:** Imagine you are in a mall. To your right you see what appears to be a group of high school girls, not talking to one another, but focusing on cell phone in hand. To your left you

see a group of freshman boys punching each other in the arm and shoving each other into hallways, except for one, who's surfing the web on his blackberry device not saying a word. In front of you sits a married couple, each with laptop in hand again, not conversing but focusing in on their lighted screens.

**Link to Topic:** This is not an imaginary world; in fact it is the world that we live in today a world in which the art of communication has been lost as a whole.

**Statement of Significance:** Let's take a step back and begin to examine what you just heard, or, what may be more important: how you just heard it. If I were to have allowed you to preview a written copy of my original oratory you probably wouldn't be thinking right now: oh my god this kid is crazy, am I in mortal danger? Well trust me, you have nothing to worry about I'm more of an ultimate eater than an ultimate fighter. No, the real reason that I seemed crazy is because my verbal message, and my nonverbal message didn't align, and that completely affected the way that I came across.

**Thesis:** In fact in a world that more and more, substitutes its real self for a virtual facsimile, we lose the power, beauty, and even ability to recognize nonverbal communication.

**Preview:** So please log off of your facebook, bring up your away message on aim and pull yourself off of twitter so that we can first begin to re-familiarize ourselves with all the different sorts of nonverbal communication. Second recognize that they are being lost in the transition from the voice to the keyboard. And third and finally brainstorm for some solutions on how to preserve communication as an art form in a world that's gone digital.

## **WHAT IS NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION?**

**Transition:** Alright, why don't we, take the first step, and begin to re-familiarize ourselves with all of the different sorts of nonverbal communication.

In the 2005 edition of the seminal work *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interactions*, University of Texas communication professor Dr. Mark Knapp defined nonverbal communication as: "communication without words," including apparent behaviors such as facial expression, eye contact, touching and tones of voice, also including less obvious messages such as: posture, dress, and even special distance between two or more people. Dr. Knapp divides nonverbal communication into two clear areas, the first is comprised of vocal cues, or ways in which the quality of our voice affects how our message gets across. Often

times it's not what we say that matters most, but rather, how we say it. Examples abound all around us, but there's one example of a vocal cue that shines above all others when examining how it's lost texting or typing. That example is of course, tone of voice. Imagine if you will this completely made-up, 100% untrue situation that has never once happened to me. Me and my buddy are, allegedly, having a text message conversation, and I receive the completely out-of-the-blue question: do you like wearing ladies underwear? Now, I'm a sarcastic guy, so of course I reply with: yeah, I love wearing ladies underwear. But because this is a text message when my buddy receives that alert he doesn't know whether I was trying to say: yeah I love wearing ladies underwear, or: yeah I love wearing ladies underwear. So suddenly my entire school thinks that when I get home I slap on some lingerie, grab a Luna bar and slouch down into my pink fluffy bean bag chair for another juicy episode of gossip girl, which I have absolutely never done, ever. Clearly here while my two verbal messages never once changed, the two tones of voice dramatically altered the message I was sending. The second area of nonverbal communication however is comprised of non-vocal cues, those that do not involve the quality of our voice. Again, examples are all around us. Later on today a foreign extemporaneous speaker will probably be lying about Zambia's nickel industry in its third fiscal quarter, and staring at the judge's forehead, praying that he doesn't realize that he knows nothing about Zambian economic growth. I mean c'mon, we all know that it's a copper based economy, am I right? That is an example of eye-contact. Now that same extemporaneous speaker will probably also be furiously karate-chopping the air like the karate kid, punctuating every fabricated precious metal company and made-up statistic with a hand-gesture.

## **NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IS LOST IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

**Transition:** Now that we've begun to re-familiarize ourselves with all the different sorts of nonverbal communication, it's important to recognize that they are being lost in the, transition, to a digital world.

Let's face it: we are living in a digital world, and while technology certainly brings along with it numerous benefits, it also supplies a number of reasons for concern. As technology pushes us more towards verbal-only styles of communication it's important to realize just how much of a stake we have in our current form of communication. In the 1990 classic, *Bodily Communication* psychologist Michael Argyle provides us with the information that "nonverbal communication constitutes 93% of all communication." In essence this means

that modes of communication that technology is constantly pushing us toward can only hope to contain 7% of the way that we talk to each other today. This analysis was brought to the digital world, and specifically a virtual chatroom, by professors Joan Gajadhar and John Green in 2003 when they argues that “while it contains many of the elements of face-to-face conversation, virtual chatrooms provide little opportunity for the nonverbal aspects of the ordinary conversational mode of communication.” Technology currently poses two clear threats to nonverbal communication and the first comes from text messaging. Text messaging has single handedly eliminated the humanity of conversation. Technology critic Howard Rheingold explained in his 200 writing *Tools for Thought: the History and Future of Mind-expanding Technology*, that while students have no trouble text messaging in class they often struggles with face-to-face communication. The reason that we encounter such a challenge is because the world of text messaging presents a very unique intersection of limitations on the humanity of conversation. Not only are communicators limited to a text-only message space, but they must also describe their ideas in 160 characters or less. The brevity of this format has robbed communicators of the ability to express complex human emotion. Think about how wonderful you feel when you’re happy. Happiness fills you up, happiness warms your body, happiness changes your demeanor completely. Now think about how we express that feeling in the world of text messaging: colon, close parenthesis. Not only that but the world of text messaging also creates emoticons for emotions I’ve never even seen used. When’s the last time in casual conversation you actually found yourself making the face: colon capital p. The second technological threat that nonverbal communication faces derives from social networking sites. Guardian journalist Mary Richard argued in 2008 that “social networking sites, which are now more popular than pornography on the internet, allow us with a way to avoid face-to-face communication and the emotion that accompanies deep meaningful conversation.” In short, this means that social networking sites provide us with a way to completely hide our identities online. Now this can certainly be beneficial for a shy high school student who has trouble communicating face-to-face, but the intentions of many others are much more sinister. The National Sex Offender Registry reported in 2008 that “1 in 5 American teenagers who regularly log on to the web has received an unwanted sexual solicitation.” To sacrifice 93% of the way that we communicate today which is, in its entirety, nonverbal communication, simply in exchange for a more technological way of talking to one another, is not only saddening but dangerous.

## SOLUTIONS

**Transition:** So in order to balance the preservation of communication as an art form and the benefits of technology why don't we, move to the center, and strike a balance.

The very first step is the realization that there are certain things which we can never hope to convey without some form of human exposure. Take the following for example. You receive a text message at 10:00 in the morning, and it reads: "Caroline's just had her first baby boy." An hour later you receive another text, and it reads: "Complications, Caroline's in the ICU." You wait, and wait and wait. The final text that you receive that morning reads only: "she's gone." This very nightmare occurred to Pat O'Hera of Tampa Bay Florida on May 17<sup>th</sup> of 2007. The *Tampa Bay Tribune* sadly reported that Pat received the alert that one of his closest friends had passed away via two indifferent words on the screen of his cellular device. Nonverbal communication is what makes words human. Given only a written copy of my original oratory one wouldn't realize how unorthodox my introduction was, or how my hilariously un-canned transition phrases also emphasized my movements. Nonverbal communication is what makes words on the page live and breathe. Think about where we are: the National Speech & Debate Tournament. We are students who routinely sacrifice our time, our money, our grades, our relationships, our sanity, and for what? To travel across the United States and compete against others who value communication as an art form just as much as we do. We devote our entire high school careers to the advocacy of our voice and our ideas and I am sure that's something that nobody in here would give up without a fight.

## CONCLUSION

So here is all that I ask of you today. When you go home, instead of logging into your facebook or neurotically checking your cell phone for another text message just take a step back and talk to someone. Talk to your parents, talk to your siblings. Call a friend or family member or a loved one and revel in the beauty of the spoken word. In a world where we're drowned out by technology don't let the wonderment of the human voice be lost. And for all you text messaging addicts out there I have one final message: just put down the phone, and pick up the phone.

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## INTERNAL STRUCTURE

In the previous chapter, we discussed the elements of persuasive argumentation that must be included in an argument in order for it to be effective at persuading an audience. Internal structure aids in making claims thoroughly and clearly throughout your speech. There are several components to internal structure that must be considered. The internal structure of main body points in a speech following the Problem-Cause-Solution format is very different than the internal structure of main body points in a speech that takes a two-prong approach. Therefore, in this section we will break

down how internal structure works in both types of speeches.

### PCS/CES

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For each main body point in your PCS or CES speech, you should include:

- A transition
- An internal preview
- Sub-point 1
- Sub-point 2
- Impact Statement

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### Example

#### ***Christopher Wideman, A Rave Review***

***In his speech, Mr. Wideman is using a CES format and this is Mr. Wideman’s “cause” main body point.***

***Transition:*** Now, a speech criticizing criticism sounds a little oxymoronic, but criticizing a speech criticizing criticism is even more ridiculous. Wrap your mind around that one.

***Internal Preview:*** In the mean time, we have to explore why it is that we’ve become so self-critical.

***Sub-point 1:*** First, we constantly feel like we have to be progressing. If we are not moving forward we feel like we’re moving backwards. The Conference Board reports that Americans are growing increasingly unhappy with their jobs when they don’t get promoted, as 50% have reported their dissatisfaction with stagnation. In order to combat this discontent, we begin to critique and analyze every aspect of our lives in an attempt to advance.

**Sub-point 2:** Second, we are bombarded with images of the “ideal,” which we constantly compare ourselves to. The June 2007 *Journal of Personality Assessment* explains, that self-criticism is a quest for validation from our culture and its ideals. These unattainable ideals are everywhere: on the billboards on the drive to work reminding of us of new ways to shed pounds, the internet ads pointing out how imperfect our skin really is, and the covers of magazines graced with skinny double-digit models. We just melt when we feel inferior in comparison.

**Impact Statement:** So we beat ourselves up – scrutinizing everything that doesn’t seem to fit.

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## SUB-STRUCTURE

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Each sub-point within a main body point also as a sub-structure. Sub-structure is designed to help you make concise and clear arguments (as Toulmin suggested you should). For speeches using either the PCS or CES formats you can use these easy and accessible format to help you maintain good sub-structure:

- Name it—State what your claim is for the sub-point
- Explain it—Expand on your articulation of the argument by helping us visualize or make sense of it
- Prove it—Give sufficient evidence to support claim
- Conclude it—Conclude and impact point

For example, if you break down the first sub-point in the example just given, you will see sub-structure at work:

- **Name it:** First, we constantly feel like we have to be progressing.

- **Explain it:** If we are not moving forward we feel like we’re moving backwards.
- **Prove it:** The Conference Board reports that Americans are growing increasingly unhappy with their jobs when they don’t get promoted, as 50% have reported their dissatisfaction with stagnation.
- **Conclude it:** In order to combat this discontent, we begin to critique and analyze every aspect of our lives in an attempt to advance.

## TWO-PRONG

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The two-prong format is not as mechanized as the PCS/CES formats, so it is difficult to explicitly outline how you can build internal structure. When writing your prongs, you should write intuitively considering the arguments and evidence that you want to include. However, generally speaking a prong should:

- Transition from the previous point
- State main idea or thesis of prong

- Explain it (use short examples or hypothetical examples here to illustrate problem for audience)
- Prove it (Share statistics, studies or quotations from experts)
- Impact it (Explain why what you are discussing is a bad thing, often people use an extended story as an example)
- Restate main idea and impact how its connected to thesis of speech

## Example

*Sonia Chokshi, My White Night*

*Transition:* Lord Layard, Professor at the London School of Economics points out “There’s a problem with the word happiness. When you use the word happy, it often has the sort of context of balloons floating up into the sky or something frivolous.”

*State main idea:* This brings me to my next concern: we have created a “Disney-fied” definition of happiness.

*Explain it:* We think that we’ll find happiness “just around the river bend” or on “second star to the right,” but happiness is a more complex and dynamic emotion. Eric Wilson, professor at Wake Forest University, states that today, we are attempting to “annihilate melancholia” and create “a brave new world of persistent good fortune, joy without pain, and felicity with no penalty.”

*Prove it:* But what we must understand is that we can find happiness through pain and sorrow. A study published in the January 2009 *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* even suggests that depression can lead to overall wellbeing because it causes us to focus and streamline our goals.

*Impact it:* But when we are searching for the perfect Disney happy ending, we can’t recognize happiness when it is right in front of us. Often, we corrupt our chances to be happy by striving too hard for perfection. When my father was younger, my grandmother always pushed him to be the best, the top, number one. During his schooling my father was forced into “all work, and no play.” 40 years later, my father wishes he could have cherished his childhood, but because my grandmothers’ view of perfect happiness included perfect children, he lost out on memorable childhood experiences.

*Restate main idea:* My grandmother wasn’t satisfied with her already extremely bright children, she thought *that* perfection would make her happier.

## CONCLUSION

No matter what persuasive organizational pattern you choose, you must stay attune to your internal structure if you are going to

effective and thoroughly develop arguments that will persuade your audience.

## OUTLINING YOUR SPEECH

Creating an outline your speech before you begin writing is one of the most critical steps in developing and writing an oratory. Outlining helps you clarify your ideas, commit to an organizational pattern, and identify holes or weaknesses in your argumentation and evidence.

Begin by using the point-by-point outlines for the PCS, CES, and Two-Prong formats detailed in the section about persuasive organizational patterns. Use these outlines as a guideline and fill in information as you go.

In order to illustrate this more effectively, I am going to use Christopher Wideman's A Rave Review speech to break down how you might construct an outline.

*Begin by articulating the "bare bones" arguments you are making.*

**Thesis:** We have become our own biggest critics—ruthless down to the nitty gritty details, and often incredibly paralyzing.

**Purpose Statement:** I want people to stop being so overly critical of themselves that they are paralyzed in fear.

### Causes

- Cause One

*We constantly feel like we need to be progressing*

- Cause Two

*We are bombarded with images of the ideal, which we constantly compare ourselves to.*

### Effects

- Effect One

*We are never satisfied with what we have done or accomplished.*

- Effect Two

*We are paralyzed by our self criticism. Due to fear, due to an incredible amount of self-doubt we hold back; avoid risks, miss opportunities, and lose out.*

### Solutions

- Solution One

*Take a balanced approach to self criticism*

- Solution Two

*Remember that ideals are not real*

Once you have identified the arguments you are going to be making throughout your speech, start to add in more detail, evidence, and supporting language.

### Introduction

- **Attention Getting Device (AGD):** Funny anecdote about being overly critical of hands
- **Link to Topic:**
- **Thesis:** We have become our own biggest critics—ruthless down to the nitty gritty details, and often incredibly paralyzing.
- **Statement of Significance:** An APA study published in 2006 suggests that excessive self-criticism is directly linked to depression; it seems that we just can't seem to turn off this little voice in our heads.
- **Roadmap:** In order to do this, let's first examine why we are so critical of ourselves, then uncover the dire effects of our excessive scrutiny, before we can perhaps finally discover some ways to stop the presses, and write ourselves a glowing review.

### Cause

- **Transition:** Now, a speech criticizing criticism sounds a little oxymoronic, but criticizing a speech criticizing criticism is even more ridiculous. Wrap your mind around that one.

- **Internal Preview:** In the mean time, we have to explore why it is that we've become so self-critical.
- **Cause One**
- Name it: We constantly feel like we need to be progressing.
- Explain it: If we are not moving forward we feel like we're moving backwards.
- Prove it: The Conference Board reports that Americans are growing increasingly unhappy with their jobs when they don't get promoted, as 50% have reported their dissatisfaction with stagnation.
- Conclude it: In order to combat this discontent, we begin to critique and analyze every aspect of our lives in an attempt to advance.
- **Cause Two**
- Name it: We are bombarded with images of the ideal, which we constantly compare ourselves to.
- Explain it/Prove it: The June 2007 *Journal of Personality Assessment* explains, that self-criticism is a quest for validation from our culture and its ideals. These unattainable ideals are everywhere: on the billboards on the drive to work reminding of us of new ways to shed pounds, the internet ads pointing out how imperfect our skin really is, and the covers of magazines graced with skinny double-digit models.
- Conclude it: We just melt when we feel inferior in comparison. So we beat

ourselves up – scrutinizing everything that doesn't seem to fit.

### Effect

- **Transition:** After my last girlfriend broke up with me in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I thought I'd do my future girlfriends a favor, by writing myself a horrible review and sending it into the New York Times, it came back saying, "Return to Sender – individual not important enough for major newspaper distribution." They don't know who they're messing with! No actually, they don't know who I am, that's why they didn't publish it.
- **Internal Preview:** Now, even though my review was never published, there are two effects that stem from this criticism.
- **Effect One**
  - Name it: We are never satisfied with what we have done or accomplished.
  - Explain it/Prove it: Dr. Deidre Donaldson argues that, "self criticism is the cognitive variable most strongly associated with hopelessness." We lose hope for ourselves
  - Conclude it:—Then attack and attack, over and over, so much so that we're never satisfied, we're never good enough.
- **Effect Two**
  - Name it: We are paralyzed by our self criticism.

- Explain it: Due to fear, due to an incredible amount of self-doubt we hold back; avoid risks, miss opportunities, and lose out.
- Prove it: The *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences* of March 2006 asserts that self-criticism is the largest cause of avoidant coping.
- Conclude it: Personal Story about my own battle with self-criticism

### Solution

- **Transition:** At my lowest point, everyday felt like a roast on Comedy Central. I'd look at myself in the mirror and scream, "GOSH! Look at you! Was anyone else hurt in the accident?" No, I was the only one in the ugly car.
- **Internal Preview:** But before this speech crashes and burns, lets find some solutions.
- **Solution One**
  - Name it: Take a balanced approach to self criticism
  - Explain it: It's okay, and even important, to critique ourselves, as long as we keep remembering our strengths. When we start to feel as though we aren't good at anything, its probably time to take a step back and look at our real strengths and weaknesses.
  - Prove it: I might not get all the ladies, but I do make a mean green bean casserole,



*and I haven't lost a game of Egyptian Rat Screw in over three years!*

- Conclude it:
- **Solution Two**
- Name it: Remember that ideals are not real
- Explain it: Otherwise we'll spend our lives trying to fight a futile battle against bogus images.
- Prove it: Kurt Cobain quotation and Paul Potts Story
- Conclude it:
- **Conclude Point**

## CONCLUSION

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Once you have filled out your outline with your claims, evidence, and explanations you will be surprised about how easy it will be to turn this full outline into a completed first draft. Remember, creating an outline helps you keep your ideas organized, illuminates holes or weaknesses in your research and argument, and aids in quickly developing your ideas into a cohesive speech.

*In this chapter we will discuss:*

- *Language development*
- *Cohesive Mechanisms*
- *Adding Humor to your Oratory*

# CHAPTER 4

## *Writing Your Speech*

*“With all his tumid boasts, he’s like the sword-fish, who only wears his weapon in his mouth.” —John Madden*

### LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

**T**he language in your original oratory should be extremely descriptive and engaging. Writing dynamically and descriptively can help to craft a perception of you as poised, intelligent, and elegant. There are several tips and tricks that can aid in the development of vibrant writing.

### SIMPLICITY AND CLARITY

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Because you are verbally conveying this information, it is imperative that you KEEP IT SIMPLE. I cannot say this enough. Don’t pick words that are overly complicated or unnecessary because you think they will make you



sound smart, they will only distract from your message.

## USE INVITING LANGUAGE, NOT ATTACKING LANGUAGE

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Too many orators attack and accuse their audience of participating in the problem they are addressing. Unfortunately, this can alienate your audience, decrease your ethos, and generally make people not like you. Always include yourself in this “societal” problem by using “us” or “we” instead of “you.” Do not tell your audience they are doing something wrong; rather make them look at an issue in a way they haven’t thought of before.

## 70-30 RULE

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Often, oratories are so stuffed to the brim with facts, statistics, stories, and data that the rhetoric of the speaker is lost along the way. A good rule of thumb is that 70% of your speech should be your thoughts, explanations, reflections, and rhetoric about your issue; while only 30% should be the information, examples, and data. Never let a statistic, fact, or example “hang out” or end without you contextualizing it in relation to your topic.

## AVOID ABSOLUTES

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Try to stay away from using absolutes in your speech because they can alienate you from

your audience. Replace instances of always and never with sometimes or often. Rather than all or none, use some or most.

## RULE OF THREE

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The rule of three is a general principle in writing that suggests that grouping concepts, adjectives, examples, or jokes into three is more effective than two or four or more. For example, instead of saying, “just be your intelligent self,” Anthony Francomacaro found it far more powerful to say “Let’s learn to be ourselves, just be you: gorgeous, intelligent, wonderful you.”

## BE APPROPRIATE

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Make sure that you are using professional and appropriate language in your oratory. While you might find it appropriate to use certain slang or swear words, your judges and audience may not. Remember that you are speaking for them, so your language choices should follow suit.

## MAKE POWERFUL WORD CHOICES

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Utilize your thesaurus and explore different ways of saying the same phrase. Using “moreover” and “additionally” too many times can make your speech seem robotic and unrefined.

## USE LANGUAGE STRATEGIES

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You will also want to look to language strategies to enhance your speech. The following strategies can be used to create vividness in your writing:

- *Alliteration*—The repetition of initial consonants (e.g. “A cacophony of crows cascaded through the cathedral”).
- *Consonance*—Repetition of the same consonant two or more times in direct succession (e.g. “ponies pitter patter”).
- *Assonance*—The repetition of a vowel sound that produces a kind of rhythm ( e.g. “seeking shelter under the trees where the bees reside”).
- *Onomatopoeia*—The tendency in certain words to imitate the very sound that they symbolize. (e.g. buzz, hiss, bump, meow, etc...). You can use different strategies to craft powerful phrases, arguments and statements.
- *Personification*—Treating an abstract idea as if it were a human being or as if it has human characteristics (e.g. in the poem “Mirror” Sylvia Plath personifies the mirror and gives it the ability to speak, see and swallow, as well as human attributes such as truthfulness. She writes, “I am silver and exact/I have no preconceptions/ Whatever I see I swallow immediately/ Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike/I am not cruel, only truthful”).

- *Visualization*—Putting an idea into visual form or creating a mental picture so that the audience can experience what you are discussing (e.g.
- *Metaphor*—A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable (e.g. “No man is an island”).

## CONCLUSION

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It is necessary that you appropriately and vividly develop the language in your oratory. In the following sections, you will also learn about cohesive mechanisms that can help bind your speech and arguments together and how attempting humor can engage your audience.

## COHESIVE MECHANISMS

There are myriad ways that a writer and speaker can help develop cohesion in their speech. Delivery, thoughtful writing, and the use of sub-structure and parallelism can all help enhance the cohesiveness, flow, and build of your speech. There are also several cohesive mechanisms that are commonly used in original oratory speeches.

### CONNECTIVES

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Connectives are the internal transitions and sign-posts that help to hold together the arguments, main body points, and logic of your oratory. Transitions are the connectives that link together main body points in a speech. They almost always reference what was said and connect it to what is going to be said (e.g.

“Now that I have discussed our inability to say no, we must examine how this has detrimental effects on society”). Transitions are also effective when you use humor, quotations, or examples to illustrate points (e.g. in the transitions from his introduction to first prong, Anthony Francomacaro writes, “Albert Einstein, a great man and even greater hair stylist, philosophized, ‘It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.’ And it’s true; technology allows us to create the illusion of friendship, while simultaneously disconnecting us from it”).

Sign-posts are the internal “signs” that signal to the audience that you are switching gears, emphasizing a point once again, or moving on to another point (e.g. “First,” “Moreover,” “Additionally,” etc...).

## CATCH-PHRASES

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Catch-phrases are phrases or words recognized by their repeated utterance. In speeches, you could use a catch-phrase to emphasize points or ideas throughout your speech. For example, when Lydia Nelson refers to Ugly Duckling Syndrome as UDS or when Josh Gad used the “woohaa!” to denote risk taking they are implementing catch-phrases as a cohesive mechanism.

## EXTENDED METAPHORS

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An extended metaphor is a metaphor (a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable) that extends throughout a speech. For example, in Anthony Francomacaro’s speech Make-Real, he uses the extended metaphor of “imaginary friends” to refer to many things, including his imaginary friend LDS that he discusses in his introduction

and the imaginary friends his sister believed to be real. By extending the metaphor of imaginary friends throughout the speech, Francomacaro was able to create cohesion without explicitly using a vehicle or referencing “imaginary friends” at every transition.

## VEHICLES

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“Vehicles” are a method used to link together your points in order to make your speech more cohesive and allow for a better flow. These are not necessary, and should not be implemented unless they add to the speech. A vehicle is characterized in three parts: AGD, transitions and conclusion. It works as a thread, linking and joining each of the main points in your speech together. It can be reference to a story, a movie, or a book. On the following pages, I will break down an example of a vehicle used in Lydia Nelson’s 2003 National Tournament winning speech.

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### Example:

*A League of My Own*

Lydia Nelson, Sacred Heart High School

1<sup>st</sup> place, 2003 National Speech & Debate Tournament

#### **Attention-Getting Device**

**[You introduce your vehicle as your AGD, or Attention Getting Device. This sets you up for using the story as a thread.]**

*Hello. I have a little secret. I'm not pretty. No, no, it's true. Oh, don't feel bad. I've known I was not pretty for a long time now. It was the first day of seventh grade. There I was, head drooped, shoulders slouched, hair hanging over my face, when suddenly out of nowhere, someone screams, "Hey Marla, I could stick your face in some dough and make gorilla cookies." I froze. Who was Marla and why was everyone looking at me? Intrigued, I conducted a little research and discovered that Marla Hooch is a character from the baseball movie, A League of Their Own. Marla is short, chubby, mousy looking, tomboyish, raised-by-her-father, hair-in-her-face, no self-confidence, constantly-passed-over because she is not pretty. I have been likened to Marla Hooch?*

Believe it or not, there is a very social problem that comes from this asocial degradation. I like to call it, "The Ugly Duckling Syndrome" or UDS. You like that? UDS is simply defined as being blind-sided by appearance, rather than acknowledging abilities, qualities or talents. Its important that you understand why we have let vanity distort success, we will start by "hitting" the "foul" problem that causes misrepresentation of achievement, then "lineup" the causes that create this "error" of success, and finally "pitch" a solution to measure our successes by new standards.

### **Problems**

**[After introducing your vehicle in the AGD, you use it as the transitional tool to each of the points. In the following example Lydia Nelson tells bits of the story in order to transition to a new point, as well as introduce the argument.]**

*A baseball scout watches Marla in an impressive batting practice. Afterwards, she's called over to meet him, but when she peers out from behind her hair, the scout immediately jumps back, makes a face and says, "I can't use her. You know General Omar Bradley? Too strong of a resemblance."*

**Link to Point:** This attitude is the very problem with achievement. Success is measured by appearance and society rewards beauty.

Role models on TV are sexy. The cast of Friends, newscasters, and—thanks to Cher's pioneering efforts—most stars go under the knife or the Botox to remain young and hip in the world's limelight. Cher—if that woman has one more facelift she won't be able to blink. So, let's look at Hollywood. How many fat, ugly stars are there? Okay, Danny DeVito and Drew Carey don't count because they're funny. But, arguably, who has been more successful, John

Goodman or Ben Affleck? Denzel Washington or Mike O'Malley? Who's Mike O'Malley? Exactly! Truth be told, I will never be a super model, movie star or even a broadcast journalist because I suffer from UDS.

### **Causes**

*Now, Marla does manage to make the team, however, she's forced to attend charm and beauty school. Her instructor urges her to play a lot of night games. Causes of this demeaning declaration lie in stereotyping and stories.*

**Link to Point:** As with Marla's instructor, proficient professionals are incapable of linking the two qualities of athletic talent and attractiveness in this Ugly Duckling Syndrome.

Berscheid, Walster and Dion—not Warwick—discuss the “halo” effect—not Jesus—which means when one is attractive, people assume he has other good qualities. There research indicates that attractive people are found to be more sensitive, kind, sociable, interesting, outgoing, strong, poised and intelligent than unattractive people; therefore, they are trusted more and gain higher positions in society. The implication being, I'm not only fat and poor, I'm also a criminal. Kick it! UDS gains a new twist when we assimilate adolescence with this beautification blunder. Doctor Alvin Poussant, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, explains that children are taught to differentiate between attractive and unattractive people at an early age through storybooks and fairy tales. Pretty princesses are rescued by Prince Charmings who have slain the evil, ugly, wicked witch—that's me. These stories become indoctrinated in young, easily influenced minds. Do you honestly think Prince Charming would have wrestled his way through one-hundred-foot thicket of briar and scaled a two-hundred story tower to save—Roseanne? She'd probably be sleeping for another hundred years, or two, or ten. Okay, society's hangup with outside perception leads to self-esteem issues, too. In sixth century Greece, the disfigured were blamed for various evils, such as famines and plagues, and were publicly beaten and burned to death. (I really dodged a bullet there, didn't I? Phew!) But this public degradation did not waste away with the falls of the Greco-Roman empires. Are we really surprised when websites like DropDeadUgly.com, a dating service, prompts one to rate the repulsiveness of some people (“Yes, umm, that's disgusting.”), or where books like *How to Make People Like You in 90 Seconds or Less* top bestseller lists?

## Solutions

*Throughout the course of the movie, Marla's inner qualities are gradually revealed. She is a team player, an exceptionally strong athlete, a loving friend and wife, and an intelligent woman. Although she lacks beauty, she possesses an inner attractiveness and her diligence and persistence lead to a successful life.*

**Link to Point:** Marla's story concretely plants us in efforts of solution, so let's change this duckling to a swan.

Doctor Jay Strack said in the September 9, 1996 issue of Desktop Devotions, "Time changes things. Styles change, as do expectations, salaries, communications systems, but some things have no business changing. Character qualities are never up for grabs. Times must change, but character never." One day in elementary school, I was patiently waiting outside for the bus. There I was—chapped lips, chubby cheeks, bad posture, wind-blown hair—and my bus pulls up, and a kid seated in the way back pulls down his window and yells, "You are the ugliest girl I have ever seen!" While it's true that throughout the course of my oratory I have made myself the butt of many jokes, I have learned to laugh at myself or at least society's perception of me, but no matter how hard I try I just can't find that one funny. You see, I went to school that morning with a new dress, new coat, new shoes—feeling pretty. What I discovered was I was pretty—ugly. In our world, we have allowed physical attractiveness to make success a one-size-fits-all definition, forcing square pegs into round holes and completely eliminating the aspect of character. That boy on the bus didn't know me, but because he was repulsed by my physical appearance, he never took the time to know me for who I really am. But, I'm asking you to strike out these stereotypes. Let's redefine the definition pulling us off the road to revulsion, detouring us to a place where the Ugly Duckling Syndrome is only a fairy tale. Leadership expert John Maxwell says that over a lifetime one person can influence ten thousand people. So, if three people here today change their definitions of success to include who someone is on the inside, that's thirty thousand people right there.

## Conclusion

**[In the conclusion the writer reverts back once again to the story, using it as a transition to conclude.]**

*For the past few minutes, Marla and I have “singled” out some problems, “batted” around some causes and, finally, “scored” a solution to change the world from an ugly duckling to a beautiful swan. Marla’s not one of my nicknames any more. You know, I miss that. She taught me that success is what I make of it, who cares if I’m not Britney Spears. Ugly people can make it far. We just shouldn’t wear, short, pleated, Catholic schoolgirl uniforms. So, to all the cross-eyed, uni-browed, slack-jawed, double-chinned, hairy-backed, intelligent, caring, terrific people out there, I say U-P-U—ugly people unite! And while I might not make it to the cover of Vogue, if you give me the chance, I know I can make it to the cover of your heart because I’m in a league of my own.*

## HUMOR

Humor strategically placed in speeches helps to keep the audience engaged and listening to the speaker. Making someone laugh also makes you a likable speaker, which means the audience is more likely to listen to your more serious points. Additionally, it gives the audience a break from serious and daunting information. In the end, the easiest way to make someone cry or emote, is to make him or her laugh first.

Despite the incredible impact of humor, many people do not find themselves funny or feel as though they do not know how to translate their humor into their oratory. It is important to remember that almost everyone has a sense of humor, you just have to find ways to unlock it and use it strategically.

As a general rule, you want to use humorous stories and jokes that relate directly to the

topic of your speech and that actually help to make your persuasive points. Humor is disarming, and can often be the best method of getting a hesitant audience to accept a difficult premise. If the persuasive function of humor is to disarm, then one should avoid offensive, foul mouthed or belittling humor, because it can alienate you from your audience.

Teaching individuals to be funny or humorous is not something that can be mechanized or easily distributed. However, first you need to get comfortable with who you are and what you find funny. Then, familiarize yourself with the different ways that you can structure a joke. In what follows, the different types of humor will be outlined to help you think of what kinds of jokes can be used in your original oratory.

## TYPES OF HUMOR

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**Self deprecation:** Sometimes poking fun at yourself can be the best use of humor. This type of humor (as long as it is done with some restraint so you don't make your audience uncomfortable) humanizes you, allowing the audience to see your vulnerable side. For example, Lydia Nelson writes in her oratory: "In sixth century Greece, the disfigured were blamed for various evils, such as famines and plagues, and were publicly beaten and burned to death. (I really dodged a bullet there, didn't I? Phew!)"

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**It is important to remember that almost everyone has a sense of humor, you just have to find ways to unlock it and use it strategically.**

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**Analogies:** Use an off the cuff comparison to something ridiculous for a useful and funny effect (e.g. "He was as smooth as Britney's head in 2007").

**Puns:** Play on the double meaning of a word or sound construction (e.g. "I was reading a book about anti-gravity. It proved impossible to put down" or "I usually take steps to avoid elevators").

**Indirection:** Indirection is when you make it seem as if you are talking about one thing when

you really are talking about something else (e.g. with a serious and foreboding tone you state, "I didn't know what to do... I was lost... and then I found a map and discovered Orange Julius was right around the corner").

**Irony:** A humorous device wherein there is a sharp incongruity between the thing as presented and the actual thing (e.g. "The baby had a caption bubble that read, 'I want you for dinner' or shouting emotionally "I am not upset!").

**Twisted quotations:** Take a famous or easily recognizable quotation and twist it for humorous effect (e.g. "There is nothing to fear but fear...and everything else").

**Humorous quotations** from comics, authors, news commentators, TV shows or movies.

**Jabs at Current Events:** Reference current events with a cynical or sarcastic tone (e.g. "thanks to Cher's pioneering efforts—most stars go under the knife or the Botox to remain young and hip in the world's limelight. Cher—if that woman has one more facelift she won't be able to blink").

**Allusions:** You can take a funny line from a well-known movie, TV show, or song lyric (e.g. "When I looked under my bed to discover the gruesome, pussy faced, 12 eyed, 6 legged monster that I call Cher, my imaginary amigo was there to kick its butt, before Cher said 'I Got You ...Babe'").

**Understatement:** You can strategically draw humorous/sarcastic attention to something but making it seem less important than what it is (e.g. "All she had to do to escape was

scale a 50 foot fence, walk 200 miles through three deserts, and hijack a motor boat from a group of murderous pirates... Regular Sunday afternoon.”

**Clichés:** By employing trite statements strategically and ironically ( e.g. “Strike while the Iron Man is hot, otherwise he might go on another drinking binge and wander bare-foot through Stark Enterprises” or “Whatever doesn’t kill you only... hurts you even more”).

**Overstatement:** Often, you can exaggerate the case to draw attention to it in humorous way.

**Portmanteau words:** A Portmanteau word is when you take two words and mix them together. (e.g. “bennifer,” “brangelina”).

**Alliteration:** Sometimes just using a string of words each beginning with the same first letter can make listeners chuckle or smile (e.g. “Kindly keep killing kites in kitchen, Kristine!”)

## A Joke Writing Activity

Go through your speech and identify 10 places where a joke could be placed. Often we hear the jokes speaking to us, but don’t know exactly what kind of joke can be placed in a particular place. Feeling self conscious can keep you from writing jokes, so this type of activity is designed to get you out of your own head.

Once you have identified 10 places for jokes, go back through and attempt to come up with the “structure” of the jokes. It’s okay if you don’t know exactly what the examples, words, or content will be. You might hear that an analogy joke (“Thats like \_\_\_\_\_”) would fit after a certain sentence or example, but don’t know what the exact content of the joke will be. Just write the structure of the joke first.

Once you have identified and written the structure of at least 10 jokes, go back through and start brainstorming ideas to fill in the blanks. It is always better to brainstorm lots of ideas than to just go with your first try.



*In this chapter we will discuss:*

- *How to find your “methos”*
- *Expressing meaning both verbally and non-verbally*
- *How to identify barriers to expression and overcome them*
- *How to effectively prepare and practice your original oratory*

# CHAPTER 5

## *Delivering Your Speech*

*“All the great speakers were bad speakers at first.”*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### DELIVERY

**T**he content of your speech is only as good as its expression. The audience of a public presentation cannot read your outline or notes; they will only experience what you utter, and how you choose to express it. This means that thoughtful and coherent content can only take you so far; you have

to learn how to effectively express meaning. The **expression of meaning** is a process of synthesis: How can you as a speaker “sync up” the content of your presentation, with your inner thoughts, and ultimately, your outward expressions of those thoughts, in order to make your oratory seamless, natural and understandable?

This task is difficult for many because public presentations are epicenters of stress and anxiety, distraction, and self-doubt. But have no fear, the delivery chapter is here!

This chapter will provide the necessary tools to express meaning effectively and professionally in your oratory and beyond. These tools include:

- capturing your “methos”
- utilizing vocal, facial, and bodily expressions appropriately
- realizing the barriers to expressing meaning
- managing communication apprehension
- techniques for effectively practicing the delivery of your presentation

## FINDING YOUR METHOS

As previously noted, Aristotle introduced three rhetorical proofs (ethos, pathos, and logos) nearly 2300 years ago. With his introduction of ethos into the rhetorical canon, Aristotle became the first documented philosopher to highlight the important role character perceptions play in an audience’s likelihood to accept or reject a speaker’s message.

What we can learn from Aristotle, and from two-thousand or so years of poorly executed sales pitches, is: What you are really selling in a public presentation is **you**. If you are going to be successful at persuading or explaining during a presentation, people have to feel like you are a trustworthy and competent human being.

The best delivery, therefore, occurs when you can present your information as if you were engaging in a natural conversation with your audience. We often forget that the audience is not an empty receptacle to dump

information in: As you are presenting, your audience is thinking and responding, so it is important that we approach presentations as the conversations that they are.

The first step that you must take in order to successfully present in a conversational tone is discover your **methos** (derived from the non-greek “me” and the clever suffix “thos”). While methos is not one of Aristotle’s original proofs, it is an appeal based on the authenticity or realness of your character. An individual presenter can appeal to an audience’s desire for authenticity by accessing the essential parts of their personality and utilizing them to engage in a conversation with their audience. Your methos is your own unique communication traits, which can be translated into the individual style you display when presenting. This does not mean that you should show all parts of your personality during your oratory. On the contrary, you do not want to talk to your judges the same



way that you talk to your friends while hanging out at a party. Similarly, you might be shy in real life, but incredibly engaging and dynamic when presenting. Methos is our individual communication traits, *professionally* crafted, packaged and expressed to audiences through language and delivery choices.

Methos is unlike a **persona** (which in Latin means “mask,” and refers to the social facade or front an individual displays in public). Methos requires the removal of fakeness in presentations. A common mistake occurs in presentations when individuals try to adopt an overly professional persona. This often results in an unnatural, forced, warbled, overly polished or “canned” vocal presentation called **speech voice**. Consider your local newscasters,

and how their voices seem cheesy, forced and unnatural. Sometimes speakers do this in response to communication apprehension; creating a persona is easier than having to face the crowd as yourself.

### ***But how do I find my methos?***

The existence of methos is one of the main reasons there is no cookie cutter formula for delivering oratories. Each individual communicates information differently, and you have to understand your own expressivity before you can try to utilize it successfully in a presentation. But how do you break down the essential parts of your personality in order to employ them in your oratory? There is not a test that you can take that can diagnose your methos, but you can take the time to reflect

on how you embody meaning in everyday life. We rarely try to consider our communicative traits objectively. Think about instances when you communicate with a group of friends, your family, or strangers and consider asking yourself questions such as:

- Have you given a public presentation before? How did you communicate information? What type of person did you show the audience? What do you think they thought about you?
- How would you describe your sense of humor (are you sarcastic, goofy, deadpan, witty, etc...)?
- Describe your personality in one or two words (are you weird, awkward, confident, shy, etc...)?
- How do you tell stories to others?
- What do people tell you is your best quality as a communicator? Your worst?

This is by no means an exhaustive set of questions, so contemplate what other questions you can ask yourself to continue exploring

how you communicate publicly. Once you feel like you have a good sense of how you embody and express meaning, you can start figuring out how to hone those unique sensibilities into delivery skills for professional presentations. For example, Anne thinks of herself as a kind person, with a sarcastic sense of humor. But she is shy, so when she gave her oratory her judges commented that she came across as cold and mean. How can she fix other people's misperception of her shyness as coldness in rounds? In this instance, Anne is not using her method to her advantage, because her shyness is masking the warmer parts of her delivery style, while highlighting the more abrasive parts (such as her sarcastic demeanor). For Anne, she has to focus her delivery work on developing a more accessible style of delivery. One way she could do this is by making a conscious effort to smile more frequently while presenting. In the following sections of this chapter, we will give you the techniques needed to hone your method into a unique professional delivery style that works for you.

## EXPRESSING MEANING

How you express your speech determines how others experience the meaning of your information. There are both verbal and nonverbal means of expressing meaning. As a speaker

your **verbal delivery** consists of the spoken elements of your speech, such as pitch, tone, pace, volume, articulation, and enunciation, while **nonverbal delivery** is the use of the

body and face to communicate meaning. This section will discuss aspects of both verbal and nonverbal delivery. By breaking down the different types of expressions in public speaking, you can learn how to deliver your oratory more effectively.

## VERBAL DELIVERY

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### Pitch and Tone

Pitch and tone are two qualities of the voice that often get confused with one another. Pitch is the actual value of the note of your voices (how high or low your voice is on the scale of musical notes). Pitch, then, is “the auditory attribute of sound according to which sounds can be ordered on a scale from low to high.”

Tone, on the other hand, is the quality of the voice (how good does it sound, is it raspy, crackly, or guttural, is it strong or warm sounding). Pitch is often taken into consideration when assessing the tone of voice, as a singer can have perfect pitch and still sound horrible and have poor tone quality. Higher pitched voices tend to have lower tonal quality than low-pitched voices (just think of how smooth Sean Connery sounds), although this is not always the case.

The distinction between pitch and tone is important, and not just because it proves that when Randy Jackson calls singers on *American Idol* “a little pitchy” he is revealing just how little

he knows about vocal technique. As a speaker, you have to be aware of both these qualities in your own voice because certain levels can inhibit your audience’s comprehension of your message. Think about Sesame Street’s famous duo Bert and Ernie, their voices are incredibly high pitched, and have a screeching tonal quality that make them difficult to listen to for long periods of time. If Ernie was asked to give an oratory, he would have his work cut out for him because the quality of his voice serves as a barrier between him and the audience. Additionally, when you are nervous, anxious, or angry your voice naturally goes higher. Once you are aware of this, you can monitor your pitch and tone so they will not impede your presentation. There are several key ways that you can adjust your pitch and tone:

- *Breathing through your diaphragm.* The pitch and tone of your voice are integrally connected to whether or not you breathe through your diaphragm. When properly breathing through your diaphragm you have better control over the pitch of your voice, while maintaining high quality tone. Please see the section on Volume and Breathing for further instructions on how to breath through your diaphragm properly.
- *Adjust head and neck position.* The positions of our head and neck also impact the pitch and tone of our voice because different neck and head

positions impact how air flows past our vocal cords. If you were to tip your head back, your pitch would go higher, whereas touching your chin to your chest would result in a lower note. If you have a particularly high voice, make sure to avoid lifting or extending your neck upwards. Whereas if you have a particularly low voice, you might purposefully lift your chin and neck upwards in order to raise your pitch slightly. If you have a microphone for your presentation, you can even adjust its position accordingly.

## Pace and Pausing

The speed of your oratory matters. Think about a time when you had a teacher or a friend who talked so fast that you could not understand what they were saying. Or what about when someone was talking so slow you wanted to cry yourself to sleep? You must learn to use pace and pausing effectively. Pace is the rate at which you speak. Because of the increased anxiety we often feel when giving public presentations, an individual speaker's normal pace pattern often increases, but this can greatly harm the quality of delivery. Staying relaxed and breathing appropriately can help you keep a steady and appropriate pace. But use your audience's nonverbal feedback to gauge whether you need to slow down or speed up: do they look overwhelmed? Or do they all look bored? These could be signals that your pace is off. Additionally, pausing is important in

creating the perfect pace in a presentation. A well-placed pause can denote the seriousness of the previous statement, or it can reveal that you are unprepared. You can strategically use pausing, but it has to be appropriate and not more than a beat.

*TIP: The time it takes to say “Mickey Mouse” in your head is generally the same length as an appropriate pause.*

## Volume and Breathing

The volume of a speech is also an important part of verbal delivery. Each member of the audience, even those in the far back, has to hear you if they are going to understand your message. The trick is to speak to the back of the room, without sounding like you are shouting. Use audience feedback to determine whether or not your volume is on point, and do not be afraid to ask if people in the back can hear you.

But determining when to increase or decrease your volume is only part of the process of using volume appropriately. Most people think of voice volume coming from just their mouth and lungs, but this is an unfortunate misunderstanding. You might have heard of the phrase, “speak from your gut,” which refers to the physiological process of your abdominal muscles supporting your voice by propelling air through your lungs and voice box. This means that your abdominal muscles, posture, and the amount of air in your lungs greatly impact the volume of your voice. If you

are unsure as to whether or not you breathe from your diaphragm when speaking, ask yourself the following questions:

- When you breathe in, do your shoulders and/or chest rise?
- Do you run out of breath towards the end of sentences?
- Do you gasp for air periodically?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have poor breathing technique.

Learning how to breathe properly can help us expertly use volume in presentations. Our **thoracic diaphragm** muscle controls our breathing. The thoracic diaphragm is located between the chest cavity and the lower abdomen and is the major muscle of our respiratory system. Unless individuals have been properly trained as singers or speakers, most do not use their diaphragms the way they should. We improperly do things like suck in our stomachs while we speak. Just like any other muscle in the body, the diaphragm gains strength from exercise. If used poorly, the diaphragm muscle becomes weak from neglect. In order to get the most use out of it, you have to start consciously using it in everyday conversation in order to build strength. Below are some exercises you can use to find, use, and exercise your diaphragm muscle.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Tighten your abdominal muscles by sticking your stomach out as far as you can. Put your

hands on your abdomen, and slowly breathe in and out, as if filling your stomach with air. If your shoulders or chest rise, you are doing this incorrectly. You should feel the muscles in your stomach working. First, breathe in for ten seconds, then breathe out for ten seconds. Second, take ten short breaths in, and then breathe out in ten short spurts.

Lay on the floor on your back. Place your hands on your abdomen, and slowly breathe in and out, feeling the muscles in your abdomen working. In this position, your shoulders and chest are more immobilized, making it more difficult for you to fall back on them to breathe.

*TIP: Attempt saying your speech while someone pushes on your back from behind. If you can keep your balance and hold your ground – you are breathing correctly.*

## Articulation and Enunciation

In verbal delivery, the meaning of a word is determined by how it is articulated and enunciated. These two terms are often confused with each other, but there is a fine and important distinction. **Articulation** is the clear distinction of each syllable in each word and differentiation between words. An articulate speaker is one who pronounces each word clearly. **Enunciation** is the stress or inflection you place on a single word or phrase in order to clarify or emphasize meaning. Articulation and enunciation can be problematic for some

if they have an accent, speech impediment, or they talk very fast. These obstacles can result in words running together, or a word pronounced “incompletely,” such as when someone says, “I’m just presentin’ ta’m friends” and it sounds like “I’m giving presents to my friends!” While your friends might like you more, your presentation will ultimately suffer when you fail to fully articulate or enunciate. Breathing properly, and attaining proper pace will aid in your use of proper enunciation and articulation, but they also need to be practiced. If you are having trouble with either of these practices, try placing a pen or pencil in your mouth and biting down. Now, attempt to clearly speak while enunciating and articulating. This forces your mouth muscles to over articulate and enunciate, which trains them to do a better job of it when you remove the pen or pencil from your mouth and speak freely.

## NON-VERBAL DELIVERY

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### Facial expressions

Facial expressions are one tool people often forget about in presentations. **Facial expressions** are facial muscle movements that contribute to the expression of your message by accenting meaning. For example, wincing your mouth can convey disgust or raising your eyebrows can express sarcasm. Use facial

expressions as a tool to enhance the verbal delivery you’ve already worked on.

### Eye contact

Eye contact or lack thereof is one of the biggest mistakes people make in public presentations. Research shows that people look to our eyes the most for nonverbal clues. This is why Tyra Banks always says you should “smize”: Having engaged and bright eyes invites people to connect with you as a presenter. If you have trouble holding consistent eye contact, try to focus on one individual at a time so that your performance doesn’t seem overwhelming. Often, this can help us engage more naturally and intimately.

### Hand Gestures

Just like their facial counterparts, **hand gestures** are non-verbal, physical movements that contribute to the expression of your message by accenting meaning. Gestures should be controlled but not robotic, so the best thing you can do is use gestures the same way you use them in real life.

*TIPS:*

- *Keep your hands loose and your elbows and shoulders unlocked. Looking too stiff can make gestures look fake. If you are having trouble simulating looseness in your hand, hold an orange loosely in your palm while*

*practicing. This will train the muscles in your hands to naturally avoid stiffness.*

- *Avoid using the same gesture over and over again. You want gestures to be unique and natural. So if you are going to use one, think about how it emphasizes the meaning of your message. For example, you are trying to explain how stem cells function think about how you might embody that process in your hand gestures? Perhaps a gesture expressing movement or fluidity.*
- *Sometimes, the more you think about a gesture, the more awkward it becomes. How do you emphasize points in everyday conversation? Follow your natural barometer for gesturing, and they will look less forced and more appropriate.*
- *If the gesture doesn't fit, don't force it. If all else fails. DON'T gesture. Don't be afraid to keep your hands relaxed and at your side for a longer period of time.*

## **Posture/Stance**

Never underestimate the power of posture. You want your audience to believe that you are confident about your message, and holding yourself up straight can actually help you

embody that. Your body does what your mind believes. If you hunch, people will see your insecurity. Try positioning yourself with your feet shoulder-width apart, and your shoulders back and see what kind of difference it makes. But its not just about looking confident and in control, posture actually affects your breathing and nervous system.

## **Movement**

The movement of your body can aid in your expression of meaning or distract from it. Because people get nervous in front of a room full of people, they often fidget, pace back and forth or stand rigidly still. All of these movements can harm your audience intake of your message. When standing, stay controlled and avoid fidgeting. Keeping your feet shoulder width-apart aids in creating a strong and confident stance.

Your movements between main body points should be strategic: Walk several steps when transitioning to a new main body. Movement can help your audience understand the structure of your presentation if implemented correctly and not overused.

## BARRIERS TO EXPRESSION

Because people often think of presentations as performances and not conversations they mistakenly “fake” meaning rather than embody it. This can result in strange enactments in delivery. For example, a common mistake is that a speaker smiles while describing something sad/tragic/horrific. While smiling does make a speaker accessible, if used incorrectly it can also alienate the audience from the message of a speech. There are many barriers to expression that can create a disconnect between you and the audience while delivering your oratory. In this section, we will discuss those barriers and how you can overcome them.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

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Delivery is a process of synthesizing your content with your thoughts and expressions of those thoughts. Unfortunately, psychological barriers create a disconnect between these processes.

#### Emotions

Public presentations do not happen in a vacuum: You live a real life, where real emotions exist. You might have had a bad morning, or night before your oratory; or you might have broken up with your girlfriend/boyfriend recently. Considering this, sometimes being

good at expressing meaning can be a process of deception, you might need to deceive yourself into feeling natural or calm, even if you are not. Famed psychologist and lie detection expert Dr. Paul Ekman argues that in high stakes situations, like public presentations, it is easier for our emotions to bubble to the surface and betray the emotion we are trying to express.

So if you ever wondered why when you practice a presentation alone you can execute it perfectly, but when you do it in front of others you mess up, this explains why: High stakes situations up the ante, making it difficult to suppress hidden emotions such as fear or stress. It is really important that you spend time relaxing on the days you give your oratory, so that you can get in the right frame of mind to deal with the high stakes situation.

#### Over confidence

While it is essential that you express confidence and poise in your presentation, feeling too confident can actually result in a lack of focus in your presentation. You want to stay sharp and alert, so you don't grow overly complacent or comfortable when presenting.

#### Perfectionism

When giving a public presentation, especially when you are being judged, it is really easy to focus on being perfect. Unfortunately, we too

often let mistakes hold us back, and we worry about our hang-ups so much that we are unable to focus on performing at our highest level. Most of the time, your audience will not even recognize mistakes or flubs if you handle them appropriately. How you respond to mistakes is what leaves an impression: Did you go forth with confidence and poise? Did your flub make you forget your next line? Do you seem stressed out about it? Did you acknowledge it tactfully? Or did you sheepishly apologize to the room? We are human and we make mistakes. OWN your mistakes and flubs—they are part of what makes you human, if you do not show fear, your audience will not remember them.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL

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### Flight or fight response

Sometimes these psychological barriers also manifest in physiological ways. Stress or fear can produce an almost automatic physiological response from the sympathetic nervous system, called the fight-or-flight response. This physiological reaction is often what we colloquially refer to as “nerves” or “nervousness.” Your sympathetic nervous system discharges in high stress situations, releasing the hormone adrenaline, which causes immediate physical reactions in preparation for your body to fight or flight.

These responses include:

- Paling or flushing

- Acceleration of heart and lung action (*which can lead to quick breaths, increased heart rate, and sweating*)
- Stops digestion (*results in stomach aches*)
- Shaking (*this can manifest in your knees or hands*)
- Tunnel vision (*loss of peripheral vision, which can decrease eye contact*)
- Acceleration of instantaneous reflexes (*Ticking or gesturing too quick*)
- Inhibition of the lacrimal gland (*the lacrimal gland is responsible for tear and salivation production which if inhibited can result in dry mouth or “cotton mouth” and dry eyes*)

### Managing Apprehension

Managing these physiological manifestations of stress can be difficult, but also rewarding. If you can learn to “fight” rather than freeze or flee, you can actually harness your nerves to create a stronger, more energetic performance. Doing this is all about mindset, and for some, especially those with dispositional communication apprehension, this can be difficult. Consider these techniques can also help you control some of your sympathetic nervous system’s responses:

Meditation the morning of a presentation or shortly before can aid in the calming of psychological nerves. Try breathing slowly in and out and focusing only on that breathing.

Maintaining a solid stance, breathing through your diaphragm and consciously slowing pace can reduce the physiological side effects of nervousness.

## PREPARING FOR PRESENTING

You can reduce distractions by preparing properly for your oratory. This section teaches you techniques to practice your presentation and to prepare on the days you perform your oratory.

### PRACTICING YOUR ORATORY

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When preparing to give your speech, it is essential that you learn your speech word for word. You spent a long time working on that draft, why throw out all that hard work now? Using notecards can help you transfer your written words in to a performable speech. The best way to practice your oratory is to always practice your speech as if you are in the environment you are going to present in.

However, while it is absolutely necessary that you practice your presentation simulating the environment of your presentation space, sometimes we can over practice. This can result in the development of bad habits that transfer over into our real presentation, such as stiffness, fakeness, or over-memorization. Therefore, sometimes it can help your performance to change it up. Consider these techniques:

- *Coffee Talk.* Say your presentation to a friend over coffee, have them interrupt you and ask questions in order to simulate a real conversation, this helps to

make our expressions more natural and authentic.

- *Video tape yourself.* Watching yourself perform on video and taking notes can help us improve dramatically. It can be uncomfortable watching yourself, but it enables you to recognize and correct distracting behaviors.
- *Make it a family affair.* Perform your speech for your roommate or family, so you can practice performing for people. Sometimes we get use to performing it to ourselves, and then our overwhelm when we finally give it to an audience.
- *Go outside and practice.* Sometimes just changing your routine or atmosphere can make a big difference in helping you practice and perfect your presentation.

### ON THE DAY OF YOUR PRESENTATION

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The rest of this section provides you with specific suggestions and guidelines for what to do on days when you give your oratory.

The night before you present, you will want to get a good night sleep. When you wake up, eat a good breakfast. Eat something protein and carbohydrate packed, but something that is not massive. You want to have energy, but not want to be weighed down because you ate too much or something too heavy.

Make the few hours before you present relaxing—do not be running your presentation during this time, finish all practicing the night before. You want to take this time, to mentally prepare and relax.

*TIPS:*

- *Don't drink or eat dairy products (they coat your vocal cords and can make it difficult to enunciate and articulate).*
- *Drink water (and lots of it!). Water hydrates your body, keeping it functioning at its highest level. Think of it like oil in a car, without oil, a car's gears and parts begin to function improperly. By lubricating your body with water, you are preparing yourself to function at your best.*
- *Avoid diuretics like coffee, energy drinks, etc...while we think they may help us get to the tournament on time, they actually dehydrate your body.*
- *You should arrive early to the room your round is in, because you will want to prepare yourself properly.*  
***Before you enter the competition space, you'll want to make sure to:***
- *Go to the restroom, check that you are looking professional (nothing on your face or in your teeth from lunch; all zippers zipped and buttons buttoned; hair out of your face and in place)*
- *Turn off cell phone*
- *Take keys/wallets out of pockets*

- *Remove head phones*
- *Spit out gum*
- *When you enter the competition space, make sure to:*
- *Place your personal items someplace out of the way*
- *In a non-disturbing way, move objects that might impede your presentation (such as desks, tables, extra podiums)*
- *Do not appear to be or state that you are unprepared*
- *Do not apologize*
- *Sit quietly and SMILE*
- *After you present, make sure to:*
- *Believe people when they tell you that you did a good job*
- *Do not call attention to mistakes or self criticize*
- *Do not make a big production that your presentation is over. Stay professional and in control until you get home or in private space...then feel free to go nuts!*

## CONCLUSION

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In this chapter, you have learned the techniques necessary to be the best professional presenter you can be. Remember that to express meaning is to embody it, and the delivery choices you make alter how your audience experiences your oratory. If you can learn to hone your unique personality into a professional presentation style, you can express your message much more effectively.

## EXAMPLE SPEECHES

### **Straight Talk**

*Allie Pridmore, Lake Highland High School, FL  
7th place, 2009 NCFL National Tournament*

Growing up my mom always told me to tell the truth, to be a straight talker. Unlike Lady Gaga, you can totally read my poker face. In fact, during games I shout out “My hand is so royal it will flush you out broski.” Or when my best friend Aubrey asked my opinion on her prom dress I told her she looked like an unripe pineapple, saving her from humiliation. Since I attempt to tell it straight, I’m confused when people aren’t straight with me. When I turned 16 my dad said he felt safe with me on the road—the person I hit didn’t think so. For years my mom told me I was good singer, but I discovered, not only do I shatter the sound barrier, I also shatter people’s faith in humanity. Recently, my friend was talking about how she was going “incognito” for spring break, I was like “Where’s cognito?” She did tell me that its an adjective not a place, so I ran around screaming, “WOOO Spring Break, Cognito! Gimme five! No? Okay.”

And it might be my blonde moment talking, but I’ve come to understand why others neglect to tell it to me straight. As a culture, we no longer use straight talk. We neglect to say what we mean and instead say what we believe others want to hear, often euphemizing our words (as opposed to euthanizing our words, which would be both catastrophic and impossible). It seems on the surface that Americans love straight talk, but even in this last presidential election, both candidates used TV campaign ads as a way to spread lies. And if this past election has taught us anything, it’s time for a change. Let’s examine this problem by looking at the two main causes. First, our desire to please others prevents us from speaking our mind. Second, we hide what we mean through euphemisms and doublespeak. Once we examine both of these concerns, we will explore implications and finally put forth some practical and straightforward solutions.

Bad news isn’t wine. It doesn’t improve with age. However, we are still uncomfortable using straight talk, putting off or neglecting to express our opinions. We opt for the easier “I’m cool with whatever.” Where do you want to go to dinner? “I’m cool with whatever.” What movie do you want to see? “I’m cool with whatever.” Who do you want to mug tonight? “I’m cool with whatever.” We want others to perceive us as open to anything, as having common interests.

This people pleasing isn't always a bad thing, but, a study conducted by psychologists Sydney Rosen and Abraham Tesser, found that when we please others, we silence ourselves in what they call the "Mum Effect." They found that only 19% of people said they felt comfortable expressing their true opinions, or emotions. These same people also said that they lie or stay mum about 65% of the time, because they fear backlash. Think about it. What happens when someone asks you, "Do these pants make my butt look big?" and you answer : "Yes." You get punched. But, when we fail to use straight talk we often put others in uncomfortable situations, as in the case of Jennifer Wilbanks. Jennifer could never tell others what she actually felt. She never told her fiancé how uncomfortable she was with their blowout wedding plans. And four days before 500 guests would gather, Jennifer disappeared. Over 60,000 dollars were spent attempting to locate her and her story became the biggest headline in the national media. On the day of her wedding, Jennifer placed a frantic 911 call, claiming she had been kidnapped and taken to Arizona, presumably not for their iced tea. When the facts didn't add up, she admitted that she invented the entire story all because the pressure of telling the truth was too much. Now, Jennifer is known as the runaway bride, who ran away from her emotions, who ran away from the truth, who ran away from herself.

Playwright Noel Coward wrote, "It is discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit." This is our second problem area: we hide what we really mean through double speak and euphemisms. We assume the truth is better received when we use more appealing words. George Orwell coined this term, "doublespeak," noting, "A mass of Latin words... [blur] the outline and [cover] up all the details." But, our inability to speak baldly has been around long before 1984. And while we love the '80s (hello, harem pants!) our straight talking struggle leads to confusion. PR guru Frank Luntz makes a living based on this idea. From 2001 to 2005 Luntz worked for the GOP, rephrasing more delicate issues. Oil drilling turned into "energy exploration." Global warming became "climate change." And The War on Iraq is now "War on Terror". Luntz found that by using words that sounded more positive the public was more likely to accept what the government dished out. But doublespeak doesn't just occur in the political arena—we use it in everyday life. Instead of saying someone is dead they have "moved on", firing is "letting go," farting is "the dog did it." This past summer over 65 primarily minority campers were turned away from a private pool in Philadelphia amidst concerns that they would change the "complexion and atmosphere" of the club. But euphemisms for policies reminiscent of Jim Crow aren't our only offense of doublespeak. Each year, the National Council of Teachers of English awards the year's worst double speak offense. In 1986,

NASA was the recipient for comments made after the Challenger explosion. Instead of calling the event a “tragedy,” officials called it an “anomaly,” the bodies of those lost were “recovered components,” and their coffins “crew transfer containers.” Instead of talking straight, NASA portrayed the loss of seven lives as something scientific and not emotional. The respect and solemnity that these men and women deserved was lost. Ultimately, no matter how carefully chosen our language is, the truth is the truth.

Whether it is the politician who is purposefully distorting a message to manipulate the public, or the people pleaser who doesn’t assert themselves, our inability to tell it like it is to each other is seriously keeping us from connecting and communicating on a real level. The foundation of every good and healthy relationship- whether interpersonal, political, or organizational- is honesty. A life without honesty is plagued by meaningless babble. It becomes, in a sense, a lifeless life.

An ancient Chinese proverb says, “If you truly want honesty, don’t ask questions you don’t want the answer to.” So first, we must realize that if a friend disowns you after you say you’d rather stay home and watch Man vs. Wild than go out to dinner, he was never a really a true friend. And despite our discomfort with some topics, we need to stop acting defensive or upset when people are honest with us – this only discourages our friends from speaking their minds. Sure, there are some things we just don’t want to hear: The relationship is over. The economy won’t rebound soon. You’ve been denied admission to Hogwarts. Ultimately, hearing the truth helps us to assert ourselves. Second, instead of hiding behind double-speak, we should say what we mean. For example, a Time Magazine July 2009 poll found that no-nonsense preachin’ Jon Stewart is America’s most trusted newscaster, winning 44% of the vote over network newscasters Katie Couric, Brian Williams, and Charlie Gibson. The bottom line is the more straight up we are, the more we can trust each other. I’ll be honest, it’s not necessary to share everything. Telling your friend that they have a milk mustache is okay. Telling your friend that their acne looks like a volcano exploded is unnecessary and cruel. Kinda funny, but cruel. A couple of years ago I began to notice odd patterns in my best friend’s behavior. She wasn’t comfortable answering questions about her weekend, family or home life. When I finally confronted her about it, she admitted to being abused by her stepfather for over five years. She said the reason she had never spoken out before was that she feared her mother would either not believe her, or would blame her. With a bit of encouragement, my friend talked to our school’s guidance counselor, and is now living safely with her grandparents. Now I am by no means saying that telling the truth should have

been easy for my friend, but We need to become comfortable using straight talk, because sometimes the situation requires it.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, “It takes two to speak the truth- one to speak it and one to hear it.” Let’s find a balance between talking straight and keeping mum. Now, spring break Cognito was a bust, I mean I went on Expedia to try and get a flight but....turns out, its not a place. If only my friends had told me the truth I would have had to be so embarrassed that I had to go...incognito. So, let me tell it to you straight. It’s not going to be easy, but we owe it to both ourselves and to others, to finally become straight talkers.

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### **Out of Eden: The Immoral Vacation**

*Emily Schlichting, Millard North High School, NE*

*Semi-Finalist, 2008 National Speech & Debate Tournament*

The only thing Adam and Eve had to do to live large in Eden was not eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Well, Eve was tempted by the serpent, and she did eat. Adam was tempted by Eve, and he did eat. Long story short, God was angered by both, and he did evict. On the way out, Adam shot Eve a look that said ‘You stupid glutton, look what you’ve done!’ Eve just shrugged her fig- leaf adorned shoulders and said, “What happens in Eden stays in Eden.” And that is where all our troubles began. Maybe that mentality works only in a more modern paradise. Fast forward to, well....here. Las Vegas, Nevada. It’s the city of sin. I mean, where else can you find baseball cards with hookers on them lying on the sidewalks? But with the launching of its ad campaign titled “Vegas: What happens here, stays here,” it’s become more than a destination; it is now lifestyle.

We’ve become immoral vacationers, leaving our values at home with last season’s bikini and those awful Hawaiian print shorts. Intercultural scholars Martin and Nakayama argue in their book that no matter what the culture, all individuals form core values which dictate what’s right, wrong, and how to act. Our morals inspire our beliefs and attitudes, and leaving home without them causes us to lie to our friends, our families, and ourselves. While personal morals are ultimately subjective, sticking to those morals is not. We either do or we don’t. Today, we’ll first discuss why our sinful appetites are so large, then peek beneath the fig leaves at some hidden harms, and finally send that pesky serpent packing with some solutions to the immoral vacation.

Like trying to control our appetites at a Vegas buffet, we're all tempted by forbidden fruit when we travel, even those of us who still have to vacation with our parents. Come on, I mean, what did you do last night? Ideally, our morals should stay the same wherever we go, but Orbitz Vice President John Samuel believes that "people vacationing want to escape every-day responsibilities." Whether it's the tendency to overwork and rarely relax, too much exposure to MTV Spring Break specials, or too much exposure *on* MTV Spring Break specials, something is causing us to embrace the "What Happens in Vegas" mentality. We think that binging on nude dancers, cocktails, and casino visits doesn't count if we're away from home. Sounds like spring break, during which the American Medical Association found that 50% of men and 40% of women binge drink until they vomit or pass out. We see our trips as an escape from the rules of everyday life. A business man quoted in USA Today in 2007, stated "When traveling, "You don't feel so attached to family and community. Your standards and morals tend to change a bit." Sex tourist and author Jeanette Belliveau agrees, admitting in the May 2007 BUST magazine "It's like 'If I'm traveling, I can throw out the rules about being a good girl.'" Our morals are so flimsy that they crumble when we leave certain physical parameters. Part of this comes from the failure to define our own morals. In a busy, busy world it's hard to find time to sit down and write a personal moral handbook. But we need that handbook. It's basic psychology. The id, which you can picture as the devil on your left shoulder, pushes us to follow our desires and the super-ego, which you can picture as the angel on your right shoulder, counteracts the desirous nature of the id with a moral conscience. Leaving that handbook behind could lead to a Freudian slip of the worst kind. A literal one.

Now that we've diagnosed our little hunger problem, let's peek under the fig leaves at the harms of a vacation without values. Immoral vacations allow us to misrepresent ourselves, hurting us and those around us. First, like Oprah trying to do a move from Cirque de Soleil, we hurt ourselves. Colin Alexander of the independent society, culture, and politics publication Flak Magazine believes these trips "allow us to live our fantasy, to be someone else. The transcripts are written on an Etch-a-Sketch — as soon as we leave, we can just shake ourselves off and get back to our daily routines." We compromise our personal integrity and standards on vacation, buying into the elementary school mentality that "it's not wrong if you don't get caught." Unfortunately, the guilt and hypocrisy we feel in this tug of war between how we act on vacation and how we present ourselves at home creates a lot of stress.

At home, we want to be seen as “good” so we save up all the bad until no one is watching, but hiding the small cracks creates much larger fault lines. By being that “someone else” on vacation, we create secrets and lies that erode the connections we make with our friends and families. Jude Cassidy, professor of psychology at Penn State, defines intimacy as “the truth of who a person really is”. Until we stop filtering ourselves, none of our relationships will be truly intimate and some of them may even fall apart. Now, I know these escapes feel like isolated fantasies, but NEWSFLASH: they are real! Real decisions with very real consequences, which some have learned the hard way. The Daily Mail 2007 reported that Claire Thomas contracted Chlamydia while on holiday in Crete. She claimed that “I’m not usually promiscuous but the rules about what I do don’t apply when I’m abroad.” A seemingly-innocent one night stand meant an emergency 25 day course of antibiotics for Claire, but that’s not all. There’s a significant chance that she will not be able to have children. Other consequences are a bit more personal. When I was a freshman, my family took a vacation to Colorado. In a little boutique, I saw the most gorgeous shirt that I had to have, but couldn’t afford. I stuffed it in my bag, and walked out of the store. I got home thinking I’d pulled it off, until my mom found it while unpacking. The rhinestone pot leaf emblazoned on the chest didn’t really help matters. But in all seriousness, I have never been more ashamed to explain myself. I realized that just because I did something away from home didn’t mean it wouldn’t affect my life. All actions have repercussions.

Well, after peeking beneath my fig leaves, and I mean that figuratively so don’t get any ideas, those harms aren’t so hidden anymore. Now, I’m not here to tell you what your morals should be because enough people already do that. But we can send that serpent packing with a change in attitude concerning morality. First, we’ve got to abandon the binge mentality and stop starving ourselves. Being immoral and blowing off steam in a healthy way are as different as Tila Tequila and Margaret Thatcher. Stop suppressing the impulse to indulge in guilty pleasures. Check out that hot blonde in the back of the room during your round, eat the last double-fudge brownie, go commando if that’s what does it for you! If we cut ourselves some slack every day, we won’t let it all out on our vacations. Second, we need to show some self-restraint. J.C. Watts said that integrity is doing the right thing when no one is looking. A moral person’s beliefs transcend a situation and remain intact. We need to stop acting as if values come in convenient travel sizes which won’t burden us on our trips. It boils down to this: if you can’t talk about your vacation when you get home, you shouldn’t have taken it. So check out the pyramids, fountains, art, volcanoes, canals and tigers on the

strip. Eat the deep fat fried twinkie if your diet allows, just don't drink eight rocktails with it. Finally, we have to identify our personal principles. Know who you are and what you believe, or at least have an idea. We can't possibly stand our ground if we don't know where to stand. Also, we must realize not all people will share our morals, but that doesn't mean anyone has to conform. We need to own our individual morality, and keep it constant. Life coach Martha Beck explains, "When we're moral because we want to be, it's life-affirming." Define your morals and LIVE them. So, uh... what are you guys gonna do tonight?

After examining our appetite for indiscretions, peeking beneath the fig leaves, and sending the serpent packing, we can all say "Bon voyage" to the immoral vacation. Unfortunately for Eve, what happened in Eden didn't stay there. Perhaps the same is true for Vegas.

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### **The Honest Truth**

*Kelley Siart, Desert Vista High School, AZ*

*1<sup>st</sup> place Glenbrooks*

*2<sup>nd</sup> place St. Marks*

Facebook is like crack for voyeurs. I'm obsessed with it. I can't stop reading the news feed, or checking up on that cute guy, Mark, in my chemistry class' relationship status. Today he's going to be single. Today he is going to be single. And, I can't get enough of the "honesty box"... where you can post completely anonymous messages. It's awesome because I can finally speak the truth, you know? Like I told my friend Kristie that her boyfriend James, is way too hot for her. Dropped Mark a little note, you know, "can't wait to have your babies." And I feel like this weight has been lifted off of my shoulders. As I was scrolling down my own Honesty Box, it was the usesh—"your hot;" "I wish I could send a thank you card to your parents." and "You're fuggly and I hate you." BESKEWSME? That's awful! I don't want to hear the truth anymore, its ugly and depressing! But I am not the only one afraid of the truth, according to a September 2006 study, "the average person tells a lie every eight minutes." That means you are getting at least six good ones before this round is over. But we've heard that before, lying is as old as sponges, let that joke absorb for a second. The new problem is that today we are afraid of the truth, so we silence it. Truth is how we know and understand reality. However, as author Clarence Day once noted, "The real world is not easy to live in. It is rough; it is slippery. Without the most clear-eyed adjustments we fall and get crushed." Our avoidance of the truth ultimately leads us to fall victim to the harshness of reality. The

truth is being silenced for two main reasons: first, we are afraid to hear it. And second, we are afraid to speak it. So today, we will examine both of these factors. Then explore implications before finally, looking at some solutions.

Last year I tried out for the hip hop team at school and for some crazy reason, my name wasn't on the final roster! When I showed up to practice anyways the coach started yelling something about vulgarity and rhythm, but I was just like: "NA NA NA NA NA!" I don't need to hear all that negativity. See, today it seems we can't handle the truth, because we are afraid of hearing it, which is our first problem. American Idol contestants cannot believe they didn't make it to the next round; a college student asks his long time girlfriend to marry him. She says no, so he punches her in the face; and chubby eight year old Eric Cartman of *South Park*, continues to believe that he is just "big boned". The truth isn't always what we want—a fact recognized by the Ohio State University Medical School which has a specific course that teaches its students the right way to deliver bad news. Which means, no more, "Shhehhh, you know that birthday you were looking forward to?" Although most truths, aren't *this* scary, we have trained ourselves to fear the unknown. According to a May 2005 *University Affairs* article, prostitutes in Majengo, Kenya have shown an immunity to HIV that could help develop a vaccine against the virus. Although this phenomenon was discovered in 1988, little funding or media attention surrounds the project because people just don't want to believe that prostitutes hold the key to the epidemic. I don't understand, I mean— they taught me everything I know.

Last week at school, this girl cut me in line at lunch and so I started frontin'. She backed down, when my street side comes out, people get scurred. That actually doesn't happen at all— I'm just lying. But its not the lies we tell that are silencing the truth, it's what we're afraid to say—which is my second area of concern. A certain amount of courage is required to express uncomfortable truths, why else would we use the honesty box, or Honesty Stamps which are inscribed with hard-to-verbalize statements like "all I ask for is one last chance" and "I've never met anyone as beautiful as you." The creator, Dominic Wilcox explains, "I wanted to make each sentence sound very, very personal." Ya Dominic, nothing screams sincerity like vulcanized rubber. We don't want to make ourselves vulnerable because we are afraid of being rejected, so we don't say it out loud. But the consequences of our fear of speaking the truth can be much more harmful than not going to prom with your crush because you were too afraid to ask. From an early age we're taught to look down on the tattletale, the grass, the snitch, the rat, or the squealer, and child abuse researcher, Dr. Jim Hop-

per, tells us that because of this mentality most children will never report abuse, and adults aware of crimes won't either. As Scott Roberts of the *Toronto Star* cites in his August 2005 article, "Whether it's because of fear of retribution or social exclusion, experts say no one wants to be known as a snitch. And there's a growing culture playing on the tradition." Such is the case with, eleven-year-old Ephraim Brown, who on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 was gunned down by rival gang fire during a birthday BBQ for his cousin. Even though there were 100 witnesses at the BBQ, none have come forward; not even a man wounded by the same gunfire – all because snitching is stigmatized, so they keep their mouths shut. Ephraim's sister Camisha spoke out against the silence, exclaiming, "This hush-hush thing has got to stop. We know somebody out there knows something." Admittedly, there are certain situations where it is beneficial to keep things to ourselves; during the Holocaust secret attics kept many Jews safe from captivity. However, in a society where FEMA knew about high levels of toxic formaldehyde in the trailers housing families displaced by hurricane Katrina, but thought it best to keep their mouths shut, we have clearly blurred the line between when its good to keep quiet, and when its necessary to speak up.

In 2004, the documentary "Stop Snitching" encouraged Americans to stop pointing their fingers at neighborhood drug dealers who just sometimes had to kill people. In 2005 Steven Colbert introduced a new word into the English language: truthiness, which highlighted our propensity to accept and often ask for half-truths. Today, in 2007, what does that mean? Reality is scary – as author Tad Williams once stated, "We are afraid... afraid of what we don't know, afraid of what others will think, afraid of what will be found out about us." See, we are protecting ourselves when we don't speak or hear the truth. We don't ask people on dates because we don't want to have to deal with rejection. The government doesn't want to speak up when it knows of fatal flaws in its infrastructure, because it doesn't want to seem incapable. We are just absolutely terrified of being vulnerable.

But how do we return to truth, and trust each other again? President James Garfield once said, "The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable." And he was right, if it were as easy as just, telling the truth, wouldn't we have done it already? The first step is to buck up and face it. The truth can be terrifying, painful, but also really beautiful and moving. Reality is flawed, but fixable. And that's what's really great about it! Next, in order for each of us to feel comfortable speaking the truth, we have to get rid of the negative connotations that surround not only snitching, but also just being open and honest. In 1972, if Deep Throat had never uncovered the secrets of Watergate, Nixon would've never

resigned. In 1991, if Anita Hill had never had the courage to speak up about her encounters with Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas', laws against sexual harassment in the workplace would have never been established. And in 2004, if Joe Darby had never exposed pictures he accidentally discovered, we never would have known about the prisoner abuse in Iraq. If all these "snitches" never had the courage to speak up, where would we be now? We can only stop silencing the truth, when we are no longer afraid **it**. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Men are disposed to live honestly, if the means of doing so are open to them." So let's establish those means, by creating a culture that revels in knowledge, in openness, in understanding—and rebukes silence.

I'm still angry about that honesty box comment. If they had such a problem with me they should have just said it to my face. But I realized something; we use the honesty box, or websites like postsecret.com, because we want to tell the truth, without really having to TELL the truth. So, I decided to delete my honesty box. No more hiding behind anonymous messages, I want to face reality and whatever it wants to throw at me. I can handle the truth, and so can you. As Thomas Paine once quipped, "Such is the irresistible nature of the truth that all it asks, and all it wants, is the liberty of appearing." Let's liberate it. Because honesty and openness are gateways to connection and community, and that's the honest truth.

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