


From Topic to Speech:
A Workshop on Crafting Your Next Speech



District 96
Public Speaking Curriculum

Module 2
Openings and Closings

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Come with a Topic, Leave with a Speech
Who came with a topic?

MODULE 2 – Openings and Closings



Instructor's Notes:

The opening of a speech should capture the audience's interest quickly, the closing should wrap it up with a message. A good closing will often refer back to the opening

Scott's Notes

I've always heard that an audience will remember the first thing you tell them and the last thing you make them feel. Great speeches bookend the main body with a bold opening and an inspiring closing that clearly relate to each other and your....purpose

Opening and Closing

This module will help you:

- Describe impactful speech openings and closings
- Write 1-2 possible openings and closings for your speech



Are these speech openings impactful?

Hi, I'm Scott and
today I'm here to
talk to you about...

Madam Toastmaster,
fellow Toastmasters
and welcome guests

I'm really sorry...
I just threw this speech
together last night

Can you hear
me okay at the
back there?

Instructor's Notes:

Comment on why these are bad openings...

Hi, I'm Scott and...the introducer should have done this. If not, do it AFTER you get the audience's attention

Madam Toastmaster...<thank you for inviting me> IT IS important to acknowledge the audience, but again, do this after you get their attention

I'm really sorry...<I'm not worthy to breath the oxygen in this room> you're telling the audience this is going to be crappy, and

Can you hear me...<blacken the screen, fidget with the remote>...looking unprepared reduces credibility

the audience should start checking their email

Answer: the first two are NOT memorable and the last two are memorable for all the wrong reasons

Scott's story:

I wrote a lot of 10-12 minute speeches when I started at Toastmasters. Writing a single sentence purpose is how I was able to pare them down to 7 minutes, anything that did not directly support the purpose might be an idea for a future speech. But it didn't belong in this one.

Are these speech openings impactful?

Hi, I'm Scott and
today I'm here to
talk to you about...

X

Madam Toastmaster,
fellow Toastmasters
and welcome guests

X

I'm really sorry...
I just threw this speech
together last night

X

Can you hear
me okay at the
back there?

X

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Capture the audience's attention

- Do it immediately
- Show confidence—know it cold
- Clearly link it to your purpose
- Combine words, voice, actions, images or props
- Bring out who you are (be vulnerable)

Instructor's Notes:

Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov found that people start making a first impression of someone within 1/10th of a second of meeting them. Within 7 seconds people have a solid sense that sticks with them. Get their attention and make an impression as soon as you can.

Props: 2015 World Champion Mohammed Qatani pulls out a cigarette and almost lights it. 2016 World Champion Darren Tay Jen Wie puts a pair of underwear on over top of his pants

Scott's story:

My biggest learning from Toastmasters is that speaking is about connecting and interacting with people, not just presenting facts. If you don't build and maintain a connection, they won't remember the facts.

Invite engagement with your opening

- Recite a famous or witty quote
- Open with a question
- Make a bold statement (maybe refer to an authority)
- Invite the audience to imagine
- Tell a compelling (YOUR) story

...and humour is always effective

Instructor's Notes:

Recite a quotation...John Quincy Adams said "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

Questions invite the audience to answer in their head, you can even poll them to raise their hands. Who here has experienced bullying in their lifetime? Hint: ask poll questions that engage everyone

Make a bold statement..."I would say we're in a climate crisis, action needs to be taken". So says outgoing Bank of England Governor Mark Carney.

Invite the audience to imagine a past or future circumstance...imagine a world where we all said exactly what was on our minds, unfiltered, all the time...Is anyone in a long-term relationship? There would be no long-term relationships.

Tell a compelling story, bonus points if it's your story. It has to be short and to the point, and feel free to leave them hanging to keep them engaged

Activity: Let's see some speech openings

Purpose	On your Module 2 worksheet, record thoughts on the video speech openings and the techniques used. Then consider how you could create a strong opening for your speech.
Process	<p>In question 2.1, consider the following questions for the openings in the videos:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What technique(s) did the speaker use?2. Were you engaged? What was the impact? What made it effective? <p>Turning to your speech, in question 2.2, write a couple of ideas that might make your speech opening effective?</p>
Product	You will have a couple of ideas to open your speech.
Post-activity debrief	Each group will present the techniques used in the sample speech opening and what was effective.

Instructor's Notes

Show a few of the example videos and ask “What techniques did you see? Were you engaged? What was the impact?” Most of the videos use a number of different techniques

Are these speech closings memorable?

The red light is on so
I'll stop here before I
get clapped off

Thanks for
listening to my
speech today

That's all I can
think of to say on
the topic today

Does anyone
have any
questions?

Instructor's Notes:

Comment on why these are bad openings...

Happily ever after...too typical, and it's not memorable (unless your speech is about fairy tales and you're injecting some humour)

Red is on...make sure you own the time and wrap up on your schedule (before being clapped off)

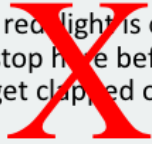
Thanks for listening...if you end with a bold, memorable statement, they'll thank you!

That's all I can think of...Once you say everything you have to say, wrap up nicely and end

Any questions...if you take questions, politely stop taking them and leave yourself 30-60 seconds to you end with your closing message

Are these speech closings memorable?

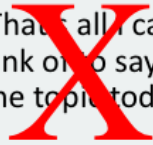
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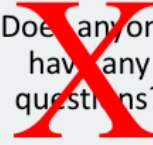
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Close with a memorable message

- Relate directly to your purpose, restate it
- Leave the audience with an emotion
- Pause, let people absorb it
- Consider a direct call to action (persuasive speeches)
- Recap key points (informative speeches)

...most impactful opening techniques work here, too

Instructor's Notes:

Restate—along with the opening, this is the most important parts of the speech, make it count. Restate your purpose in the context of what you have now shared

Emotion—”People will remember the first thing you say and the last thing you make them feel”, leave them with a memorable feeling

Pause—give people a few seconds of quiet to linger in the feeling before you thank the chair and leave the stage

Call to action—it’s not a “call to consider maybe adding it to your list of things to think about next week”. It’s a call to action. Be direct, make it immediate, and give them a simple first step if the overall call is larger and longer term. Make it easy, and emphasize the benefits TO THE AUDIENCE

Recap—reiterate key points, don’t add any new ones, it’s just a reminder to put it all together. And reiterate your purpose

Look at the opening techniques and see which ones work for closings, too

Treat the opening and closing as a pair

If you open with...	Consider closing with...

Instructor's Notes:

The opening and closing are not separate, emphasize that they should work together. If you call back your opening, the audience is prepared and sees the package as complete. There are lots of ways to refer back, it helps to be explicit (eg. Using the same language)

Activity: Consider your speech closing

Purpose	On your Module 2 worksheet, consider the message you want your audience to take away. Consider your speech opening ideas and look for a nice pairing to close with. Review the techniques you learned, but don't restrict yourself.
Process	In questions 2.3 and 2.4, focus on your speech closing: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Remind yourself what message you would like the audience to take away,2. Write some ideas for effective closings, based on your opening.
Product	Each participant will have ideas for a speech closing that relates to their purpose and pairs with their opening
Post-activity debrief	One person from each group will share their speech opening and closing with the room.

Opening and Closing

Reflect on how *you* can...

- Describe impactful speech openings and closings
- Write 1-2 possible openings and closings for your speech

...please share one takeaway in the chat



Instructor's Notes:

Ask the participants for a couple of ideas they took away.

What questions are you sitting on?



Give a pitch to part 2: Structuring your speech and Writing effectively

