

Impromptu Speaking

The Better Speaker Series



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The Better Speaker Series

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

The presentations in **The Better Speaker Series** may be presented by any club member and take between 10 to 15 minutes to present.

Conducting the Program

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

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ A PowerPoint presentation for a visual aid



In your own words

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

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

- ▶ **Study the outline in this manual carefully.** Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ **Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words.** Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively. If you are using this outline as a digital PDF, record your thoughts with the built-in notetaking functions.
- ▶ **When delivering your speech, be expressive.** Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster, including vocal variety and gestures.

Using Visual Aids Effectively

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance. In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered.

◆ V1. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

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

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
 - ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
 - ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
 - ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in an online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.
- ▶ For more information on presenting in an online or hybrid format, refer to the Manage Online Meetings elective in Level 3 of your path."

Benefits and Opportunities

The Better Speaker Series has valuable guidance for you and your club. The content will help you master core skills for speech writing and delivery through effective and easy-to-follow tips. This will benefit Toastmasters members at any level of experience or skill.

Presenting from the Better Speaker Series is required in Level 4 of all six standard paths: Dynamic Leadership, Engaging Humor, Motivational Strategies, Persuasive Influence, Presentation Mastery, and Visionary Communication. This is both a great way to support your club members and an excellent chance to practice speaking and presenting.

Impromptu Speaking

Introducing the Presenter

Tips For The Presenter: Write Your Introduction

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

- ▶ Include the purpose of **The Better Speaker Series**.
- ▶ Explain why “Impromptu Speaking” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Provide some background information about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You are the Introducer* in **A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats** for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

Tips For The Introducer

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

Outline

Introduction

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

◆ V1

Five-step Formula

It is possible to be prepared and confident even if we cannot anticipate what questions we'll be asked. Use this formula for a successful impromptu speech:

1. Listen

- ▶ A good response is dependent on an attentive attitude, and careful listening can provide part of your response. If you agree with what was said, your reply will reflect your attention by reinforcing the other person's words. If you disagree, you can tactfully respond to the original statement.
- ▶ Make an active effort to concentrate on what the other person is telling or asking you. This will help you become a more effective speaker.
- ▶ Don't interject your own ideas before the other person has finished. Instead, focus on what is being said and wait to respond. The advantages of doing this are:
 - People are more likely to respect and listen to your ideas when you listen to them.
 - You'll be able to incorporate some of what you've heard into your reply.
 - You'll improve your chances of commenting directly on what the other speaker said so you can give relevant responses.

2. Pause

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

3. Confirm

Repeating or confirming the question out loud provides you with a clearer idea of how to respond and will help ensure that you understood the question.

4. Tell

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

5. End

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

◆ V2

Select a Strategy

There are four common strategies speakers can use to formulate an organized impromptu speech or response.

- ▶ Express an opinion.
 - State an opinion, then justify it with a supporting statement.
 1. Use one such statement if answering a question.
 2. Use two or three if giving a brief speech.
 - One variation on this strategy is to offer reasons why you agree or disagree with an idea or concept.
- ▶ Address cause and effect.
 - State the situation, then discuss its causes and eventual consequences.
- ▶ Break the topic down into smaller parts and discuss each piece individually.
- ▶ Discuss the past, present, and future. Organize your answer in the style of a timeline.

◆ V3

Three Points

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

Closing

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

Evaluation Guide

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ Speech Length 10–15 minutes

Speech Title _____

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this speech is to deliver a presentation from the Toastmasters Education Series to learn and educate club members about ways to improve speaking and leadership skills and contribute to the club experience. The speaker will follow the outline while adding their own knowledge, examples, and style.

Notes for the Evaluator

The speaker will be delivering a presentation from one of the three Education Series: the Better Speaker Series, the Leadership Excellence Series, or the Successful Club Series.

About this speech:

- ▶ The speaker will present a well-organized presentation based on the topic's outline.
- ▶ The speech may be in any style the member chooses, as long as it supports the presentation topic. The speaker must successfully share the information and advice with their club.
- ▶ This presentation should not be a direct reading of the presentation outline.
- ▶ Use of visual aids should support and not distract from the presentation topic.

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Well Supported: Speech content is well-supported and sources are available if requested

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Evaluation Criteria

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

Clarity

- Developing** – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood
- Emerging** – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- Accomplished** – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- Excels** – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- Exemplary** – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood

Vocal Variety

- Developing** – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume
- Emerging** – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- Accomplished** – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- Excels** – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- Exemplary** – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection

Eye Contact

- Developing** – Makes little or no eye contact with audience
- Emerging** – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- Accomplished** – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- Excels** – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- Exemplary** – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response

Gestures

- Developing** – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures
- Emerging** – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- Accomplished** – Uses physical gestures effectively
- Excels** – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- Exemplary** – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech

Audience Awareness

- Developing** – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs
- Emerging** – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- Accomplished** – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- Excels** – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- Exemplary** – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs

Comfort Level

- Developing** – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience
- Emerging** – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- Accomplished** – Appears comfortable with the audience
- Excels** – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- Exemplary** – Appears completely self-assured with the audience

Interest

- Developing** – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed
- Emerging** – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- Accomplished** – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- Excels** – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- Exemplary** – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content

Well Supported

- Developing** – Speech content is unrelated to the topic of the speech
- Emerging** – Speech contains content that supports the topic though some content may seem disconnected
- Accomplished** – Speech topic is well-supported by content of speech
- Excels** – Speech is excellent with a topic that is well-supported by content of the speech
- Exemplary** – Delivers exemplary speech with a topic that is well-supported by content of the speech

Notes



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