

ORAL PRESENTATIONS & SPEECH WRITING

Oral presentations and **speeches** differ from traditional academic writings through their *tone* and *techniques*. However, much like academic papers, speeches must still contain an *opening*, a *thesis*, *several main points*, and a *closing*. With speech writing, you must consider the way that the speech will sound and how you will engage your audience.

Aristotle initially defined *ethos* as the speech acts that reveal a rhetor's credibility, demonstrating wisdom, virtue, and pure intent (Griffin et al., 2015, pp. 286-287).

PLANNING & STRUCTURING YOUR SPEECH

1. **Determine the type of speech** – Do you plan to inform, persuade, or inspire your audience? Does your speech play a role in a cultural or religious ceremony? You will gain a stronger sense of direction when you understand the function of your speech.
2. **Consider the audience** – Note the number of people in your audience, their distinguishing characteristics, and whether your audience will consist primarily of children, teens, or adults. As you formulate your speech, ask yourself, “What words, examples, and tone will resonate the most with this audience?”
3. **Consider the setting** – Does the location have any social, historical, or cultural significance? As you develop your speech, ask yourself, “What events happened here? How can I connect those past events to present occurrences?”
4. **Establish your thesis** – Every speech should have a central message or claim that the speaker communicates. Ask yourself, “What main idea do I want to communicate? What position do I want to promote to my audience?”
5. **Consider your appeals** – Every speech should include a rational appeal, an emotional appeal, and an ethical appeal. As you craft your speech, ask yourself, “How can I spark critical thinking or create an emotional connection?”
6. **Develop your opening** – Your opening must engage your audience, introduce your topic, and foreshadow the closing of your speech. You can begin your speech using a question, quote, statistic, story, or thought-provoking sentence.
7. **Develop your main points** – Sometimes, your appeals can become your main points. However, each point should still have an element of emotion, ethics, and rationality as well as support and advance the message of your speech. Each main point should build on the previous point emotionally and/or rationally, priming the audience for your closing.
8. **Develop your closing** – Reiterate your main points and explain how they support your message. As you conclude, subtly refer back to your opening statement.

APPLYING SPEECH WRITING PRINCIPLES

1. **Consider the speech:** Inspirational Speech on Calling
2. **Consider the audience:** Incoming Freshmen
3. **Consider the setting:** Regent University Chapel, Freshman Orientation
4. **Establish your thesis:** As a college student, you must seek out God's calling for your life.
5. **Consider your appeals:**
 - a. *Rational* – A student with a clear calling will establish more thorough goals and plans
 - b. *Emotional* – A calling allows students to address the issues that empower them to act
 - c. *Ethical Appeal* – Each Christian must accept the calling that God has placed upon his or her life
6. **Develop your opening:**
 - a. **Open with a question to directly engage the audience**
Ex: What issue empowers you to act? Where do you want to affect change?
 - b. **Tailor the message for the different majors within the audience**
Ex: Is it education? Ministry? Criminal justice?
 - c. ***Use surroundings and imagery to immerse audience within the subject***
Ex: Today, you stand *where many college freshmen have stood*—many teachers, pastors, lawyers—many leaders who trained to become who they are today. They too sat here, *facing these same stained-glass images of our savior, Jesus Christ*. Here, they discovered how He would use them to change this world.
7. **Develop your main points:**
 - a. Each Christian must accept the calling that God has placed upon his or her life
 - i. Story or Example: The speaker could recount his or her personal experience of discovering calling as a college Freshman.
 - b. A student with a clear calling will establish more thorough goals and plans
 - i. Story or Example: The speaker might use the metaphor that without our callings, we cannot see our paths clearly or a video from a popular movie or YouTube video to illustrate this fact.
 - c. A calling allows students to address the issues that empower them to act
 - i. Story or example: The speaker could refer to heartbreaking world events and could stress that the *students can become leaders and impact these areas. This imagery will cast the students as the heroes of the speech's narrative.*

8. **Develop your closing:**

a. **Reiterate the main points and message**

Ex: As a Regent of the Lord, you must pursue your calling to **fulfill your role in God's design**, to **order your steps**, and to **advocate for the causes you care about**.

b. **Repeat elements of the opening to tie the beginning to the end**

Ex: So I ask you today, **What issue empowers you to act? Where do you want to affect change?** Be it **education, ministry, or criminal justice**—the Lord has given you that desire for a purpose. As a college freshman, consider this moment your first step on your path to changing the world.

RHETORICAL TACTICS

1. **Audience Involvement** – Remember that, as the speaker, you control the situation. You can prompt your audience to perform a set of actions, ask for a volunteer, or call on members of the audience. Incorporate this tactic into your opening to engage your audience or use it to illustrate your main points.
2. **Speaker Presence** – In addition to your words, you must also engage your audience with your physical presence. As you rehearse your speech, note the phrases and sections that would pair best with gestures, pauses, and vocal inflections. Ask yourself, “Which gestures would best emphasize this statement? Would a pause heighten the emotional impact of this statement? What tone of voice should accompany each phrase?”
3. **Repetition** – Repetition can enhance the syntax and memorability of your speech.
 - a. For stylistic excellence, rephrase the first sentence of your speech within the last sentence of your speech. This will recontextualize your message and tie your speech together.
 - b. To emphasize a key point, you can begin several sentences with the same words.
 - c. For memorability, you should repeat a shortened version of your main points after discussing each point. This will help your audience understand how your points fit together.
4. **Imagery** – Visual, physical, and narrative imagery engage the listener and bolster your speech's emotional impact.
 - a. **Visual Imagery** – Describe places, events, people, things, and symbols in vivid detail. Think of the colors, shapes, and textures associated with these things. With your words, try to paint a vivid image for your audience.

- b. Physical Imagery – Contextualize your physical location by describing events that transpired there or by explaining the significance of your current event. Point out the elements of your location that emphasize this fact.
- c. Narrative Imagery – Describe people, places, and things like characters in a story. Ask yourself, “What story or stories do I want my speech to tell? What role do I want my audience to play in my story? What role should I play in the story?” Additionally, you should consider how you will use visual and physical imagery in crafting your narrative.

PRACTICE NOW