

TWELFTH EDITION

# THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

STEPHEN E. LUCAS

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Education

# **The Art of Public Speaking**

TWELFTH EDITION

**Stephen E. Lucas**

University of Wisconsin—Madison





THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING, TWELFTH EDITION

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# About the Author

**S**tephen E. Lucas is Professor of Communication Arts and Evjue-Bascom Professor in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his master's and doctorate degrees from Penn State University.

Professor Lucas has been recognized for his work as both a scholar and a teacher. His first book, *Portents of Rebellion: Rhetoric and Revolution in Philadelphia, 1765–1776*, received the Golden Anniversary Award of the National Communication Association and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. His major articles include “The Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship” (1981), “The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism” (1988), “The Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence” (1990), and “The Rhetorical Ancestry of the Declaration of Independence” (1998), for which he received the Golden Anniversary Monograph Award of the National Communication Association. His most recent book is *Words of a Century: The Top 100 American Speeches, 1900–1999* (2009).

Professor Lucas has received a number of teaching awards, including the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Wisconsin and the National Communication Association's Donald Ecroyd Award for Outstanding Teaching in Higher Education. He is featured in the Educational Video Group's program on the history of American public address, and he appeared on the History Channel's documentary on the Declaration of Independence.

Professor Lucas has directed the introductory public speaking course at the University of Wisconsin–Madison since 1973. Over the years he has been responsible for numerous teaching innovations and has supervised the training of hundreds of graduate assistants. He has also served as a judge for the major national English-language public speaking competitions in China, has lectured at numerous Chinese universities, has conducted workshops for Chinese instructors on teaching public speaking, and has been instrumental in the development of public speaking as a dedicated course in the English curriculum of Chinese universities. *The Art of Public Speaking* has been translated into several languages, including Chinese, Portuguese, Korean, and Romanian.

Stephen Lucas and his wife, Patty, live in Madison, Wisconsin, and have two sons, Jeff and Ryan. His interests include travel, sports, art, and photography.





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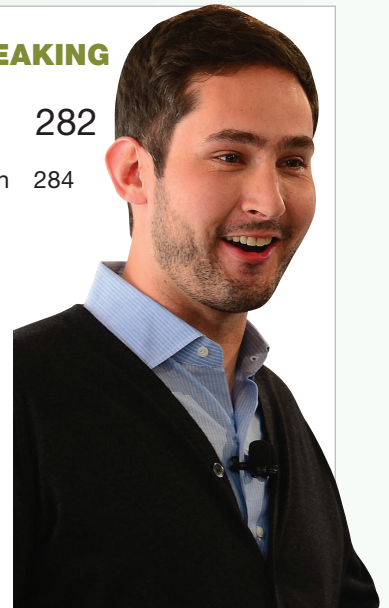
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# A Note from the Author

**W**hen I wrote the first edition of *The Art of Public Speaking*, I could not have imagined the extraordinary response the book would receive. I am deeply appreciative of the students and teachers who have made it the leading work on its subject at colleges and universities across the United States and around the world.

In preparing this edition, I have retained what readers have identified as the main strengths of the book. *The Art of Public Speaking* is informed by classical and contemporary theories of rhetoric, but it does not present theory for its own sake. Keeping a steady eye on the practical skills of public speaking, it offers full coverage of all major aspects of speech preparation and presentation.

It also follows David Hume's advice that one "who would teach eloquence must do it chiefly by examples." Whenever possible, I have tried to *show* the principles of public speaking in action in addition to describing them. Thus you will find in the book a large number of narratives, speech excerpts, and full sample speeches that illustrate the principles of effective public speaking.

Because the immediate task facing students is to present speeches in the classroom, I rely heavily on examples that relate directly to students' classroom needs and experiences. The speech classroom, however, is a training ground where students develop skills that will serve them throughout life. Therefore, I also include a large number of illustrations drawn from the kinds of speaking experiences students will face after they graduate from college.

Because speeches are performative acts, students need to be able to view speakers in action as well as read their words on the printed page. *The Art of Public Speaking* has an extensive video program that is available both on DVD and on *Connect*, McGraw-Hill's innovative online learning platform. The video program includes 36 full student speeches, plus more than 60 speech excerpts. Ten of the full speeches and 15 of the excerpts are new to this edition.

*Connect* also provides a wide range of teaching and learning resources in addition to the speech videos. These resources include SmartBook Achieve, hands-on study tools, critical-thinking exercises, speech analysis questions, worksheets, assessment forms, and more. Taken together, *The Art of Public Speaking* and the digital resources available on *Connect* provide an interactive public speaking program that meets the needs of students and teachers alike.

*The Art of Public Speaking* has changed over the years in response to changes in technology, student demographics, and instructional needs. But it has never lost sight of the fact that the most important part of speaking is thinking. The ability to think critically is vital to a world in which personality and image too often substitute for thought and substance. While helping students become capable, responsible speakers, *The Art of Public Speaking* also seeks to help them become capable, responsible thinkers.

# Instructor's Guide to McGraw-Hill Connect

When you assign Connect you can be confident—and have data to demonstrate—that your students, however diverse, are acquiring the skills, principles, and critical processes that constitute effective communication. This leaves you to focus on your highest course expectations.

**TAILORED TO YOU.** Connect offers on-demand, single sign-on access to learners—wherever they are and whenever they have time. With a single, one-time registration, learners receive access to McGraw-Hill's trusted content. **Learners also have access to a two-week courtesy access period during registration.**

**EASY TO USE.** Connect seamlessly supports all major learning management systems with content, assignments, performance data, and LearnSmart, the leading adaptive learning system. With these tools you can quickly make assignments, produce reports, focus discussions, intervene on problem topics, and help at-risk learners—as you need to and when you need to.

## SmartBook Achieve

SmartBook Achieve is the first and only adaptive reading and study experience designed to change the way students read and master key course concepts. As a student engages with SmartBook Achieve, the program creates a personalized learning path by highlighting the most impactful concepts the student needs to learn at that moment in time. The learning path continuously adapts by delivering just-in-time learning resources—videos, animations, and other interactivities—catered to each student's needs. These rich, dynamic resources help students learn the material, retain more knowledge, and get better grades.

Public Speaking

Module 12: Hearing and the Other Senses 113

Outer ear Middle ear Inner ear

Pinna Ear canal Ear drum Semicircular canals Skull base Vestibular system Cochlea Cochlea "window" Cochlea "receptor" Cochlea "nerve" Eustachian tube Hammer Anvil Stirrup Eardrum

FIGURE 1 The major parts of the ear. (Source: Booker et al., 2006, Figure 43.6)

a structure that runs through the center of the cochlea, dividing it into an upper chamber and a lower chamber. The basilar membrane is covered with hair cells. When the hair cells are bent by the vibrations entering the cochlea, the cells send a neural message to the brain (Cho, 2000; Zhao, Liu, & Davis, 2005; Møller, 2011).

**THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF SOUND**

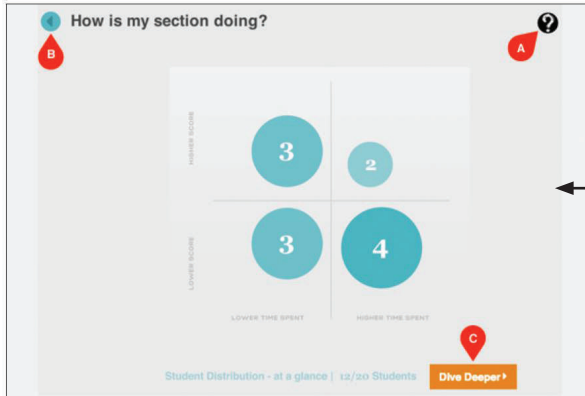
As we mentioned earlier, what we refer to as sound is actually the physical movement of air molecules in regular, wavelike patterns caused by a vibrating source. Sometimes it is even possible to see these vibrations. If you have ever seen an audio speaker that has no enclosure, you know that, at least when the lowest notes are playing, you can see the speaker moving in and out. Less obvious is what happens next: The speaker pushes air molecules into waves with the same pattern as its movement. These wave patterns soon reach your ear, although their strength has been weakened considerably during their travels. All other sources that produce sound work in essentially the same fashion, setting off wave patterns that move through the air to the ear. All—in some other medium, such as water—is necessary to make the vibrations of objects reach us. This explains why there can be no sound in a vacuum.

We are able to see the audio speaker moving when low notes are played because of a primary characteristic of sound called frequency. Frequency is the number of wave cycles that occur in a second. At very low frequencies there are relatively few wave cycles per second (see Figure 2 on page 114). These cycles are "high" or "stretched out" vibrations in the speaker. Low frequencies are translated "down" or "squished" that is very low in pitch. (Pitch is the characteristic that makes sounds seem "high" or "low.")

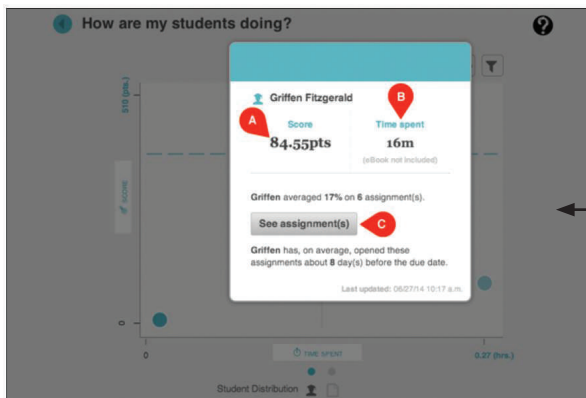
SmartBook Achieve highlights the key concepts of every chapter, offering students a high-impact learning experience. Here, highlighted text and an illustration together explain the physical aspects of sound.

# Insight Analytics

Mobile-ready Connect Insight provides at-a-glance analysis on five key insights, available at a moment's notice from your tablet device. The first and only analytics tool of its kind, Insight will tell you, in real time, how individual students or sections are doing (or how well your assignments have been received) so you can take action early and keep struggling students from falling behind.



Connect Insight shows instructors how many students have completed an assignment, how long they spent on the task, and how they scored.



With Connect Insight, instructors can see, at a glance, individual student performance: analytics showing student investment in assignments, and success at completing them, help instructors identify, and aid, those who are at risk.

## Connect LearnSmart Reports

LearnSmart Instructor Reports allow instructors to quickly monitor student activity, making it easy to identify which students are struggling and to provide immediate help to ensure those students stay enrolled in the course and improve their performance. The Instructor Reports also highlight the concepts and learning objectives that the class as a whole is having difficulty grasping. This essential information lets you know exactly which areas to target for review during your limited class time.

Some key LearnSmart reports include:

**Progress Overview report**—View student progress for all LearnSmart modules, including how long students have spent working in the module, which modules they have used outside of any that were assigned, and individual student progress through LearnSmart.

**Missed Questions report**—Identify specific LearnSmart probes, organized by chapter, that are problematic for students.

**Most Challenging Learning Objectives report**—Identify the specific topic areas that are challenging for your students; these reports are organized by chapter and include specific page references. Use this information to tailor your lecture time and assignments to cover areas that require additional remediation and practice.

**Metacognitive Skills report**—View statistics showing how knowledgeable your students are about their own comprehension and learning.

## Speech Capture

Designed for use in face-to-face, real-time classrooms, as well as online courses, Speech Capture allows you to evaluate your students' speeches using fully customizable rubrics. You can also create and manage peer review assignments and upload videos on behalf of students for optimal flexibility.

Students can access rubrics and leave comments when preparing self-reviews and peer reviews. They can easily upload a video of their speech from their hard drive or use Connect's built-in video recorder. Students can even attach and upload additional files or documents, such as a works-cited page or a PowerPoint presentation.

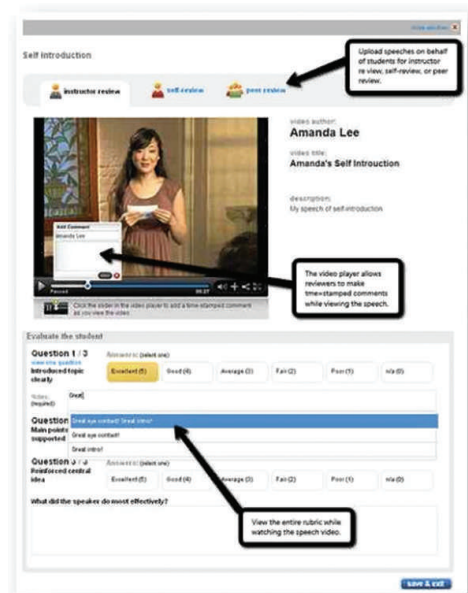
### PEER REVIEW

Peer review assignments are easier than ever. Create and manage peer review assignments and customize privacy settings.

### SPEECH ASSESSMENT

Connect Speech Capture lets you customize the assignments, including self-reviews and peer reviews.

Connect saves your frequently used comments, simplifying your efforts to provide feedback.

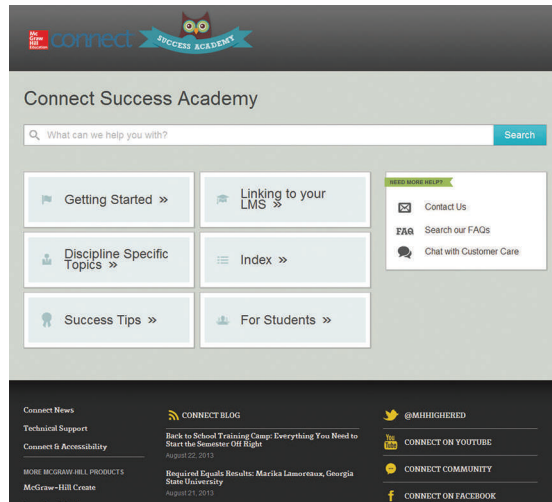




## Support to Ensure Success

### ■ **Digital Success Academy**—

The Digital Success Academy on Connect offers a wealth of training and course creation guidance for instructors and students alike. Instructor support is presented in easy-to-navigate, easy-to-complete sections. It includes the popular **Connect** video shorts, step-by-step **Click through Guides**, and **First Day of Class** materials that explain how to use both the Connect platform and its course-specific tools and features. <http://create.mcgraw-hill.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy>



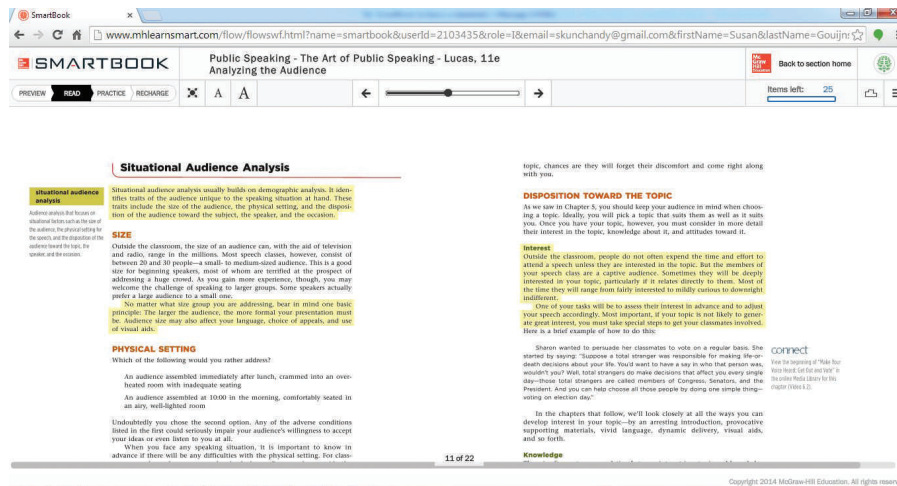
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# New to the Twelfth Edition of *The Art of Public Speaking*

- **A personalized and adaptive learning experience with Smartbook Achieve.** As a student engages with SmartBook Achieve, the program creates a personalized learning path by highlighting the most impactful concepts a student needs to learn at that moment in time. The learning path continuously adapts by delivering just-in-time learning resources—videos, animations, and other interactivities—catered to each student’s needs. These rich, dynamic resources help students learn the material, retain more knowledge, and get better grades.



- **Student performance analytics with Connect Insight.** Mobile ready for students, Insight will also be available for students. Students will be able to track their performance throughout the course.
- **New and expanded coverage of presenting online.** Chapter 13, on speech delivery, explores the appropriate technology and specialized skills needed to present professional, compelling speeches in a digital environment. The chapter has been updated with an extensive discussion of the special nature of the online milieu. Professor Lucas explains the importance of mastering today’s technology and controlling the visual environment, and offers tips on lighting, camera technique, appropriate onscreen atmosphere, and personal appearance. The discussion also explores how speakers can adapt their nonverbal communication, adjust their pacing, and manage Q&A when speaking online.
- **Fresh real-world examples.** Every chapter of *The Art of Public Speaking* opens with an engaging and relevant model, and dozens of additional examples appear throughout the chapters, each demonstrating the importance—and art—of public speaking in school, business, and social settings.

- **New checklist.** Chapter 13 includes an important, 8-point checklist to help students successfully prepare and deliver an online speech.



## checklist

**Presenting an Online Speech**

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Have I considered the special nature of the online speech environment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Do I understand the capabilities and limitations of my presentation software?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Do I control the visual environment of my presentation so it will work to my advantage?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Have I adapted my nonverbal communication so it will be effective when viewed online?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Will the pacing of my speech keep the audience focused on my message?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Have I considered how best to handle questions and answers?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Have I taken all the steps necessary to rehearse my speech for online presentation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Do I have a backup plan in case I run into technical problems?

- **New compelling student speeches.** Ten full speeches, plus 15 excerpts and six “needs improvement” versions, are new to this edition, augmenting the robust Lucas video program, which now includes 36 full student speeches and more than 60 speech excerpts. Whether a full speech or an excerpt, each video illustrates specific skills and concepts from the text and models the unique features of a variety of speech genres.
- **Updated MLA and APA citation models.** Chapter 7, on gathering materials, presents all-new sample bibliography entries, reflecting the latest MLA and APA citation formats to help students correctly cite academic, digital, and other sources.
- **Expanded coverage of outlining and revised model outlines.** Chapter 11, on outlining the speech, features updated models that illustrate the features of a good speech outline. The chapter also features additional discussion of the principles of outlining to help students better understand how to arrange their thoughts clearly and effectively.
- **Updated discussion of presentation technology.** Guidance on the use of visual aids and presentation technology is enhanced to explore best practices when using PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, Google Docs, Zoho Show, and other tools that aid the public speaking experience.

## Resources for Instructors

- **Instructors' Guide to Connect.** An overview of Connect and information to get you started can be found on pages xvii–xx.
- **Annotated Instructor's Edition.** The Annotated Instructor's Edition provides a wealth of teaching aids for each chapter in the book. It is also cross-referenced with *Connect*, the *Instructor's Manual*, the *Instructor's Resource CD*, and other supplements that accompany *The Art of Public Speaking*.
- **Resources within Connect:**
  - **Connect Insight.** This powerful analytics tool displays a range of visual data—framed by an intuitive question—to provide instructors at-a-glance information regarding how their classes are doing.
  - **Connect Reports.** Assignments and activities on Connect allow instructors and departments to gauge students' grasp of public speaking skills with exercises and assessment built around learning outcomes. Detailed reports support formative assessment and improve efficacy at the student, section, and program levels.
  - **Instructors' Manual.** This comprehensive guide to teaching from *The Art of Public Speaking* contains suggested course outlines and speaking assignments; chapter outlines; supplementary exercises and classroom activities; and teaching tips for all exercises and activities.
  - **Test Bank.** The Lucas Test Bank furnishes 2,782 examination questions based on *The Art of Public Speaking*; more than 300 of the questions are new or revised for this edition.
  - **PowerPoint Slides with Video Clips.** The PowerPoint presentations for *The Art of Public Speaking* provide chapter highlights that help instructors create focused yet individualized lesson plans.
  - **Teaching Public Speaking Online.** Fully revised for the twelfth edition, the *Teaching Public Speaking Online* manual includes new and revised chapter exercises and discusses performance analytics and approaches to the flipped classroom.
- **Instructor's Online Resource Center.** Augment the planning and teaching experience with the help of a full suite of Lucas instructional tools, including speech transcripts, professional resources, speech evaluation forms, and speech-preparation worksheets.
- **Instructor's Resources CD.** Captured on a single disc for maximum convenience, access the Instructor's Manual, Test Bank, PowerPoint Slides, *Teaching Public Speaking Online* manual, *Selections from the Communication Teacher*, and the *Handbook for Teachers of Non-Native Speakers of English*.

# Acknowledgments

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*Stephen E. Lucas*  
*Madison, Wisconsin*

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# **The Art of Public Speaking**



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# 1



## Speaking in Public

**The Power of Public Speaking**

**The Tradition of Public Speaking**

**Similarities Between Public Speaking and Conversation**

**Differences Between Public Speaking and Conversation**

**Developing Confidence: Your Speech Class**

**Public Speaking and Critical Thinking**

**The Speech Communication Process**

**Public Speaking in a Multicultural World**

**G**rowing up in the mountain town of Mingora, Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai had no idea how far her voice would travel. A bright and outspoken student, she dreamed of being a doctor. But her passion for education flew in the face of the Taliban regime that controlled her town. When Malala was 15 years old, two armed gunmen boarded her school bus and shot her at close range in the head and neck.

Miraculously, Malala survived. Since that time, she has become a symbol of the struggle for the rights of girls and women across the globe. She has established her own nonprofit organization, has met with leaders from many nations, and has turned her story of survival into a lesson on the importance of education. At age 16, she became the youngest person ever nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

How has Malala achieved all this? Partly through her bravery, partly through her commitment to education, and partly through her unyielding hope for a better world. But also important is her ability to communicate with people through public speaking, which has become a primary medium for spreading her message.

Best known is the speech Malala gave to the United Nations General Assembly on July 12, 2013, her 16th birthday. In addition to describing the attack on her school bus and the compassion she now felt for her attackers, she made her experience part of a larger struggle for human rights. “I speak not for myself,” she told world leaders, “but so those without a voice can be heard.”

If you had asked Malala several years ago, “Do you see yourself as an important international speaker?” she would probably have laughed at the idea. Yet today she gives at least one presentation in almost every city she visits. In addition to speaking at the United Nations, she has addressed Amnesty International, the World Bank, and the European Parliament. Her speeches have captivated audiences the world over.

## The Power of Public Speaking

Throughout history people have used public speaking as a vital means of communication. What the Greek leader Pericles said more than 2,500 years ago is still true today: “One who forms a judgment on any point but cannot explain” it clearly “might as well never have thought at all on the subject.”<sup>1</sup> Public speaking, as its name implies, is a way of making your ideas public—of sharing them with other people and of influencing other people.

During modern times, many women and men around the globe have spread their ideas and influence through public speaking. In the United States, the list includes Franklin Roosevelt, Billy Graham, Cesar Chavez, Barbara Jordan, Martin Luther King, Ronald Reagan, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama. In other countries, we have seen the power of public speaking employed by people such as Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela, and Aung San Suu Kyi.

As you read these names, you may think to yourself, “That’s fine. Good for them. But what does that have to do with me? I don’t plan to be a president or a preacher or a crusader for any cause.” Nevertheless, the need for public speaking will almost certainly touch you sometime in your life—maybe tomorrow, maybe not for five years. Can you imagine yourself in any of these situations?

You are one of seven management trainees in a large corporation. One of you will get the lower-management job that has just opened. There is to be a large staff meeting at which each of the trainees will discuss the project he or she has been developing. One by one your colleagues make their presentations. They have no experience in public speaking and are intimidated by the higher-ranking managers present. Their speeches are stumbling and awkward. You, however, call upon all the skills you learned in your public speaking course. You deliver an informative talk that is clear, well reasoned, and articulate. You get the job.

One of your children has a learning disability. You hear that your local school board has decided, for budget reasons, to eliminate the special teacher who has been helping your child. At an open meeting of the school board, you stand up and deliver a thoughtful, compelling speech on the necessity for keeping the special teacher. The school board changes its mind.

You are the assistant manager in a branch office of a national company. Your immediate superior, the branch manager, is about to retire, and there will be a

retirement dinner. All the executives from the home office will attend. As his close working associate, you are asked to give a farewell toast at the party. You prepare and deliver a speech that is both witty and touching—a perfect tribute to your boss. After the speech, everyone applauds enthusiastically, and a few people have tears in their eyes. The following week you are named branch manager.

Fantasies? Not really. Any of these situations could occur. In a recent survey of more than 300 employers, 93 percent stated that the ability to think critically and communicate clearly is more important for career success than is a job candidate's undergraduate major. In another survey, the American Management Association asked 768 executives and managers to rank the skills most essential to today's workplace. What was at the top of their list? Communication skills.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of such skills is true across the board—for accountants and architects, teachers and technicians, scientists and stockbrokers. Even in highly specialized fields such as civil and mechanical engineering, employers consistently rank the ability to communicate above technical knowledge when deciding whom to hire and whom to promote.

Businesses are also asking people to give more speeches in the early stages of their careers, and many young professionals are using public speaking as a way to stand out in today's highly competitive job market.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the ability to speak effectively is so prized that college graduates are increasingly being asked to give a presentation as part of their job interview.

Nor has the growth of the Internet and other new technologies reduced the need for public speaking. In this age of Instagram and Twitter, businesses are concerned that college graduates are losing the ability to talk in a professional way. As career expert Lindsey Pollak states, "It's so rare to find somebody who has that combination of really good technical skills and really good verbal communication skills. You will be head and shoulders above your colleagues if you can combine those two."<sup>4</sup>

The same is true in community life. Public speaking is a vital means of civic engagement. It is a way to express your ideas and to have an impact on issues that matter in society. As a form of empowerment, it can—and often does—make a difference in things people care about very much. The key phrase here is "make a difference." This is what most of us want to do in life—to make a difference, to change the world in some small way. Public speaking offers you an opportunity to make a difference in something you care about very much.

## The Tradition of Public Speaking

Given the importance of public speaking, it's not surprising that it has been taught and studied around the globe for thousands of years. Almost all cultures have an equivalent of the English word "orator" to designate someone with special skills in public speaking. The oldest known handbook on effective speech was written on papyrus in Egypt some 4,500 years ago. Eloquence was highly prized in ancient India, Africa, and China, as well as among the Aztecs and other pre-European cultures of North and South America.<sup>5</sup>

In classical Greece and Rome, public speaking played a central role in education and civic life. It was also studied extensively. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, composed during the third century B.C., is still considered the most important work on its subject, and many of its principles are followed by speakers (and

writers) today. The great Roman leader Cicero used his speeches to defend liberty and wrote several works about oratory in general.

Over the centuries, many other notable thinkers have dealt with issues of rhetoric, speech, and language—including the Roman educator Quintilian, the Christian preacher St. Augustine, the medieval writer Christine de Pizan, the British philosopher Francis Bacon, and the American critic Kenneth Burke. In recent years, communication researchers have provided an increasingly scientific basis for understanding the methods and strategies of effective speech.

Your immediate objective is to apply those methods and strategies in your classroom speeches. What you learn, however, will be applicable long after you leave college. The principles of public speaking are derived from a long tradition and have been confirmed by a substantial body of research. The more you know about those principles, the more effective you will be in your own speeches—and the more effective you will be in listening to the speeches of other people.

## Similarities Between Public Speaking and Conversation

How much time do you spend each day talking to other people? The average adult spends about 30 percent of her or his waking hours in conversation. By the time you read this book, you will have spent much of your life perfecting the art of conversation. You may not realize it, but you already employ a wide range of skills when talking to people. These skills include the following:

1. *Organizing your thoughts logically.* Suppose you were giving someone directions to get to your house. You wouldn't do it this way:

When you turn off the highway, you'll see a big diner on the left. But before that, stay on the highway to Exit 67. Usually a couple of the neighbors' dogs are in the street, so go slow after you turn at the blinking light. Coming from your house you get on the highway through Maple Street. If you pass the taco stand, you've gone too far. The house is blue.

Instead, you would take your listener systematically, step by step, from his or her house to your house. You would organize your message.

2. *Tailoring your message to your audience.* You are a geology major. Two people ask you how pearls are formed. One is your roommate; the other is your nine-year-old niece. You answer as follows:

To your roommate: "When any irritant, say a grain of sand, gets inside the oyster's shell, the oyster automatically secretes a substance called nacre, which is principally calcium carbonate and is the same material that lines the oyster's shell. The nacre accumulates in layers around the irritant core to form the pearl."

To your niece: "Imagine you're an oyster on the ocean floor. A grain of sand gets inside your shell and makes you uncomfortable. So you decide to cover it up. You cover it with a material called mother-of-pearl. The covering builds up around the grain of sand to make a pearl."





Many skills used in conversation also apply in public speaking. As you learn to speak more effectively, you may also learn to communicate more effectively in other situations.

3. *Telling a story for maximum impact.* Suppose you are telling a friend about a funny incident at last week's football game. You don't begin with the punch line ("Keisha fell out of the stands right onto the field. Here's how it started. . . ."). Instead, you carefully build up your story, adjusting your words and tone of voice to get the best effect.

4. *Adapting to listener feedback.* Whenever you talk with someone, you are aware of that person's verbal, facial, and physical reactions. For example:

You are explaining an interesting point that came up in biology class. Your listener begins to look confused, puts up a hand as though to stop you, and says "Huh?" You go back and explain more clearly.

A friend has asked you to listen while she practices a speech. At the end you tell her, "There's just one part I really don't like—that quotation from the attorney general." Your friend looks very hurt and says, "That was my favorite part!" So you say, "But if you just worked the quotation in a little differently, it would be wonderful."

Each day, in casual conversation, you do all these things many times without thinking about them. You already possess these communication skills. And these are among the most important skills you will need for public speaking.

To illustrate, let's return briefly to one of the hypothetical situations at the beginning of this chapter. When addressing the school board about the need for a special teacher:

- You *organize* your ideas to present them in the most persuasive manner. You steadily build up a compelling case about how the teacher benefits the school.
- You *tailor your message* to your audience. This is no time to launch an impassioned defense of special education in the United States. You must show how the issue is important to the people in that very room—to their children and to the school.



- You *tell your story* for maximum impact. Perhaps you relate an anecdote to demonstrate how much your child has improved. You also have statistics to show how many other children have been helped.
- You *adapt to listener feedback*. When you mention the cost of the special teacher, you notice sour looks on the faces of the school board members. So you patiently explain how small that cost is in relation to the overall school budget.

In many ways, then, public speaking requires the same skills used in ordinary conversation. Most people who communicate well in daily talk can learn to communicate just as well in public speaking. By the same token, training in public speaking can make you a more adept communicator in a variety of situations, such as conversations, classroom discussions, business meetings, and interviews.

## Differences Between Public Speaking and Conversation

Despite their similarities, public speaking and everyday conversation are not identical. Imagine that you are telling a story to a friend. Then imagine yourself telling the story to a group of seven or eight friends. Now imagine telling the same story to 20 or 30 people. As the size of your audience grows, you will find yourself adapting to three major differences between conversation and public speaking:

1. *Public speaking is more highly structured.* It usually imposes strict time limitations on the speaker. In most cases, the situation does not allow listeners to interrupt with questions or commentary. The speaker must accomplish her or his purpose in the speech itself. In preparing the speech, the speaker must anticipate questions that might arise in the minds of listeners and answer them. Consequently, public speaking demands much more detailed planning and preparation than ordinary conversation.

2. *Public speaking requires more formal language.* Slang, jargon, and bad grammar have little place in public speeches. When Malala Yousafzai addressed the United Nations, she didn't say, "We've got to stop Taliban creeps from going after innocent people." Listeners usually react negatively to speakers who do not elevate and polish their language when addressing an audience. A speech should be "special."

3. *Public speaking requires a different method of delivery.* When conversing informally, most people talk quietly, interject stock phrases such as "like" and "you know," adopt a casual posture, and use what are called vocalized pauses ("uh," "er," "um"). Effective public speakers, however, adjust their voices to be heard clearly throughout the audience. They assume a more erect posture. They avoid distracting mannerisms and verbal habits.

With study and practice, you will be able to master these differences and expand your conversational skills into speechmaking. Your speech class will provide the opportunity for this study and practice.

# Developing Confidence: Your Speech Class

One of the major concerns of students in any speech class is stage fright. We may as well face the issue squarely. Many people who converse easily in all kinds of everyday situations become frightened at the idea of standing up before a group to make a speech.

If you are worried about stage fright, you may feel better knowing that you are not alone. A 2001 Gallup Poll asked Americans to list their greatest fears. Forty percent identified speaking before a group as their top fear, exceeded only by the 51 percent who said they were afraid of snakes. A 2005 survey produced similar results, with 42 percent of respondents being terrified by the prospect of speaking in public. In comparison, only 28 percent said they were afraid of dying.<sup>6</sup>

In a different study, researchers concentrated on social situations and, again, asked their subjects to list their greatest fears. More than 9,000 people were interviewed. Here is the ranking of their answers:<sup>7</sup>

## Greatest Fear

Public speaking

Speaking up in a meeting or class

Meeting new people

Talking to people in authority

Important examination or interview

Going to parties

Talking with strangers

Again, speechmaking is at the top in provoking anxiety.

## NERVOUSNESS IS NORMAL

If you feel nervous about giving a speech, you are in very good company. Some of the greatest public speakers in history have suffered from stage fright, including Abraham Lincoln, Margaret Sanger, and Winston Churchill. The famous Roman orator Cicero said, “I turn pale at the outset of a speech and quake in every limb and in my soul.”<sup>8</sup>

Jennifer Lawrence, Conan O’Brien, and Oprah Winfrey all report being anxious about speaking in public. Early in his career, Leonardo DiCaprio was so nervous about giving an acceptance speech that he hoped he would not win the Academy Award for which he had been nominated. Eighty-one percent of business executives say public speaking is the most nerve-wracking experience they face.<sup>9</sup> What comedian Jerry Seinfeld said in jest sometimes seems literally true: “Given a choice, at a funeral most of us would rather be the one in the coffin than the one giving the eulogy.”

Actually, most people tend to be anxious before doing something important in public. Actors are nervous before a play, politicians are nervous before a campaign speech, athletes are nervous before a big game. The ones who succeed have learned to use their nervousness to their advantage. Listen to

### stage fright

Anxiety over the prospect of giving a speech in front of an audience.