

1. LISTENING AND SPEAKING

A) LISTENING TO FAMOUS SPEECHES AND POEMS

Lesson One

A speech is usually a formal address delivered to an audience. Great speeches are excellent examples of ideas well expressed. Listening to speeches by people from various walks of life on a variety of subjects will not only increase your vocabulary but will also make you familiar with the different ways in which one uses one's tone and body language to communicate your ideas effectively.

Kinds of Speeches

A speech could be made, at both formal and informal occasions, to inform, persuade, or entertain. Speeches by historians and scientists are largely informative. A speech which is meant to persuade an audience could be made by managers during a sale's pitch or by politicians to encourage people to vote in favour of something or take some actions. Entertaining speeches are given at informal gatherings like dinner parties, team parties and weddings to raise a toast. These are not meant to teach anything to the audience. These speeches rely heavily on anecdotes and humour while in the other kinds of speeches they may be used sparingly.

There is no hard and fast rule that one needs to adhere to while preparing a speech. However, to fulfil one's purpose and to communicate effectively one should equip oneself to both prepare and deliver speeches. You would come across several occasions both now, while in college and later in your career, when you may have to deliver a speech. For instance, you may have to prepare a speech for an event in college – a welcome speech or deliver the vote of thanks, or a speech to share the concept note of an event, or you might make a speech at an oratorical competition. Most of you would make a seminar presentation in the classroom or summarise your project at a viva-voce. In all these instances you would have to prepare a speech.

Types of Speeches

Based on the type of delivery, speeches could be classified as:

1. Speech from memory
2. Delivery based on a manuscript
3. Extempore
4. Impromptu

Although speeches could be composed and delivered in different ways, they generally follow a common format. The introduction contains a hook to draw the audience's attention. It highlights what would be spoken about in the speech, the purpose and prepares the audience to pay attention to what is to follow. The hook may be an anecdote, a joke, or interesting facts or statistics that is gripping. The body has the main points supported by details, real time examples, or statistics. In a persuasive speech the speaker presents arguments and counterarguments to convince the audience in believing their point of view. The conclusion summarises the key points made and ends with a powerful thought. The speaker makes an appeal for a specific action or motivates the audience to decide in the concluding remarks of a persuasive speech.

The easiest way to learn to make a good speech is to learn from examples. History is filled with landmark speeches made by world's top leaders and performers.

Essays

1. Write an essay on the uses, kinds, types and classification of listening to famous speeches.

1. Definition of speech

For our purposes, speech may be defined as the communication of thought and emotion by means of voice, language and bodily action. By speech we mean conversation, discussion, public speaking, reading aloud, acting and even booing, hissing, heckling or sign language.

2. Uses of the speeches

1. In speeches to inform, stimulate and convince, catching and holding audience attention is the first requirement.
2. In speeches to entertain it is almost the only requirement because dullness defeats everything else a speaker attempts to do.
3. Speeches are interesting when they are adapted to the audience.
4. When speeches apply the factors of attention such as significance, humour, uniqueness or familiarity, problems, concreteness, antagonism and variation.
5. Speeches to entertain should include maximum variety of delivery and appropriate speech organization, as well as constant use of the attention controlling factors.

3. Characteristics of a good speech

1. It is clear
3. It is vivid and concrete
5. It is interesting

2. It is like an informal talk
4. It is brief
6. It is audience oriented

4. What makes a speech famous?

The best speeches include a clear, relevant message and a few great stories to illustrate it. Forget fancy Power Point presentations and loads of data. Instead keep your speech simple, with a clear beginning, middle and end. Those kinds of speeches are easier to deliver because they do not have to be read.

5. Kinds / Types of speeches:

There are four main kinds of speech delivery:

1. Impromptu
2. Extemporaneous
3. Manuscript
4. Memorized

Impromptu speaking involves delivering message on the spur of the moment, as when someone is asked to "say a few words". Extemporaneous speaking consists of delivering a speech in a conversational fashion using notes.

6. Impromptu speeches

An Impromptu speech is given with little or no preparation, usually about a topic that the speaker knows well. An Impromptu speech is given with little or no preparation, yet almost always with some advance knowledge on the topic. For example, if called on to speak in class; a student might give a short impromptu speech about a topic that was in the assigned readings. Additionally, impromptu speaking is rarely appropriate for occasions which require more reasoned discourse with supporting ideas or more formal events. We must list ways to quietly prepare when called upon to give an Impromptu speech. There are ways to prepare and deliver impromptu speeches by anticipating the more common impromptu contexts.

7. Extempore speech

The focus of most college courses in public speaking is the Extemporaneous speech. This is because this is the type of speech used most in business, education, preaching and political affairs. The extempore speech, as used by certain MBA institutes during their selection procedure is when a candidate is given a topic and asked to speak about it for a minute or two. He is not allowed to prepare for this topic, but has to speak on the spot. Thus, he cannot prepare the content and decide what to say beforehand. Extempore refers to a stage or theatre performance that is carried out without preparation or forethought. Most often, the term is used in the context of speech, singing and stage acting.

8. Manuscript speech

When we listen to the President deliver a State of the Union message, we listen to a well-crafted speech being read from a teleprompter. The speech has been polished by a staff of speechwriters and has been practiced many times. The President will know how to anticipate the reaction of the audience and will know when to pause for applause and when to expect laughter. This form of speaking is used when the exact words matter and when much time and energy is expended on getting everything just right. There are times when people who are not leaders of countries deliver manuscript speeches as well. Unless we are specifically told by our instructor to prepare and deliver a manuscript speech, we should never write out the entire speech. We must spend our time developing our outline, organizing our ideas, and determining where we can best insert our supports. Then we must practice using the outline while speaking.

9. Memorized speech

When we were in elementary school, did we ever have to memorize a poem or a part of a speech? If we are like most students, the answer is "Yes". There is nothing wrong with memorization. But if we try to memorize a speech, we risk forgetting what we planned to say and coming across as completely unprepared. Memorizing our speech is even worse than reading it. All the objections that apply to the read speech also apply to the memorized speech. Spontaneity is gone. The speech can sound stilted. Often, delivery is too rapid. Concentration is on the words, not the ideas. Sometimes the speech sounds too formal, like a written essay. There is minimal feedback or other contact with the audience. And what happens if our mind goes completely blank or if an audience member interrupts? The entire presentation will likely fall apart. Memorizing a speech puts entirely too much pressure on the speaker.