



**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL

# IMPROMPTU SPEAKING



The Better  
Speaker Series



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**



# IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

The Better Speaker Series

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[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

# THE BETTER SPEAKER SERIES

Toastmasters International's *The Better Speaker Series* is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

Presentations in *The Better Speaker Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

## CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

"Impromptu Speaking" addresses those occasions when you are expected to speak without preparation. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ CD of a PowerPoint presentation to be viewed along with your speech

### ***In Your Own Words***

*The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.*

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. You are encouraged to use them. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this program as visual aids, you will need a data projector, a laptop computer, a table to support them, and a screen for viewing.

In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If you cannot arrange for projection equipment but still would like to use visuals, you may copy the material on the visuals onto a flipchart. Do this before the presentation. Use a heavy marking pen that does not seep through the paper, and write on every third or fourth page so succeeding visuals will not show through. Also, make your letters large and heavy with plenty of space between them.

Follow these tips when using visual aids:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners. Place your projector so it projects a large, high, undistorted image on the screen. Focus the image.
- ▶ Bring spare equipment, including a projector bulb, extension cord, extra marking pens, etc.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flipchart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flipchart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. Do not talk to the screen or flipchart. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

## **EVALUATION AND THE ADVANCED COMMUNICATOR SILVER (ACS) AWARD**

Because this is an outlined presentation, for presenting it you will not receive credit toward completing a manual speech project, but you may receive credit toward your Advanced Communicator Silver (ACS) award. Ask your vice president education to assign an evaluator for your presentation.

Conducting any two presentations from *The Better Speaker Series* and/or *The Successful Club Series* is one component of qualification for ACS recognition. For further details, please view the Toastmasters International website: [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org).



# IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

## Introducing the Presenter

### TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Impromptu Speaking” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* (Item 1167E) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

# IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

## Outline

### INTRODUCTION

People encounter impromptu speaking situations every day. An impromptu speech can take the form of a job interview, a telephone conversation, or a chat with customer service people or co-workers. With enough practice, anyone can develop the ability to present ideas clearly in any impromptu speaking situation.

### FIVE-STEP FORMULA

It is possible to be prepared and confident even if we cannot anticipate a question's content. Use this formula for a successful impromptu speech:

#### 1. Listen

- ▶ A good response is dependent on an attentive attitude and careful listening can provide part of your response. If you agree, your reply will reflect your attention by reinforcing the other person's words. If you disagree, you can tactfully amend or correct the original statement.
- ▶ Sharpen your powers of concentration to become an effective speaker.
- ▶ Don't interject your own ideas before the other person has finished. Instead, focus on what is being said. The advantages are:
  - People are more likely to respect and listen to your ideas when you listen to them.
  - You'll be able to incorporate some of what you've heard into your reply.
  - You'll improve your chances of commenting directly on what you've heard so you can give on-target responses.

#### 2. Pause

- ▶ Pausing before you speak allows you to refresh your thoughts and formulate an answer.
- ▶ A pause can add drama, allow the audience to absorb your message, or give them the opportunity to respond to humor. A silent pause is preferable to using verbal place holders.

#### 3. Confirm

Repeating or confirming the question out loud provides you with a clearer idea of how to respond and will help verify the topic in case you misunderstood the question.

#### 4. Tell

Be enthusiastic but stay focused and stick to the essentials. Don't give in to the urge to analyze every aspect of the topic.

#### 5. End

Once you have said what you want to say, don't belabor the point. Bring your comments to a close; emphasize your main point, smile, and make eye contact with your listener if possible.

V1

V2

## SELECT A STRATEGY

There are four common strategies speakers can use to maintain enthusiasm and focus during an impromptu presentation.

- ▶ Express an opinion.
  - State an opinion, then justify it with a supporting statement.
    1. Use one support item if answering a question.
    2. Use two or three if giving a brief speech.
  - Strategy variation: offer reasons why you agree or disagree with an idea or concept.
- ▶ Address cause and effect.
  - State the situation, then discuss its causes and eventual consequences.
- ▶ Break the topic into components and then discuss each component individually.
- ▶ Discuss the past, present, and future. Organize your answer in the style of a timeline.

V3

## THREE POINTS

1. Be confident. Remind yourself that pausing is okay and restating the question will help you steady your response.
2. Be brief. It is easy to stray off topic and begin repeating statements, adding new points, or backtracking. Stick to your main points.
3. Be sincere. Trying to be inventive when you don't know the answer to a question can be risky. It is better that you admit if you don't know how to respond.

## CLOSING

Being able to respond spontaneously is an excellent mental habit to cultivate. It takes time and effort to develop. Practice the basics.

# Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series* and the presentation itself?
  
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
  
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
  
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
  
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
  
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
  
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own speeches?
  
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
  
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



## Notes



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