

Writing Your Speech

Step 1: Organize your thoughts

Judges will be paying close attention to how well you've organized your speech because it's so vital to audience understanding. Follow the process below to ensure your speech will make sense and flow:

Collecting ideas (mind mapping):

1. Write the topic in the center of a large sheet of paper and circle it.
2. Write as many ideas about the topic as you can in five minutes, spacing the words and phrases around the paper. (See sample, p. 11)
3. Set the sheet aside. If you think of any more ideas, add them.

Grouping ideas:

1. Using different colored markers, circle two or three main ideas.
2. Look at the other words and phrases. Use the same color markers to show they're connected to the main ideas.

Arranging ideas:

1. Write the topic in the center of a new sheet of paper and circle it.
2. Draw evenly-spaced lines from the circle and write the main ideas on them.
3. Draw lines from those main ideas and write the words and phrases that go with them from the first sheet.



Step 2: Write your speech

Now that your thoughts are organized on paper, writing your speech will be easier. As you write, keep two things in mind:

- 1) Your goal is to give your audience something meaningful to take with them: information, a new attitude, awareness of a situation, etc.
- 2) You have only a few minutes to speak. Focus on two or three main ideas and don't try to cram in too much information.

There are many ways to write a speech. In the following method, you'll notice the three parts – the introduction, the body and the conclusion – are written in mixed-up order.

First: Write the body of the speech

- Ask yourself: "If I were a member of the audience, what three things would I want to know about the main ideas?" These are the points you'll make in your speech. Get to them quickly – be brief and clear.
- Back up your points with hard facts and interesting examples. Tying in a personal experience is also good.
- Help the audience follow your speech by clearly marking each section with words and phrases like "first of all" and "secondly."
- Use short sentences and casual vocabulary. Avoid big words.
- Relate to the audience by using words like "you," "us" and "our."
- Ask a rhetorical question – one you don't expect them to answer – like, "Have you ever ... ?" Or "What would you do if ... ?"
- As you write, ask yourself:
 - Would I talk like this to someone I know?
 - Am I being clear?

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Second: Write the conclusion

Make it short and powerful. Wrap up the speech and summarize what you want the audience to remember. Your last sentence should be a call for action, an encouragement or inspiration.

Third: Write the introduction

Grab the audience’s attention by making it clear you have something important to say. Quote a famous person or tell a funny story. Offer a surprising fact or statistic. If the information is somehow related to you or someone you know, that’s all the better.

Other Tips:

- After the speech is completely written, reread it, eliminating unnecessary words. The best, most understandable speeches are simple and to the point.

- If typed, triple-space your speech. As you practice, make notes above the text. What will you emphasize? How will your voice volume change? Where will you pause? What hand gestures and body movements will you make? All these techniques will help you hold the audience’s attention.
- Write notes – key words and phrases – on 3” x 5” cards. They’ll help you memorize your speech by prompting you as you practice. Make sure you number them, in case they’re



Mind mapping sample

