



Questions to Ask about Speech Content

Questions to ask about the audience of the speech

Is your audience just your classmates, or are you addressing a wider audience?

What can you tell me about the demographics of your audience?

- race
- ethnicity
- religious beliefs
- level of education
- socio-economic status
- gender

How much is your audience likely to know about your topic?

What techniques have you used to keep your audience interested in your message?

(Persuasive essays only) Will your audience...

- mostly agree with you? (consider deductive organization—thesis first, supporting points afterwards)
- feel neutral?
- disagree with you? (consider inductive organization—explain to them how you arrived at your belief without actually stating it until near the end)

Questions to ask about the purpose of the speech

The topic is one that is original and thought-provoking.

What do you want people to do or think or how do you want people to change after hearing your speech?

Does your purpose fit with your intended audience? For example, if you're speaking to persuade your audience to recycle and 99% of them already recycle, what's your point?

Questions to ask about the introduction of the speech

Is there a hook? Will the lead really get the audience's attention?

What would you say is the controlling idea? What is your overall message?

Have you previewed your main points?

Have you established why you're qualified to speak on this subject?

Questions to ask about the body of the speech

What are the main points that support your thesis?

Do the main points present original ideas that listeners will find compelling? Or is it pretty much what everyone has heard before?

Is there any supporting material that might be irrelevant to one of the main points?

Are there any places where you just added filler because you were concerned the speech might not be long enough?

Have you given adequate support for each main point? Are there any points that you don't spend as much time on?

Are there places where the listener might wonder, "How so?" or "So what?"

Are there spots where you had trouble explaining yourself? Will the reader "get" what you're trying to say in those places?

In what ways have you tried to make ideas flow one into the next? Have you taken the time to review the main point you just covered and previewed the main point you're about to cover?

Have you incorporated outside source material to honestly support your ideas or just dropped it in because x number of quotes were required?

Are the outside sources you used unbiased? Can your audience call your sources into question?

Have you explained facts and statistics in ways that will be meaningful to your listeners? For instance, if you quote the statistic that one in four women will be a victim of sexual assault in their lifetime, how many women in the audience does that mean?

Are you sure you have given credit to your sources where you needed to?

Have you given proper credit? That is, have you given the name of each source you're quoted or paraphrased?

Have your ideas become obscured by too much opinion from other sources?

Questions to ask about the conclusion of the speech

Have you reviewed your thesis and main points in your conclusion?

Have you brought in any new ideas that might have been better discussed in the body?

Do you leave your audience with a clincher? A quote, a call to action, or a thought that they can take away with them from the speech?

Questions to ask about time

Are you short on the time limit? Where can you expand your ideas more?