



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



The Better
Speaker Series



**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**



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The Better Speaker Series

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Item 275A



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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 facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

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

CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

"Know Your Audience" addresses the importance of researching and understanding the people who will be listening to your speech so that you might best serve their needs—as well as your own. 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
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation

In Your Own Words

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

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

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

USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. 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. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

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

If 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 the 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.

BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

By giving this presentation, you will be helping your club build excellence and move toward the possibility of becoming a Distinguished club—or reaching an even greater Distinguished status.

While this is an outlined presentation, it still provides a good opportunity for you to further practice speaking and build your presentation skills.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

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 “Know Your Audience” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* in *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D) 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.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Outline

INTRODUCTION

Speakers want to share knowledge and move an audience to share their viewpoint. To do this, they must send their message in such a way that it is easy for the audience to receive and understand it. The speaker must know who the audience is and fine-tune how the message is sent to the audience in order to succeed.

VARIABLES

There will always be diversity among a group of individuals but a typical audience has several characteristics that distinguish it from other audiences. Consider the following variables when tailoring a speech to the interests of an audience:

► Age range

When a speaker knows what kinds of events the audience has experienced, they are able to use statements that are meaningful to the audience. These statements help the speaker to establish why their ideas are relevant and of interest to the audience.

► Gender ratio

Depending on the organization or situation, an audience may be primarily or exclusively composed of one sex. If this is the case, select the language, examples, and line of reasoning accordingly. Effectively delivering a message means gearing the speech to the specific needs and interests of an audience.

► Occupational and economic status

A speaker can assume that an audience comprised of persons sharing a specific occupation has a certain level of specialized knowledge. Using professional jargon with such an audience would be appropriate. Using jargon or referring to specialized knowledge that is unfamiliar to the audience can be confusing and could be perceived as arrogant.

Economic levels also help to define an audience. A speech topic that appeals to an affluent audience would be less likely to appeal to an audience of middle-class manual laborers.

Whatever the occupation or economic status of the audience, the speaker's goal is to ensure their message is perceived as significant to the audience's lives and experience.

► Educational background

The educational status of an audience can make a significant difference in a speaker's approach, wording, and focus. Avoid being perceived as patronizing by keeping the speech level just a bit higher than that of listeners but be cautious of using language that exceeds the audience's understanding.

► Political orientation

Some groups pride themselves on being open-minded, but others take firm positions. Be aware of an audience's general attitude when deciding whether the speech focuses on a topic or merely refers to it briefly.

V1

▶ **Leisure activities**

Awareness of an audience's extracurricular hobbies and activities helps speakers further understand the audience's interests and needs.

V2

KEEP THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION

Visit the venue in advance or talk to the event host to gather information about:

- ▶ Room acoustics
- ▶ Seating
- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Temperature control
- ▶ Outside noise
- ▶ Other possible distractions

When selecting the best way to hold your audience's attention, also consider:

- ▶ Time of day
- ▶ Concurrent events/activities
- ▶ Practicality of breaks for lengthy presentations

V3

WHAT DOES THE AUDIENCE WANT TO KNOW?

Discover what it is that the audience wants to know. Figure out which approaches have worked before and which have not by:

- ▶ Asking the event host what the audience already knows
- ▶ Scanning any publications specific to the audience
- ▶ Contacting local officers
- ▶ Consulting references on the Internet and in periodicals
- ▶ Talking with someone who has either spoken to the group or is an actual member

V4

SPEECH OBJECTIVES

A speaker must recognize what the audience's goals are and fashion a presentation that meets those objectives. The most common speech objectives are to:

- ▶ Inform
- ▶ Inspire
- ▶ Persuade
- ▶ Entertain

CONCLUSION

A speaker does not need not adjust their own opinions or talk only about what the audience already agrees with in order to effectively send a message. But the more a speaker knows about the people in the audience – backgrounds, interests, preferences – the easier it will be to establish the best way to deliver a specific message to a particular group.

Researching an audience in advance also will help a speaker feel knowledgeable and confident. Nervous tension will convert itself into positive energy, and instead of being disabled by fears of the unknown, a speaker will be ready to convert a room full of strangers into a captivated and speaker-friendly audience.

Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name _____

Presentation Title _____ Date _____

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



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