

## Some Points to Remember when Writing and Giving a Speech

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I think the first thing we must remember when giving a speech is that a speech is not a recitation — nor is it an essay — and as such it is not necessary that it be memorised entirely, but neither should it be read entirely. When we are giving a speech, whether it is in order to persuade, inform, amuse people — or for some other reason — one of the most important things is communication with the audience. We must ‘win’ our audience, or our words will fall on deaf, or at least, on unreceptive ears.

To establish and maintain this communication throughout the speech we must use our faces to show expression — and also employ pause, gesture, and changes in stress, pitch and intonation. Experiment with these a little when practising your speech — you may find that a pause before or after making an important point is more effective even than stress. Varied use of all these make for interesting listening.

We *must* look at the audience when speaking — not just in front or over their heads — but at them and talk *to* them.

Therefore, we must have our notes organised in such a way that we don’t have to keep looking down at them — and thus lose contact with our audience. If when making notes to use while giving your speech you confine them to the main points — and write them upon a small card or cards, that you can hold in the palm of your hand — and bring your hand up and glance at them when necessary.

In this way you don't "break contact" with your audience, or muffle your voice as you do when looking down and reading – neither is the audience's attention distracted by flapping sheets of paper.

When planning and writing your speech it is useful to think of it in 3 parts – introduction, the main contents, and the conclusion.

The introduction is very important – for it is there that we must catch the audience's attention. We can do this in many ways – for example by using a quotation, by telling of some amusing incident, or by asking a question.

We must then develop the speech along logical lines – remembering always that this is going to be spoken.

Then we come to the conclusion. It is very disappointing and something of an anticlimax to be listening to a speech – when suddenly it comes to an abrupt end and we are told "that's all"! We want the audience to remember our speech, and so we must conclude by "drawing the ends together" – that is to say, in a few words, try to sum up the main points – and then give the audience something to "take away" with them – perhaps something to think about and consider (again by asking them a question – or by offering them a suggestion, or opinion) – or something amusing to send them on their way smiling.