



# WAIKIKI TOASTMASTERS

## Seven Steps For Organizing Your Speech

Derived from Robert Anderson's *"Speaking to Groups, Eyeball to Eyeball"*

- Step 1** **Choose your topic** and determine the purpose of your speech (inform, persuade, or entertain.)
  - a. Based on your knowledge, background, experience.
  - b. Researched extensively.
  - c. Three Es: enthusiastic about, eager to share, or earned the right (from Dale Carnegie).
  
- Step 2** **Brainstorm your topic.** Start with a blank paper and list through brainstorming anything and everything you know about your topic. List as many topics as possible. Do not edit or cut out anything during this step.
  
- Step 3** **Group your items.** Review your list and put related items into groups. You may form five or six groups. This will become the body of your speech. If your topic was "tropical fish," you would probably have groups of items related to types of food, fish, saltwater and freshwater, equipment, etc.
  
- Step 4** **Refine and label your groups.** Now you add, delete, and refine the items in your groups. You may want to add in a topic you didn't think of previously, or decide not to include an item based on other factors, i.e., time limitations, audience, etc. Label your groups. These labels will serve as topic headings in the body of your speech. Lastly, put them in order so your speech will have a logical flow.
  
- Step 5** **Determine your closing.** Look at how you want to finish. What do you want your audience to remember? Do you want to finish on an up-beat tone? Inspire the group to action? Leave out lead-ins like, "in closing" or "in summary." Guideline is 10% of your total speech time should be allotted to the closing.

Different types are:

- a. *Summarize* – Provide a summary of your main points. Normally used for an information type talk. “Over the last few minutes, we heard three things you can do to build a tsunami kit.”
- b. *Story* – Audiences like stories. It needs to relate to the point you want to make. Be as descriptive as possible (paint the picture) involving as many of the senses as possible. Be aware of how much time you have left.
- c. *Quote* – Write it down on a 3x5 card if it’s lengthy. If you’re confident you can deliver it well, memorize it.
- d. *Recommended action* – Such as, “Get out and vote, we all have a stake in our future!”
- e. *Question* – Pose a question to the audience, for example, “Isn’t protecting our environment today protecting all of mankind for the future?”

**Step 7 Determine your opening.** Choose the best fit depending on the purpose of your speech. In the opening, let us know what the topic is (we don’t want to guess), establish your credibility (unless the TMOE does this), and give us a preview of the body. You need to get our attention in the first 15 seconds and generate interest to want to listen to the rest of your speech.

- a. *Story* – Similar to the closing; you need to be descriptive, paint the picture for the audience. The point of the story must relate to the speech. Keep it under two minutes or 10% of the total speech time. Don’t waste precious time explaining or providing background...start right in the action. Use names...”my brother Bob”, “my friend Cassandra”, etc.
- b. *Statistics* – Needs to be recent; cite the source. “The FBI reported for 20\_\_” the Honda Civic was the most reported stolen car in the US”
- c. *Definition* – Write it down on a small card. Since you’re at the opening, being able to read it will help your confidence. For example, “Webster defines courage as the ability to act under stress.”
- d. *Purpose* – Used more often with technical or formal briefs. “The purpose of my presentation will be to explain how Project X will impact the future of our company.”
- e. *Agenda* – Cover what you’ll be speaking about. This gives the audience a preview of what to expect. Make sure you cover what you stated. “Tonight, we’re going to learn about how to prepare for natural disasters. First we’ll learn...”
- f. *Question* – Use a thought provoking question or startling statement. Be sure to pause after the question, this will give the audience time to consider it. “Can we freeze the human body and revive it later?” “Does life exist on other planets?” “Can humans live to 150 yrs?”

**Step 7 Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse.** There is no short cut to learning your speech. In the beginning, write out your entire speech. As you rehearse and refine, get it down to an outline on a 5x7 index card. Place it on the lectern so you can glance at it. Rehearsing is necessary to get your timing down.

You outline should look like this:

OPENING

Point 1 – (key words)

Point 2 –

Point 3 –

Point 4 –

CLOSING:

**Other Tips** After you've put together your speech, start adding the **refinements**:

- Supporting materials, such as visual aids, examples, etc. They need to support the main points. Use photos, graphs, objects, whenever you can. Handle it only when talking about it and continue to look at the audience... not the visual aid. Avoid handing it out...the audience will take their attention off of you.
- Insert transitions between the main points. "I've covered what parrots eat and how they breed, next I'll cover some of their typical health issues."
- Be prepared to go straight to your closing when you see the yellow light. You may have to cover a point briefly to leave enough time for your closing.

*Provided by Richard A. Hernandez, DTM*