

THE KEYS TO UNLOCK A WINNING EXPOSITORY

by David A. Wendt

E X P O S I T O R Y

Expository. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, exposition is "the presentation of information in clear, precise form". It is sharing or giving knowledge to an audience. The key to giving a winning expository speech is focusing on the audience. What does the audience want to know? What does the audience already know? Will the audience care about the topic? These are several important questions that should be asked before the speaker puts the first word on paper.

Topic selection is the vital ingredient to a successful speech. There are millions of topics to choose from, but which will provide that needed flair for success. Try to steer away from common issues or topics. Search for the unique!

The first step is to brainstorm as many topics as possible. Several places for exploration include television talk shows; Oprah, Jerry, Sally, Geraldo, 20/20, 60 Minutes, etc. Remember if it has a name or number it will probably produce a winner! Reading newspapers and magazines can provide new and timely areas of information. There are times when a combination of television talk shows and print media can fulfill that dream for a winning informative talk.

After a list with a variety of topics has been compiled, then select five or six that seem "interesting" to you. The term "interesting" can reflect a personal liking for a topic, a timeliness, a new trend or a topic that is so far out that "they" will love it. It could also mean taking a common speech topic and adding a new twist.

Restructuring an oratory is a possible winning expository speech. The typical oratory of problem, cause, effect and solution takes an in-depth look at problems. A compact view could present a formidable presentation. Possible persuasion topics minus the solution can provide information. Various societal problems can be the foundation of an informative speech.

Now that those interesting topics have surfaced, which will have some effect on the audience. Ask yourself, "Why am I giving this speech? Will the audience care? Most importantly, will the judge care? Will the judge remember me?" When searching for topics calculate how many people are

affected by each idea. Is it a small percentage of the population or the majority?

Research will aid the final choice of a topic. In some cases, research may make the decision. Then the sifting of information and topics must stop. The decision is completed and the final product is finished.

The final decision is approaching. One major factor of that choice should be the availability of statistics and/or examples. Sources of information will provide the hard data and the needed citations. Quotations from professionals and experts enhance the validity of the topic. Documentation is a must!! The more recent dates of publishing set the timeliness. Three citations of information is a good starting point for an effective expository speech.

Now that the key is turned and the research is completed, structure your information. An attention getter in the introduction, three solid, documented main points and a conclusion are necessities to a winning speech. Then practice, practice, practice.

When concentrating on delivery, one special note must be taken into consideration. No notecards or visual aids may be used during the expository presentation. The speech should be memorized or extemporized.

Correct physical delivery is vital. The speaker must have sustained eye contact with the audience, natural gestures and movement and other polished delivery skills. It takes practice to achieve this style. Audio or video taping practice speeches will help.

You now have the keys to unlock the foundation for presenting clear, precise information. You have answered the questions. You must make the audience want to know this knowledge. You will make the judge care about your speech. Then as the final draft is written and all improvements have been made, you will present what they want to know. Information.

(David A. Wendt, now coach at Keokuk HS (IA) coached the winning expository speaker at the 1989 Colorado Nationals.)

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