

Planning Advice for Rostrum Voice of Youth Participants

Getting started. Before you do anything else...

- Think carefully about each of the offered topics. Choose the one that you feel will create the most interesting speech.
- Consider the topic you have chosen – what **approach** do you wish to take?
- Define the **purpose** of your speech – do you aim to instruct, inform, amuse, persuade, motivate ... or perhaps a combination?
- Imagine your **audience** – gender mix, age range, subject knowledge. Develop your speech to suit the audience talk at an appropriate level, and don't use jargon (keep it simple).

Now you are ready to develop your speech...

- Think about your closing comments - as you build the speech you have something to aim for.
- Use a definite structure – Have an opening, a body and a closing.
- Note that a normal speaking speed is around 120 words per minute.
- Develop an opening that is brief, gains attention, and introduces the subject. Don't open a speech with “*my subject today is...*” - be creative and interesting, the opening provides your best opportunity to grab the attention of the audience.
- Develop a closing that “tells them what you've told them” - reinforce the message - remember, those last few words are the most likely to be retained by the audience. A speech is not a book, they can't go back and re-read it.
- As a guideline, for a 6 minute speech the opening may take up to 1 minute, the body of the speech should be at least 4 minutes, and the closing may be around 1 minute. However, remember, these are only “guidelines”; it's the result that counts.
- Start to gather your thoughts about the body of the speech - collect ideas, write them down - slowly work on the ideas until the speech begins to take shape. The following techniques may be helpful, but there are obviously many more:
 - Tell a story from your own personal experience - this is your area of subject expertise and it's easier to remember!
 - Make lists about the subject under the headings: *what, when, how, where, who, and why*.
 - Consider a time sequence: *past, present, future*.
 - Consider a geographical approach: *local, town or city, state, national, international*.
 - Look at the subject from different perspectives: *social, political, economic*.
 - Discuss and present the advantages and disadvantages (a *Yes/No case*).
 - Use the subtraction approach, “*can you imagine a world without ...*” this method also combines well with the time sequence approach.
- Always **write your speech as you will speak it** - there is a big difference between spoken and written words - aim for a “conversational” style.
- Build a logical flow in your speech - maintain the thread of the subject throughout the delivery - where appropriate, link the opening and closing to reinforce the message.
- Don't build too much into a speech – for example, a speech of 6 minutes only requires three or four “milestones” in the body of the speech - you will **not** make a **strong case** if you try to cover too much.

Now start to practise and “polish” the speech...

- A speech is usually better if your opening words can address the subject and arouse interest. In the majority of cases in Rostrum it is not expected that the opening words address the Chairperson and audience. If you wish to extend courtesy to those present, one of the following acceptable modes of

address could be used soon after your opening: - Mister/Madam Chairperson, Chair, Chairman; Ladies and Gentlemen.

- Get the opening and closing right - write them out, but write as you speak – then if you can, remember them - using notes is perfectly acceptable, try to avoid referring to notes for the opening and closing of your speech.
- If using notes then small pieces cardboard (about business card size) are recommended, as they are small enough to fit out of the way in a pocket or in the palm of your hand while making gestures.
- Work through the body of the speech like a table of contents (memorise the table of contents - mentally walk through the headings using them as memory "milestones" – this will help you reduce your need to refer to notes).
- Use a tape recorder (or an understanding friend) - and practise, practise, then practise again - a good speech should be "*well rehearsed spontaneity*" - don't memorise the body of the speech - this section should have the same content but slightly different delivery each time you speak.
- Use pauses, plan for them - don't be afraid of silence, **silence is powerful**. It allows time for ideas to sink in.
- Change your pace and tone and volume to suit the subject matter at the time.
- Arrange your timing to finish a little ahead of time - in front of an audience speeches usually take longer than when rehearsed. In this competition you are allowed to be either 30 seconds under or over time without penalty.

When you deliver the speech...

- Take a few deep breaths and relax your shoulders before you start.
- Give yourself some positive "self-talk" before you start – use visualisation (see yourself delivering the speech, hear the applause, feel the satisfaction)
- Don't walk up to the front and start talking as you are turning around.
- Do take your time - walk to the front, turn, face the audience, scan for eye contact, **pause until you have their attention** - then start your speech. You only have one chance to make a first impression!
- Use silence for effect - pause and allow time for ideas to sink in, strange though it may seem, silence is a powerful tool in communication.
- Don't apologise – "*I'm not very experienced at public speaking...*" Never do this!!!
- Don't hang on to lecterns, chairs, etc. You really don't need them - let the audience see you, be expressive, **gesture as if you were speaking to one person only**.
- Do smile (unless the subject is a very serious one).
- Don't worry if you lose track of where you are - pause, take a deep breath, check your notes, and push on - a few seconds of silence in front of an audience may seem like an eternity to you - just remember, they don't know whether or not the pause was planned.
- Do remember that audiences are generally understanding and tolerant - they want you to do well.
- Do deliver a memorable closing. The last few words may be all they remember, make them effective. Make them lasting.
- Don't thank your audience at the end of your speech - you've done the work - they should thank you with their applause.

And when it's all over...

- Don't expect things to go exactly as planned (a good speech needs some spontaneity).
- Don't be harsh on yourself – when you face your fears and stand up before an audience it's a growing experience - you are courageous - be proud of yourself.
- Remember, **there are always 3 speeches...**
 1. The one you planned to deliver,
 2. The one you delivered, and maybe,
 3. The one you wish you had delivered.But it is not uncommon for 2 (above) to be better than 1.