Practice Informative and Persuasive Speaking

Inquire: Preparing a Presentation

Overview

Public speaking can generally be divided into two categories: informative and persuasive speaking. This lesson will focus in on these concepts and teach you the differences between them. You will learn how to choose a topic to speak about. You will learn how to use arguments in your speech, whether informative or persuasive. Finally, you will learn about the three stages of practice: organization, feedback, and fine-tuning.

Big Question: What is the hardest part of preparing a presentation?

Watch: Watching a Presentation Come Together

In this lesson, you will learn how to make an informative presentation. Let’s watch as Hillary does this now.

First, Hillary knows she needs to come up with a topic. She decides she wants to talk about how movies are made. She quickly realizes that this can be a very large topic and she should narrow it down. So, she asks herself what different parts of movies she is interested in. As she begins to write things down, she comes up with a list: cinematography, movie music, and special effects. The process of creating this list is known as brainstorming. She decides that of this list, she is most interested in talking about the cinematography of movies. She decides she wants to teach her audience about camera angles, types of cameras, and techniques to get challenging shots.

She then organizes these three main points into a full sentence outline. This is the first stage of the practice process, known as organization. Once she has written her full sentence outline, including doing the research to support her main points, she decides it’s time to turn her preparation outline into a presentation outline. She takes the full sentences and shortens them into one or two word phrases that let her remember what she is supposed to talk about in those parts of the speech.

Once she has her presentation outline, she starts to practice her speech. First, she records herself to get a feel for speaking and to hear that everything makes sense. Then, she practices in front of two of her friends. While she is presenting, her friends note that her first and third points seem similar, her second point seems short, and that she doesn’t ever explain who decides what shots should be used. She uses this feedback to fine-tune her speech and adjust her main points to include the feedback she received.
After implementing the changes, she has her friends listen again. This time, they say that it sounds great! Now it’s time for Hillary to present. She’s done the work, practiced several times, and she knows that she has a good speech.

You will find yourself going through a similar process, and at the end, you’ll be prepared to give an effective speech!

Read: Informative and Persuasive Presentations

Overview

Informative and persuasive speaking are the two broadest categories of speaking you can engage in. Generally speaking, if you aren’t persuading someone, you are informing them. This lesson will focus on the differences between the two styles of speaking, how to narrow down a speaking topic, how to use arguments to inform or persuade, and the three stages of practicing a presentation.

The Differences Between Informative and Persuasive Speaking

Informative and persuasive speaking are complementary categories of speaking. In informative speaking, you should not try to change the way a person thinks or acts. When persuading, you may need to teach some information, but it should be information that makes someone change the way they think or behave toward a certain issue. Informative speaking is something that does not take a clear side on an issue, while persuasive speaking necessarily takes a side that something is better than something else. After an informative speech, the audience should not have any call to act upon the information received, while a persuasive speech should leave people wanting to think or act in a different way. Informative speaking should be factual and avoid bias. Persuasive speaking should also be factual, but rather than avoiding bias, it should acknowledge the speaker’s bias and explain why it is something that does not take away from the credibility of the speech.

Narrowing Down a Speaking Topic

Picking a topic can be challenging. The first thing to consider is how much you like the possible topics. Find something that interests you. If you like the topic, it is easier to get your audience to like your topic as well.

After you have a topic, start researching your topic area. More often than not, you won’t talk about your topic without some sort of research or data to back you up. Find research to support what you are presenting.

Finally, narrow your topic down to an appropriate focus and length. Make sure your presentation is within whatever time limit you have been given, and that it focuses on the area you have been asked to present about. Running too long, or not speaking long enough, can reflect poorly on your presentation. Make sure to have enough information to be within your time constraints, but not so much that you run over your time limit.

Using Arguments to Inform and Persuade

Arguments matter not only to persuasive speaking. After all, an informative speech always makes an argument even if it is just “you should pay attention to this topic.” There are three kinds of arguments you will use in both informative and persuasive speeches.
First is an appeal to different **listening styles**. Listening styles refer to how people prefer to hear and interpret information. Acknowledge that some people want to experience a personal connection and some people just want data. Construct an argument convincing certain listeners to care about your topic or act on the information you are presenting.

Second are **artistic proofs**. Artistic proofs refer to how a speaker proves persuasive arguments true. The kinds of proofs are ethos, pathos, and logos. A speaker uses these to appeal to different types of listeners based on what rings most true to each specific listening style. Artistic proofs go hand-in-hand with arguments based on listening styles.

Finally, a **thesis statement** is the central argument of a presentation. This could be, “care about my topic,” or, “change the way you treat this topic.” Whatever the case, a thesis statement is the first and most important argument you make in a presentation, and the rest of the speech just serves to prove that argument true.

### Three Stages of Practice

When it comes time to put together a presentation, the importance of practicing can not be stressed enough. But, sometimes it helps to understand how practice should be set up to be most useful. There are three stages of practice to take advantage of: **organization**, **feedback**, and **fine-tuning**. Organization is the first stage of practice. In this stage, order all your relevant information into a presentation outline. Feedback is the second stage of practice. In this stage, present to practice audiences collecting ideas on things to change or improve. Fine-tuning is the third stage of practice. In this stage, make adjustments to your presentation based on the feedback received in stage two. As you prepare a presentation, you might need to repeat certain stages. If, for instance, the feedback stage shows large issues, go back to the organization stage before repeating feedback, and eventually fine-tuning. Practice as much as needed to feel comfortable. Following this roadmap will help you do just that.

### Reflect Poll: Practice Makes Perfect

What part of the practice process is most useful to you?

- organization
- feedback
- fine-tuning

### Expand: Presentation Start to Finish

#### Overview

For this module, you will have to produce an informative presentation about a topic of your choice. This section will walk you through what to do in order to complete that assignment.

#### Select a Topic

The first step is to come up with a topic. **Brainstorming** is the process of generating ideas. When brainstorming, come up with ideas that interest you. Remember, this is an informative speech; avoid topics such as “X is better than Y” or “You should do Z thing.” These speeches should instead focus on teaching something, like an event, process, concept, or an object. Keep in mind your time limit. Ask
yourself, “Can I talk about all of this topic in six to eight minutes?” If the answer is no, find ways to trim your topic down to include less information. On the other hand, make sure you have enough information to speak that long.

**Outlining**

Once you select a topic, it’s time to write an outline. This is the first stage of practicing: organization. Organize everything into a preparation outline. Once you have a preparation outline ready, convert it into a presentation outline. This outline will contain a few words for each component of the outline, instead of full sentences. You will need to turn in the presentation outline for full credit on the assignment. Your outline should include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

**Practicing**

Once you have your outline made, it’s time to start practicing! This is stage two and three of the practice process. Practice in front of audiences that will give feedback so you can adjust things to get better. Friends, classmates, or family members make great practice audiences.

**Presenting**

The last part of the assignment is to present your speech! You’ll record your speech as well, so make sure your device is charged and that you speak loudly enough for the device to register your voice. When presenting, be professional and confident. After all your practice, you’re ready to go! You’ve got this! Just take a deep breath, and knock the presentation out of the park!

**Lesson Toolbox**

**Additional Resources and Readings**

An article providing five tips on how to best practice for a presentation
- Link to resource: https://bigfishpresentations.com/2012/07/20/preparing-presentations-5-ways-to-practice-til-perfect/

An article providing an in-depth look at the differences between informative and persuasive speaking

An article providing suggestions on how to choose speech topics
- Link to resource: http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/speech-topics/

**Lesson Glossary**

**listening styles**: the way people prefer to hear and interpret information

**artistic proofs**: how a speaker proves his or her persuasive arguments true; ethos, pathos, and logos

**thesis statement**: the central argument of a presentation

**organization**: the first stage of practice; ordering all relevant information into a presentation outline

**feedback**: the second stage of practice; presenting a presentation to practice audiences collecting ideas on things to change or improve
fine-tuning: the third stage of practice; making adjustments to a presentation based on the feedback received in stage two of the practice process

brainstorming: the process of generating ideas

Check Your Knowledge

1. Informative speaking and persuasive speaking are the same.
   a. True
   b. False
2. Practicing a presentation is made of five stages.
   a. True
   b. False
3. The final part of the practicing process is fine-tuning your speech.
   a. True
   b. False

Answer Key:
1. B 2. B 3. A

Citations

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