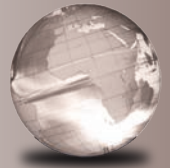


GLOBAL
EDITION



Public Speaking

Finding Your Voice

TENTH EDITION

Michael Osborn • Suzanne Osborn • Randall Osborn • Kathleen J. Turner



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Speaking

FINDING YOUR VOICE

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PUBLIC
Speaking

FINDING YOUR VOICE

Michael Osborn
University of Memphis

Suzanne Osborn
University of Memphis

Randall Osborn
University of Memphis

Kathleen J. Turner
Davidson College

PEARSON

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This edition is dedicated to our students, from whom we have learned so much.

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Brief Contents

PART ONE The Foundations of Public Speaking 27

- 1** Discovering Your Voice 27
- 2** Understanding and Managing Your Fear of Speaking 47
- 3** Preparing, Practicing, and Presenting Your First Speech 63
- 4** The Importance of Listening 85

PART TWO Preparation for Public Speaking 105

- 5** Understanding Your Audience and the Occasion 105
- 6** Selecting Your Topic 130
- 7** Building Responsible Knowledge 148
- 8** Supporting Your Ideas 173
- 9** Developing and Structuring Your Speech 193

PART THREE Developing Presentation Skills 225

- 10** Presentation Aids 225
- 11** Putting Words to Work 255
- 12** Delivering Your Speech 281

PART FOUR TYPES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING 309

- 13** Informative Speaking 309
- 14** Persuasive Speaking 332
- 15** Persuasion in Controversy 363
- 16** Ceremonial Speaking on Special Occasions 388

APPENDIX A Communicating in Small Groups 411

APPENDIX B Speeches for Analysis 426

Contents

Preface 14
Instructor and Student Resources 23
Acknowledgments 24

PART ONE The Foundations of Public Speaking 27

1 Discovering Your Voice 27



What Public Speaking Has to Offer You 29
Personal Benefits 29
Social Benefits 30
Cultural Benefits 31

Introduction to Communication 33
Historical Roots of Public Speaking 33
Communication: Interactive and Dynamic 34

What Public Speaking Asks of You 40
Respect for the Integrity of Ideas and Information 41
A Genuine Concern for Consequences 44

FINAL reflections A Quest that Deserves Commitment 45

2 Understanding and Managing Your Fear of Speaking 47



Understanding Communication Anxiety 50
An Unfamiliar Situation 50
The Importance of the Occasion 50
The Power of Negative Thinking 50

Managing Your Communication Anxiety 51
Reality Testing 52
Cognitive Restructuring 54
Selective Relaxation 54
Attitude Adjustments 55
Visualization 56
Putting It All Together 57
How You Can Help Your Classmates 59

FINAL reflections Climbing Fear Mountain 59

3 Preparing, Practicing, and Presenting Your First Speech 63



Preparing and Presenting Your First Speech 64
Step 1: Find and Focus Your Topic 65
Step 2: Gather Supporting Material 66
Step 3: Organize the Body of Your Speech 69
Step 4: Add an Introduction, Transitions, and a Conclusion 72
Step 5: Prepare a Formal Outline 72
Step 6: Practice, Practice, Practice! 73
Step 7: Present Your Speech 75

Managing the Impressions You Make 75
Competence 75
Integrity 76
Goodwill 76
Dynamism 77

Speeches of Introduction 77

FINAL reflections Taking The First Steps 81

4 The Importance of Listening 85



The Benefits of Effective Listening 86
Listening in the Classroom 87
Listening at Work 88

Understanding Listening 89
Comprehensive Listening 89
Critical Listening 89
Empathic Listening 90

Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening 90
Noise 91

- Inattention 91
- Bad Listening Habits 92
- Emotional Reactions 93
- Biases 93

Becoming a Critical Listener 94

- Do Speakers Support Their Claims? 94
- Do Speakers Cite Credible Sources? 95
- Do Speakers Use Words to Clarify or Obscure? 95

Becoming an Empathic Listener 97

Your Ethical Responsibilities as a Listener 97

Evaluating Speeches 98

- General Considerations 98
- Evaluating Substance 100
- Evaluating Structure 100
- Evaluating Presentation Skills 100

FINAL reflections The Golden Rule of Listening 102

PART TWO Preparation for Public Speaking 105

5 Understanding Your Audience and the Occasion 105



Understanding Audience Demographics 107

- Age 108
- Gender 109
- Education 110
- Sociocultural Background 110
- Group Affiliations 111
- Some Words of Caution 113

Understanding Audience Dynamics 114

- Beliefs 114
- Attitudes 114
- Values 115
- Motives 116
- Gathering Information About Audience Dynamics 119

Rewards and Challenges of Audience Diversity 120

- Become Familiar with Audience Cultures 120
- Use Supporting Materials Skillfully 121
- Speak from Shared Values 121
- Choose Your Words Carefully 122
- Avoid Rhetorical Land Mines 122

Adjusting to the Speaking Situation 124

- The Occasion 124
- The Physical Setting 124
- The Psychological Setting 125

FINAL reflections Looking Beyond the Self 127

6 Selecting Your Topic 130



What Is a Good Topic? 131

- A Good Topic Involves You 131
- A Good Topic Involves Your Listeners 132
- A Good Topic Is One You Can Manage 132

Discovering Your Topic Area 133

- Brainstorming 133
- Interest Charts 133
- Media and Internet Prompts 135

Exploring Your Topic Area 135

- Mind Mapping 136
- Topic Analysis 137

Refining Your Topic 139

- General Purpose 139
- Specific Purpose 139
- Thesis Statement 142

An Overview of the Topic Selection Process 143

FINAL reflections The Great Chain of Communication 144

7 Building Responsible Knowledge 148



The Quest for Responsible Knowledge 150

Preparing for Research 150

- Planning Your Time 150
- Developing the Right Research Attitude 150
- Setting Your Research Priorities 151
- Recording What You Discover 151
- Avoiding Chance Plagiarism 153

Your Quest for General Knowledge 153

- Drawing on Personal Experience 154
- Certain Sites on the Internet 154
- Certain Places in the Library 155
- Exploring the Social Media 155

Seeking In-Depth Knowledge 155

- Going Deeper on the Internet 156
- Going Deeper in the Library 158
- Conducting Personal Interviews 160

Evaluating What You Discover 163

- Information from the Internet 163
- Information from the Library 167
- Information from Personal Interviews 168

FINAL reflections Empowering Your Voice 169

8 Supporting Your Ideas 173



Facts and Statistics 174

- Constructing Facts and Figures 175
- Testing Facts and Figures 176

Testimony 178

- Using Expert Testimony 178
- Developing Lay Testimony 179
- Constructing Prestige Testimony 180
- Designing Testimony: Other Considerations 180

Examples 182

- Types of Examples 182
- Fashioning Powerful Examples 184
- Testing Your Examples 185

Narratives 186

- Types of Narratives 186
- Building Narratives 187
- Testing Your Story 188

Selecting and Combining Supporting Materials 190

FINAL reflections Developing a Well-Supported Voice 191

9 Developing and Structuring Your Speech 193



Principles of a Well-Structured Speech 194

- Simplicity 194
- Order 196
- Balance 196

Structuring the Body of Your Speech 197

- Selecting Your Main Points 198
- Arranging Your Main Points 198
- Developing Your Main Points 201
- Developing a Working Outline 202
- Adding Transitions 204

Introducing and Concluding Your Speech 207

- Introducing Your Speech 207
- Concluding Your Speech 211
- Selecting and Using Introductory and Concluding Techniques 214

Preparing Your Formal Outline 215

- Heading 215
- Introduction 217
- Body 217
- Conclusion 218
- Works Cited or Consulted 218
- Formal Outlines: A Caution 219

FINAL reflections Deep Roots of Structuring and Outlining 219

PART THREE Developing Presentation Skills 225

10 Presentation Aids 225



The Advantages and Disadvantages of Presentation Aids 227

- Advantages of Presentation Aids 227
- Disadvantages of Presentation Aids 229

Types of Presentation Aids 230

- People 230
- Objects and Models 231
- Graphics 232
- Pictures 235

Presentation Media 236

- Traditional Media 236
- PowerPoint, Prezi, iPad Apps, and More 239

Preparing Presentation Aids 245

- Principles of Design 245
- Principles of Color 247

Using Presentation Aids 249

Ethical Considerations for Using Presentation Aids 250

FINAL reflections Amplifying Your Voice 252

11 Putting Words to Work 255



What Words Can Do 256

- What Makes Oral Language Special 257
- Shaping Perceptions 258
- Arousing Feelings 259
- Bringing Listeners Together 261
- Moving Listeners to Action 261
- Celebrating Shared Values 262

The Six C'S of Language Use 263

- Clarity 263
- Color 265
- Concreteness 265

- Correctness 266
- Conciseness 268
- Cultural Sensitivity 268

How Language Techniques Can Magnify Your Voice 269

- Using Figurative Language 269
- Changing the Order of Words 274
- Using the Sounds of Words to Reinforce Their Meaning 275

FINAL reflections Give Me the Right Word 277

12 Delivering Your Speech 281



The Power of Presentation 282

Developing Your Physical Voice 283

- Pitch 284
- Rate 286
- Volume 288
- Variety 290
- Vocal Problems 290

Developing Your Body Language 292

- Facial Expression and Eye Contact 292
- Movement and Gestures 293
- Personal Appearance 295

Developing Versatility in Presentation 296

- Impromptu Speaking 296
- Extemporaneous Speaking 298
- Reading from a Manuscript 299
- Memorized Text Presentation 301

Practicing for Presentation 301

Developing Flexibility in Special Situations 304

- Handling Questions and Answers 304
- Moderator 305
- Making Mediated Presentations 306

FINAL reflections Holding Court 307

PART FOUR Types of Public Speaking 309

13 Informative Speaking 309



Informative Speaking: An Overview 311

Forms of Informative Speaking 312

- Speeches of Description 312
- Speeches of Demonstration 312
- Speeches of Explanation 313

Helping Listeners Learn 314

- Motivating Audiences to Listen 314
- Maintaining Audience Attention 315
- Promoting Audience Retention 317

Speech Designs 318

- Categorical Design 318
- Comparative Design 319
- Spatial Design 320
- Sequential Design 322
- Chronological Design 323
- Causation Design 324

Rising to the Challenge of the Informative Speech 325

Briefings: An Application 326

FINAL reflections Bringing Fire to Your Listeners 328

14 Persuasive Speaking 332



The Nature of Persuasive Speaking 334

The Types of Persuasive Speaking 336

- Speeches That Focus on Facts 336
- Speeches That Emphasize Attitudes and Values 338
- Speeches That Advocate Action and Policy 339

The Persuasive Process 340

- Awareness 341
- Understanding 341

- Agreement 342
- Enactment 343
- Integration 343

The Challenges of Persuasive Speaking 344

- Convincing a Reluctant Audience to Listen 345
- Removing Barriers to Commitment 350
- Moving from Attitude to Action 351
- The Challenge of Ethical Persuasion 353

Designs for Persuasive Speeches 354

- Problem–Solution Design 355
- Motivated Sequence Design 356

FINAL reflections The Case for Persuasion 358

15 Persuasion in Controversy 363



Reasoned Persuasion Versus Manipulative Persuasion 365

- Forming Evidence 365
- Developing Proofs 367

The Master Proof 371

- Defining Major Issues 371
- Deductive Reasoning 372
- Inductive Reasoning 373
- Analogical Reasoning 374

Refutative Design 376

- Design Combinations 377

Avoiding Defective Persuasion 378

- The Gallery of Fallacies 378

FINAL reflections Persuasion That Has Legs 383

16 Ceremonial Speaking on Special Occasions 388



Techniques of Ceremonial Speaking 390

- Identification 390
- Magnification 392

Types of Ceremonial Speeches 394

- Speeches of Tribute 394
- Acceptance Speeches 399
- Speeches of Introduction 399
- Speeches of Inspiration 401
- After-Dinner Speeches 402
- Acting as a Master of Ceremonies 404

Narrative Design 405

- Prologue 406
- Plot 406
- Epilogue 407

FINAL reflections “And in Conclusion
Let Us Say” 407

APPENDIX A Communicating in Small Groups 411**APPENDIX B** Speeches for Analysis 426**Glossary** 449**Notes** 457**Photo Credits** 466**Index** 467

Preface

What's New in This Edition?

Each new edition offers the chance to improve our book, and the tenth edition takes full advantage of this opportunity. Those familiar with previous editions will recognize at least seven major changes:

- **New Coauthor.** We are proud to welcome a dedicated teacher, distinguished scholar, and officer of the National Communication Association to our writing team. Professor Kathleen J. Turner of Davidson College has assumed responsibility for updating, revising, and refreshing the chapter on the use of presentation aids (Chapter 10) and the chapter on presenting (Chapter 12), which gives greater emphasis to impromptu and extemporaneous presentations. The successful results of her work are self-evident in these significantly revised chapters.

After Reading This Chapter, You Should Be Able To Answer These Questions

- 1 What are the three levels of meaning involved in “finding your voice”?
- 2 What is ethnocentrism?
- 3 What are the three major forms of public speaking and the three main kinds of appeals named by Aristotle?

- **New Features.** We have developed a self-test, “After Reading This Chapter...,” at the end of each chapter to review and reinforce the major concepts introduced and developed. These reviews measure Learning Outcomes that relate to the Learning Objectives provided at the beginning of each chapter. In addition, “For Discussion and Further Exploration” questions

and projects at the end of each chapter encourage the extension and application of chapter content. In addition, the book offers new material on presentation media and cutting-edge technologies, such as presentation programs for tablets, as well as discussion of research resources from the library to the Internet to social media.

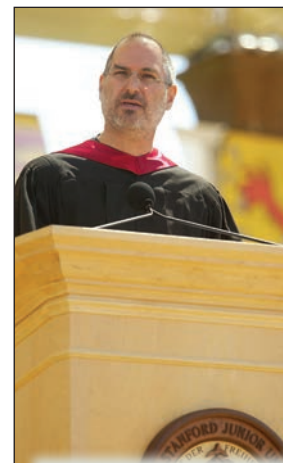
For Discussion and Further Exploration

- 1 Not everyone is a good listener. To become one, rigorous training and self-discipline are necessary. The regimen includes keeping oneself highly motivated to listen to everything carefully. Discuss with your friends the differences between hearing and listening.
- 2 Good listening habits are crucial for a successful professional life. Which aspects of professional life can be altered for good by nurturing good listening habits? Would you agree that poor listeners make poor speakers? Why are good listeners valued at the work place? Support your argument with examples.
- 3 Good listening skills help one recognize problems easily, and solve them. Listening is a voluntary process that goes beyond physical reactions to sound. There are three types of listening skills—comprehensive listening, critical listening, and empathetic listening. Describe these skills in detail and find suitable examples for each. There are many factors that affect good listening skills directly or indirectly. These factors are called barriers to listening. Are you aware of any such barriers? How can these barriers be removed? Support your arguments with examples. Nonverbal cues also play a vital role in the listening process. What are these cues and how can one recognize them in the course of a speech or conversation?

Reasoned persuasion concentrates on building a case that will justify taking some action or adopting some point of view with regard to a public controversy. The case rests upon arguments carefully constructed out of evidence and patterns of reasoning that make good sense when carefully examined. Reasoned persuasion invites rather than avoids careful inspection. It appeals to our judgment rather than to our impulses. It aims for long-range commitments that will endure in the face of counterattacks. It honors civilized deliberation over verbal mudslinging.

- **Expanded Horizons.** Expansion of the book’s horizons reflects the reach of public speaking beyond the classroom. A new case study of speaking and persuasive practices related to the nationally honored Wellness Program of Nabholz Construction Services company has been added to Chapters 14 and 16. Numerous new examples from the workplace, including motivational speakers such as Biz Stone, the founder of Twitter, and the late Steve Jobs, appear throughout. Examples from the courtroom have been added to Chapters 10 and 12.
- **More Compact and Student Friendly.** For many students, this has become the Age of Multi-Tasking, a time in which many demands are being made simultaneously on their time. Partly to help such students, and partly (we admit!) because shorter is usually better, we have sought to tighten the writing, and streamline and condense certain sections without sacrificing the quality many have come to associate with our book. Examples of this greater accessibility are the revised discussion of the “Historical Roots of Public Speaking” in Chapter 1 and the explanation of persuasion in Chapters 14 and 15.
- **Social Media Connections.** Connections between public speaking and social media have been added in the “Finding Your Voice” boxes and end-of-chapter activities, as well as thought-provoking questions and examples throughout. Students will find these applications particularly relevant to their daily lives and interactions.
- **Development of “Finding Your Voice” Theme.** The ninth edition of *Public Speaking* introduced a subtitle. “Finding Your Voice” focused on a theme that had been implicit from the first edition: that developing as a speaker can also help one develop a sense of purpose and mission. Finding your voice in the public speaking class means developing on at least three levels. On the first and most basic level of *competence*, the student learns how to analyze audiences, find good topics, conduct research, design messages, word them for maximum effect, and present them so that they achieve the desired communication goals. The second level of finding your voice involves *self-discovery*: helping students gain confidence so that they can communicate successfully and find those causes that most deserve their personal commitment. The third level begins the process of *finding your place in society*, helping students develop a sense of the communication roles that they might play in their communities or in the global workplace.

■ **Clearer Approach to Persuasion.** Development of a clearer conceptual approach to persuasion: Chapter 14 covers the nature of persuasion, and Chapter 15 focuses on the social role of persuasion in the resolution of controversy. New material emphasizes that reasoned persuasion is the ethical, enlightened alternative to manipulative persuasion.



Steve Jobs, speaking at Stanford graduation ceremonies, gave an inspiring commencement address that described how past career frustrations ultimately led to his current successes.

FINDING YOUR

voice

Persuasion in the Raw

The “Letters to the Editor” section of the Sunday newspaper is often a rich source for the study of persuasive material. Using a recent Sunday paper, analyze the persuasion attempted in these letters. You might also check blogs with which you’re familiar or that discuss a topic of interest to you. Do you find the ideas expressed in these persuasive? Why or why not? Do you evaluate these comments differently from letters to the editor or from other media sources? Which do you think are most and least effective, and why? How might these help you find your voice on a topic? Report your findings in class discussion.

“Give me the right word and the right accent, and I will move the world.”

—JOSEPH CONRAD

A legislator was asked how he felt about whiskey. He replied, “If, when you say whiskey, you mean the Devil’s brew, the poison scourge, the bloody monster that defiles innocence, dethrones reason, creates misery and poverty—yes, literally takes the bread from the mouths of little children; if you mean the drink that topples Christian man and woman from the pinnacle of righteous, gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation, despair, shame and helplessness, then certainly I am against it with all my power.

“But if, when you say whiskey, you mean the oil of conversation, the philosophical wine, the ale that is consumed when good fellows get together, that puts a song in their hearts and the warm glow of contentment in their eyes; if you mean Christmas cheer; if you mean the stimulating drink that puts the spring in an old gentleman’s step on a frosty morning; if you mean that drink, the sale of which pours into our treasury untold millions of dollars which are used to provide tender care for our crippled children, our blind, our deaf, our dumb, pitiful, aged and infirm, to build highways, hospitals, and schools, then certainly I am in favor of it.

“That is my stand, and I will not compromise.”¹

The new edition develops, integrates, and refines this idea throughout the book. Each chapter begins with stories and examples that illustrate finding your voice and concludes with an expanded “Final Reflections” section that places in context the importance of what you have learned. As each chapter develops, the “Finding Your Voice” feature offers short exercises, questions, and applications that challenge students to think about and apply what they are learning, providing opportunities for class discussion and a stimulus to learning.

FINAL reflections

“And in Conclusion Let Us Say”

We began our book by encouraging your quest to find your voice. We hope that your quest has been successful and that you have benefited, are benefiting, and will continue to benefit from it. We end our book with our own speech of tribute, this time to you. Public speaking may not have always been easy for you. But it is our hope that you have grown as a person as you have grown as a speaker. Our special wishes, expressed in terms of the underlying vision of our book, are

- that you have learned to climb the barriers that people sometimes erect to separate themselves from each other and that too often prevent meaningful communication.
- that you have learned to weave words and evidence into eloquent thoughts and persuasive ideas.
- that you have learned to build and present speeches that enlighten others in responsible and ethical ways.
- above all, that you have found subjects and causes worthy of your voice.

Some Things Don’t Change; They Just Get Better

So it is, we think, with our book. For all the changes from one edition to another, core values remain. With each edition, we try to state them a little more clearly, a little more powerfully. Among these values are the following:

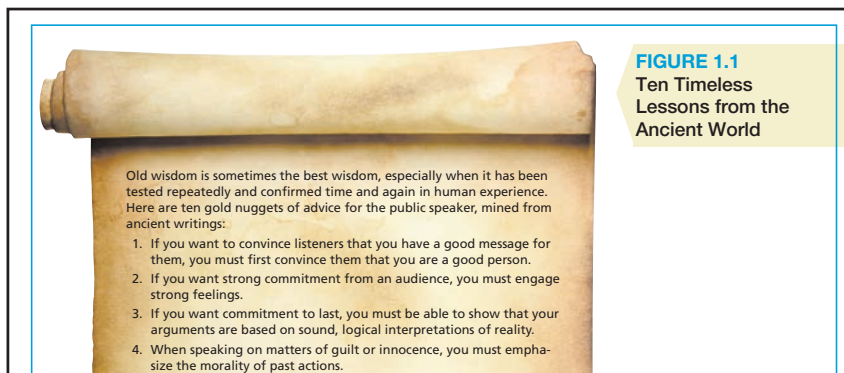
- From ancient times, educators have recognized that *the study and practice of public speaking belongs at the foundation of a liberal education*. What other discipline requires students to think clearly, be attuned to the needs of listeners, organize their thoughts, select and combine words artfully and judiciously, and express

themselves with power and conviction, all while under the direct scrutiny of an audience? The challenge to teach such a complex range of abilities has always been difficult, but it also suggests the potential value of the course to many students. This book represents our best effort to help teachers and students rise to this challenge.

- Another core objective of our book is to illuminate *the role of public speaking in a diverse society*. Adjusting to a diverse audience is a challenge ancient writers could not have anticipated. The increasing cultural diversity of our society adds to the importance of public speaking as a force that can express the richness of a diverse society, as well as counter the growing division and incivility that are the disease eating away at diversity. Our renewed emphasis on identification as the antidote to division, on the importance of shared stories that express universal values, and on the ethical importance of reasoned discourse as a preferred mode of public deliberation, all respond to the vital importance of diversity in our society. Thus, cultural diversity is a theme that remains constant in our book.
- We continue to believe that a major goal of the public speaking course is *to make students more sensitive to the ethical impact of speaking on the lives of others*. We discuss ethical considerations throughout the book. For example, we direct the attention of students to ethical concerns as we consider listening, audience analysis and adaptation, cultural variations, topic selection, research, ways of structuring speeches, presentation aids, uses of language, and the consequences of informing and persuading others. Often we use a “Finding Your Ethical Voice” feature to highlight these concerns.
- We continue to believe that *a college course in public speaking should offer both practical advice and an understanding of why such advice works*. We emphasize both the *how* and the *why* of public speaking—*how* so that beginners can achieve success as quickly as possible, and *why* so that they can manage their new skills wisely. Our approach is eclectic: we draw from the past and present and from the social sciences and humanities to help students understand and manage their public speaking experiences.
- The Roman educator Quintilian held forth the ideal of “the good person speaking well” as a goal of education. Two thousand years later, we join him in stressing *the value of speech training in the development of the whole person*. In addition, *understanding the principles of public communication can make students more resistant to unethical speakers and more critical of the mass-mediated communication to which they are exposed*. The class should help students become both better consumers and better producers of public communication.

In addition to these core values, we continue to offer features that have remained constant and distinctive across the many editions of our book.

- *Responsible knowledge as a standard for public speaking*. In order to develop a standard for the quality and depth of information that should be reflected



in all speeches, we offer the concept of *responsible knowledge*. This concept is developed in detail in Chapter 7, in which we discuss the foundation of research that should support speeches and provide an *updated* account of current research resources available to speakers, as well as a new system for recording information as the student conducts research and personal interviews to find supporting materials.

- *How to cope with communication anxiety.* A separate chapter early in the book addresses communication anxiety and how to control it. Many students come to our public speaking classes with anxiety that amounts sometimes to terror. Our book helps them to confront their feelings and to convert their fear into positive energy.
- *Special preparation for the first speech.* As teachers, we realize the importance of the first speaking experience to a student’s ultimate success in the course. Yet much useful advice must be delayed until later chapters as the subject of public speaking develops systematically over a semester. Having experienced this frustration ourselves while teaching the course, we include an overview of practical advice early in the book that previews later chapters and prepares students more effectively for their first speeches. This overview is provided in Chapter 3. The step-by-step approach to preparing the first speech offered in this chapter has been strengthened and restructured.

YOUR ethical VOICE Guidelines for the Ethical Use of Evidence

To use evidence ethically follow these guidelines:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide evidence from credible sources. 2. Identify your sources of evidence. 3. Use evidence that can stand up under critical scrutiny. 4. Be sure evidence has not been tainted by self-interest. 5. Acknowledge disagreements among experts. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Do not withhold important evidence. 7. Use expert testimony to establish facts, prestige testimony to enhance credibility, and lay testimony to create identification. 8. Quote or paraphrase testimony accurately.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

- *Situational approach to communication ethics.* We have always discussed ethical issues as they arise in the context of topics. The “Finding Your Ethical Voice” feature helps highlight these concerns as they develop chapter by chapter.

- *The importance of narrative in public speaking.* We discuss narrative as an important form of supporting material and as a previously neglected design option. This material is initially presented in Chapter 3. We also identify appeals to traditions, heroic symbols, cultural identity, and legends—all built upon narrative—as an important, emerging form of proof in persuasive speaking.

SPEAKER'S notes Deciding What Presentation Media to Use

Let the following suggestions guide your selection of presentation media.

When you need to . . .	try using . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ adapt to audience feedback ■ display maps, charts, graphs, or textual graphics ■ present complex information or statistical data ■ display graphics or photos to a large audience ■ authenticate a point ■ make your presentation appear more professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ flip charts or chalk or marker boards ■ posters or computerized programs ■ handouts ■ slides or transparencies ■ audio and video resources ■ computerized programs

- *Speaker’s Notes as a major pedagogical tool.* When our first edition appeared some twenty-five years ago we introduced to the field a feature we called “Speaker’s Notes.” This feature serves as an internal summary that helps highlight and bring into focus important concepts as the student reads the text. In the new edition, this traditional feature works in collaboration with the new “Finding Your Voice” and “Finding Your Ethical Voice” features to encourage learning and enrich the student’s reading experience.

- *Improving language skills.* We introduce students to the power of language, help them apply standards so that this power is not diminished, and demonstrate special techniques that can magnify this power at important moments in speeches. Among the standards is learning how to avoid grammatical errors that make listeners cringe.
- *Enhanced understanding of ceremonial speaking.* We provide coherence and respect for the study of ceremonial speaking by pointing out the importance of such speaking in society, and by indicating how two powerful concepts, one offered by Aristotle and the other by Kenneth Burke, can combine to generate successful ceremonial speeches, especially speeches of tribute and inspiration.

Plan of the Book

Public Speaking: Finding Your Voice is designed to help beginning students build cumulative knowledge and skills. Positive initial speaking experiences are especially important. For this reason, Chapter 2 helps apprehensive students manage communication anxiety as they stand to speak for the first time. Chapter 3 offers an overview of advice to help students design and present successful first speeches.

In the chapters that follow, students learn how to listen critically and empathetically; analyze their audiences; select, refine, and research speech topics; develop supporting materials; arrange these materials in appropriate structures; and create effective presentation aids. They also learn how to use language effectively and present their messages well. Students become acquainted with the nature of information and how to present it, the process of persuasion and how to engage it, and the importance of ceremonial speaking in its various forms. Appendix A, “Communicating in Small Groups,” describes how to use public communication skills to participate effectively in small group interactions.

Teachers may adapt the sequence of chapters to any course plan, because each chapter covers a topic thoroughly and completely.

Detailed Plan of the Book

Part One, “The Foundations of Public Speaking,” provides basic information that students need for their first speaking and listening experiences. Chapter 1 defines public speaking and the significance of “finding your voice,” highlights the personal, social, and cultural benefits of being able to speak effectively in public, and emphasizes the ethical responsibilities of speakers. Chapter 2 helps students come to terms with communication anxiety, so that they can control this problem early in the course. Chapter 3 offers practical advice for organizing, practicing, and presenting first speeches. Chapter 4 identifies common listening problems and ways to overcome them, helps students sharpen critical listening skills, and presents criteria for the constructive evaluation of speeches.

Part Two, “Preparation for Public Speaking,” introduces the basic skills needed to develop effective speeches. Chapter 5 emphasizes the importance of the audience, indicating how to adapt a message and how to adjust to factors in the speaking situation. Chapter 6 provides a systematic way to discover, evaluate, and refine speech topics. Chapter 7 shows how to research these topics, emphasizing the importance of acquiring *responsible knowledge*. Chapter 8 identifies the major types of



Objectives
This chapter will help you

- 1 Understand how persuasive speaking differs from informative speaking.
- 2 Master the types of persuasive speaking
- 3 Grasp how the persuasive process works
- 4 Soften the opposition of reluctant listeners
- 5 Remove barriers that block commitment
- 6 Turn agreement into action
- 7 Select appropriate designs for your persuasive speeches

OUTLINE

- The Nature of Persuasive Speaking
- The Types of Persuasive Speaking
- The Persuasive Process
- The Challenges of Persuasive Speaking
- Designs for Persuasive Speeches
- Final Reflections The Case for Persuasion

14 Persuasive Speaking

332

supporting materials fashioned from such research, including facts and statistics, examples, testimony, and narratives. Chapter 9 shows how to develop simple, balanced, and orderly speech designs, select and shape main points, use transitions, prepare effective introductions and conclusions, and develop outlines.

Part Three, “Developing Presentation Skills,” brings the speaker to the point of presentation. Chapter 10 explains the types, media, and preparation of presentation aids. Chapter 11 provides an understanding of the role of language in communication and offers practical suggestions for using words effectively. Chapter 12 offers concepts and exercises for the improvement of voice and body language to help students develop an extemporaneous style that is adaptable to most speaking situations.

Part Four, “Types of Public Speaking,” discusses informative, persuasive, and ceremonial speaking. Chapter 13 covers speeches designed to share information and increase understanding. The chapter discusses the types of informative speeches and presents the major designs that can structure them. Chapter 14 describes the persuasive process, focusing on how to meet the many challenges of persuasive situations. Chapter 15 examines the work of persuasion in controversy. The chapter encourages reasoned persuasion, helping students develop strong arguments to support their positions.

The chapter also identifies the major forms of fallacies so that student speakers can avoid them and detect them in the messages of others. Chapter 16 explains how to prepare effective ceremonial presentations, including speeches of tribute and inspiration, speeches introducing others, eulogies, after-dinner speeches, and speeches presenting and accepting awards. The chapter shows how to use narratives and narrative design, often found in ceremonial speeches.

Appendix A, “Communicating in Small Groups,” introduces students to the problem-solving process and to the responsibilities of both group leaders and group participants. This appendix also provides guidelines for managing meetings, including virtual meetings, and explains the basic concepts of parliamentary procedure. Appendix B provides a number of student and professional speeches for additional analysis.

Learning Tools

To help students master the material, we offer a number of special learning tools.

- We open each chapter with a chapter outline and learning objectives that prepare students for productive reading.
- The epigrams and vignettes that start each chapter help point out the topic’s significance and motivate readers to learn more.
- We conclude each chapter with a “Final Reflections” summary, a self-test to review key concepts and assess how the learning objectives were met, and questions and activities to explore chapter content in greater detail.

- We use contemporary artwork and photographs to illustrate ideas, engage student interest, and add to the visual appeal of the book.
- Examples illustrate the content in a clear, lively, and often entertaining way.
- Special embedded features help students read productively. “Speaker’s Notes” offer guidelines to help students focus on the essentials; “Finding Your Voice” offers exercises and applications that stimulate the learning process; and “Finding Your Ethical Voice” heightens ethical sensitivity.

FINDING YOUR

voice

Find the Fallacies

Look for examples of fallacies in the “Letters to the Editor” section of your local newspaper or in opinions expressed in blogs. Consider how these fallacies affect the credibility or character of the people who commit them. Did you ever commit such an error? Do you think this damaged your credibility? Might personal fallacies be an obstacle to finding your voice?

ples are not available or when their use would not be appropriate. While generally not as authoritative as their factual counterparts, hypothetical examples can still be very effective. They can be the fiction that reveals reality. Consider the following hypothetical example, which illustrates the growing problem of childhood obesity:

<p>▶ extended example A more detailed example that speakers use to illustrate or develop a point.</p>	<p>▶ factual example An example based on something that actually happened or really exists.</p>	<p>▶ hypothetical example An example offered not as real but as representative of actual people, situations, or events.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

- A Glossary runs through the book at the bottom of each page, helping students focus on key terms as they are introduced. In addition, all the key terms and their definitions are gathered in a complete Glossary at the end of the book.

- Sample classroom speeches found at the end of many chapters illustrate important concepts. The annotated speech texts show how the concepts apply in actual speaking situations. Appendix B contains additional speeches that offer an interesting array of topics, contexts, and speakers.

SAMPLE CEREMONIAL SPEECH

Simone Mullinax presented this speech of tribute to her grandmother in a public speaking class at the University of Arkansas. The speech develops a master narrative based on an extended metaphor and paints an endearing portrait of a complex person who—like key lime pie—combines the qualities of sweetness and tartness.

Baked-In Traditions

SIMONE MULLINAX

Have you ever baked a pie? No, I don’t mean one you get from the freezer section at the grocery store—I’m talking about one you bake from scratch. I learned to bake a pie at an early age. And what I learned, early on, is that there are three things you have to master: the crust, the filler, and the topping. You can’t have a pie if you lack any of these.

So where do you start? You start of course in the kitchen, which is where I meet my grandmother every time we get together. I would like to tell you she’s that sweet, picturesque, grandmotherly grandmother you see on television, but she’s not. Rather, she’s that opinionated, bold, “her-way-or-the-highway” type that scares some people off. Her salvation is that she’s also insanely funny and you fall in love with her stories, her cooking, and her opinions, even when you don’t agree with all of them. Just when you’re ready to pack up and move on, she does or says something that makes you want to hang around.

▶ This brief opening does a great deal of work. Simone opens with a rhetorical question and a definition and establishes her personal ethos. She then hints of a clever categorical design that will follow the three main ingredients of a pie.

▶ This paragraph completes

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Instructor and Student Resources

Key instructor resources include an Instructor's Manual, Test Bank, and PowerPoint Presentation Package. These supplements are available at www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Osborn (instructor login required).

For a complete list of the instructor and student resources available with the text, please visit www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Osborn.

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Objectives

This chapter will help you

- 1 Understand the personal benefits of the course
- 2 Understand the social benefits of the course
- 3 Understand the cultural benefits of the course
- 4 Appreciate the historical roots of public speaking
- 5 Understand the seven elements of interactive public speaking
- 6 Understand public speaking as a dynamic process
- 7 Appreciate the importance of public speaking ethics

OUTLINE

What Public Speaking Has to Offer You

Introduction to Communication

What Public Speaking Asks of You

Final Reflections A Quest That Deserves Commitment

1

Discovering Your Voice

“*I wanna be somebody that somebody listens to. I wanna be a voice.*”

—GERON JOHNSON

Carolyn didn't see why she needed to take a public speaking course. She was majoring in engineering and didn't plan on being active in politics. She wondered what this course would offer her. At the first class meeting, Carolyn saw twenty-five other students who looked like they weren't sure they wanted to be there either.

Her first assignment was a speech of self-introduction. As she prepared her speech, it dawned on her why a career in engineering was important to her. She had initially thought it was because jobs were readily available. But now she recognized that she found the subject fascinating and wanted to prove she could succeed in a nontraditional field for women. Her journey toward finding her voice had begun. As she spoke, she became more enthusiastic about her topic. This helped ease her nervousness.

After the course, Carolyn found many uses for the skills she had learned. Along with some other female students in the engineering courses, she took the lead in organizing a campus support group for females in nontraditional disciplines. She felt more at ease making oral presentations in other classes. When she interviewed for an internship, she was able to present her ideas clearly and concisely. She had found her voice.

What does finding your voice mean? Clearly, it goes beyond opening your mouth and making sounds. There are at least three different aspects of finding your voice: becoming a competent speaker, discovering your self-identity, and finding your place in society.

The first aspect involves learning to be a competent speaker. To “find your voice” you have to know how to make a speech. Despite popular beliefs, speakers are made, not born. They have to learn—through study, practice, and experience—the art and principles that go into speech-making. Every chapter in this book elaborates an important dimension of this knowledge.

The second level of meaning involves self-discovery: As you “find your voice,” you become more confident in yourself. You develop self-esteem and your own style as a speaker. You also develop an increased understanding of why you are speaking. As she spoke successfully, Carolyn not only found her voice but also developed a renewed appreciation for her career goals, which enhanced her sense of identity.

At a third level, “finding your voice” means finding your place in society, learning the value of the views and contributions of others, and discovering your ethical obligation to listeners. As you listen to others and as they respond to your words, you develop a sense of your mutual dependency. You learn, as the conservative intellectual Richard Weaver once noted, that “ideas [and the words that convey them] have consequences,” and that what you say (or don't say) can be important.¹ We

do live in a social world, and our speech or our silence can improve or degrade our surroundings.

“Finding your voice” is a quest that deserves your commitment. This chapter will explain further what this course has to offer and what it asks of you in return.

What Public Speaking Has to Offer You

The ability to communicate well in public settings will help establish your credentials as a competent, well-educated person. Learning to present yourself and your ideas effectively can help prepare you for some of the important moments in your life: times when you need to protect your interests, when your values are threatened, or when you need approval to undertake a project. The principles you will learn in this class should also make you a more astute consumer of public messages. They will help you sort through the information and misinformation that bombard us on a daily basis. Beyond these important considerations, the public speaking course also offers other personal, social, and cultural benefits. This chapter will introduce these and will help you understand the tradition and processes of public communication.

Personal Benefits

As you put together speeches on topics that you care about, you will explore your own interests and values, expand your base of knowledge, and develop your skills of creative expression. In short, you will be finding your own voice as a unique individual—a voice distinct from all others. As Roderick Hart has put the matter: “Communication is the ultimate people-making discipline. . . . To become eloquent is to activate one’s humanity, to apply the imagination, and to solve the practical problems of human living.”²

Your public speaking course should help you develop an array of basic communication skills, from managing your communication anxiety to expressing your ideas with power and conviction. These skills should help you succeed both in school and in your professional life. Each year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys hundreds of corporate recruiting specialists. According to this organization,

Employers responding to NACE’s survey named communication ability and integrity as a job seeker’s most important skills and qualities.

“Communication skills have topped the list for eight years.” NACE advises:

“Learn to speak clearly, confidently, and concisely.”³

In its *Job Outlook 2013* report, NACE confirms: “What sets two equally qualified job candidates apart can be as simple as who has the better communication skills.”⁴

Paul Baruda, an employment expert for the Monster.com jobs site, agrees that “articulating thoughts clearly and concisely will make a difference in both a job interview and subsequent job performance”:

The point is, you can be the best physicist in the world, but if you can’t tell people what you do or communicate it to your coworkers, what good is all of that knowledge? I can’t think of an occupation, short of living in a cave, where being able to say what you think cogently at some point in your life isn’t going to be important.⁵

So unless you plan to live in a cave, what you learn in this course can be vital to your future.

Social Benefits

The benefits of developing your public speaking skills also extend to your life as a responsible citizen. All of us feel compelled to “speak out” from time to time to defend our interests and values. As you speak out on topics of concern, you will be enacting the citizenship role envisioned for you by those who framed the Constitution of the United States:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. (Amendment I to the U.S. Constitution)

The political system of the United States is built on faith in open and robust public communication. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson emphasized the importance of allowing freedom of speech as basic to the health and survival of a democratic society. He reasoned that if citizens are the repositories of political power, then their understanding must be nourished by a full and free flow of information and exchange of opinions so that they can make good decisions on matters such as who should lead and which public policies should be adopted.

SPEAKER'S

notes

Personal Benefits of the Public Speaking Course

This course can

- help reveal you as a competent, well-educated person.
- help you develop basic communication skills.
- help you prepare for important communication situations.
- help you control communication anxiety.
- help you become a better communication consumer.
- help you succeed in college and career.

In your classes, you might speak for or against stronger immigration laws, government domestic surveillance policies, the rights of gay people to marry, or the staging of public rallies by “hate” groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. On campus, you might find yourself speaking out about attempts to alter your college’s affirmative admissions policy, to fire a popular but controversial professor, or to allow religious groups to stage protests and distribute literature on school grounds. In the community, you might find yourself wanting to speak at a school board meeting about a proposal to remove “controversial” books such as the Harry Potter series or *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from reading lists or the school library. Or you may wish to speak at a city council meeting concerning attempts to rezone your neighborhood for commercial development.

Public speaking classes therefore become laboratories for the democratic process.⁶ Developing, presenting, and listening to speeches should help you develop your citizenship skills. Preparation for your role as citizen is a benefit that serves not just you but also the society in which you live.