

SPECIAL OCCASION SPEECH GUIDE

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HOW TO WRITE A SPECIAL OCCASION SPEECH

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What does the occasion require?
2. What does the audience expect?
3. What tone or feeling should this topic convey? Is it formal or informal?

Guidelines to follow:

1. Focus on what is important.
2. Keep it simple, direct and clear!
3. Support what you say with specifics ... (evidence)
 - Definition
 - Illustration
 - Example
 - Statistic
 - Analogy
 - Quote/Testimony
 - Restatement
4. Pay attention to structure
 - Opening – capture audience, state purpose and preview points
 - Body – order of main pts (bang*bing*boom) using evidence and use transitions
 - Conclusion – restate and relate to capture with final punch, tag line or asking to take action
5. Pay attention to choice of words that it is appropriate for the occasion.

A thought or two about using HUMOR

1. When using humor, always make sure it ...
 - Relates to the subject
 - Is in good taste
2. To evoke laughter, try to use the following:
 - Exaggeration (tall tale of a story)
 - Surprise turns (story leads to something unexpected)
 - Irony (imply the opposite of what is said)
 - Puns (words with double meanings)

- Personal jokes (tell a joke on yourself)

Inspirational

Also, "Reinforce." One speaks to the converted. The pre-game pep talk is a form of this speech. Party Nomination speeches also have characteristics of inspiration. Emotional appeals are appropriate—no proof is necessary—because of audiences agreement. You are "preaching to the converted," or the congregation. What you want to make sure to do is provide "reasons" or links for the audience to grasp. That is, tell them why this event should be important to them and about what they should to be excited. Using personal experience here is often quite useful. Keep your point simple; be sure to make your point clear; and, identify specific behaviors the audience can engage in.

Commemoration OR Celebration

Commemoration deals with past events, e.g., patriotic and historical occasions and celebrations of past events—cf. the speeches on Martin Luther King, Washington, or Susan B. Anthony's birthdays. Celebrations are often more focused on current events: graduations, celebrations of "specialness," bicentennials, sesquicentennials, individual or group accomplishments, etc. Be sure to have a coherent point. Narrative, personal and family experiences, and the retelling of important stories are strategies that are often employed here.

Nomination

Persuasive and enthusiastic. Speech to actuate. Like a speech of tribute. Business-like, energetic, and your goal is to stress the qualifications of the person involved. Begin with statement of intent—"to rise to place a name in nomination"; state the requirements needed for the job; name the candidate and state the person's qualifications for the position—your job is to show why the nominee is an excellent choice; finally urge the audience to endorse the candidate as you formally place their name in nomination. Alternatively, you might start with the person's name if they are already well known and understood to be a potential candidate.

1. Stress dominant traits.
2. Mention only outstanding achievements.
3. Give special emphasis to the skills of the person.
4. Narration and anecdote is appropriate here, as are metaphors.
5. Try to "whip up the crowd"—especially supporters.

Goodwill

Create or strengthen favorable attitudes: Establish Ethos. Goodwill speeches are based around creation/cultivation of modesty, tolerance, and good humor. Sometimes your goal will be to change uninformed beliefs and hostile attitudes. You must know and represent the facts clearly and show a tolerant, patient, attitude. Do not deride or attack opposing views or competitors but instead be good-natured and good-humored. Keep in mind three things:

1. Present interesting and novel information and facts about your subject;
2. Show a relationship between the subject and the lives of your audience;
3. Offer a definite service or information to the audience. Humility is often the key here. Do not so much attack oppositional views as offer to help the audience understand yours better. Introduction (of self) speeches where a speaker identifies/explains his/her services are examples of this speech.

Tribute

To create in those who hear it a sense of appreciation for the traits or accomplishments of the particular person or group. If you make the audience realize their essential worth you have succeeded, however, you should go beyond this; by honoring the person, you may arouse deeper devotion to the cause or vales the person or group represented. The main elements to writing a successful and effective Tribute speech are to convey a sense of admiration and respect for the subject :

1. Mention only outstanding achievements
2. Give special emphasis to the influence of the group/person.
3. Knowledge of the subject - Establish credibility by demonstrating knowledge of the subject and conveying information and reasons as to why your subject is praiseworthy
4. Accomplishments of the subject - Make it clear what the subject has accomplished and the difference that the subject has made to others
5. Key Points - Repeat all the Key points and build interest by conveying the tribute with enthusiasm and including unusual facts, quotes or anecdotes about the subject

Conveying admiration and respect - Your objective is to ensure that at the end of your Tribute speech that your audience believes that the subject is praiseworthy

Introduction

Make the audience receptive for the speaker and want to hear him/her: Talk with the speaker, perhaps consult their resume or vitae. The speech of introduction is intended to highlight the accomplishments, credentials, activities, and characteristics of the individual to speak. There are several conventions to be observed when conducting an effective speech of introduction. Do them well and the audience will be excited and feel rewarded to hear the speaker; do them poorly and the audience will want you to shut up.

1. Make the audience want to hear the speaker.
 - You might relate an anecdote or (short) story, arouse curiosity, etc.
 - Make an effort to get the audience to like/respect the person—use information that the audience would find interesting, significant, or appealing.
2. Cover the aspects of the speakers background that the audience would find pertinent: education, special honors, work, etc. (This information can be gained by interviewing the speaker or getting an information sheet from them).
3. Reveal the title or topic of the speech and make a connection between the speech and the audience—do not talk about the topic yourself.
4. *Never* talk about yourself or your own ideas/theories on the subject. Although, you might relate some anecdote about how the person to speak was especially helpful, etc.
5. Neither praise too highly, nor belittle or insult the speaker.
6. The more famous the speaker the less you need to say.
7. Some humor is okay, if it is in keeping with the occasion and tasteful.
8. Be brief—Get up, Speak up, Shut up.

Farewell

When someone is bidding farewell to others they often comment on the situation under which they are leaving—it may be bitter as in Nixon's case, or fond as when a respected school teacher or colleague retires. Farewell speeches are given by both the retiree, and by those who are remaining behind. When expressing gratitude for another, note the experiences, kindness, support, helpfulness, opportunities, consideration, and warmth the individual extended.

1. Honor them—create a desire for the audience to emulate him/her.
2. Do not try to tell everything about the person—pick out the dominant personal traits, outstanding achievements, and/or influence on others. Keep your lists short but keen.
3. Although you may express regret at their departure, be positive about the future—tell where they are going...you will miss them, but they go on to greater/better things.
4. Do not make the audience overly depressed.
5. Sometimes a gift is connected with the speech (the cliché gold watch). Present it at the end of the speech.

When you are bidding farewell, you should also note the experiences, kindness, support, helpfulness, opportunities, consideration, and warmth your colleagues extended. Same principles as above apply here. Avoid the temptation to "really say what you think" about those who have wronged you, impeded your progress/success, or were downright mean. Such speeches often follow people and lead to regret for giving them.

Dedication

Dedication speeches are given for the person or people who were instrumental in the construction, fundraising, or placement of buildings, objects, monuments, artworks, ships, (or any monumental vessel) and places (parks, etc.).

1. State the purpose of the occasion or the meaning to the group or organization—yes, they know this but you do it anyway for any guests or media who might be in attendance.
2. Give brief, pertinent facts—the history of a building, object, or the persons involved with it—life facts about the person for a statue, etc.
3. Express thanks for any person particularly instrumental in building, creating, and/or fund raising.
4. What inspiration for the future can the assembled group (and those not assembled) draw from the occasion/event?
5. Narration/anecdote is appropriate here, as are brief metaphorical stories or aphorisms.
6. Eloquence, originality, and profundity are the key here. Do not rely on stereotypes, do not use puns, avoid dead metaphors, and try to say something lasting and something that will sound good on the 5:00 news.

Eulogy OR/ Memorial

Eulogies are usually given for a person soon after their death at a funeral service; memorials are for large groups and are often held well after an individual(s) death.

1. The general purpose is to pay honor or tribute to the deceased. Never forget, however, that you are giving the speech for the living and not the dead.
2. Stress the dominant traits, outstanding achievements, and/or the influence the person had on events and people.
3. A biographical account of the person's life (birth to death) is often part of the eulogy.
4. Create a sense of appreciation for the person. And hold their life up as one worthy of emulation... Unless you think that they were a rotten so-and-so in which case you probably shouldn't be speaking about them.
5. Highlight using quotations, stories, and examples.
6. The goals of a eulogy are to console the audience as well as to praise the deceased.
7. The eulogy is usually short, 2–6 minutes, and is usually followed by a sermon.
8. Religious messages are also combined with the eulogy.

WAYS TO WRITE A EULOGY:

- Chronological or Life History – this type of eulogy presentation talks about the person's life, awards and achievements.
- Shared Memories – these are your personal recollections.
- Tribute – this form is usually used in obituaries in the newspaper. This type of eulogy focuses on the achievements and accomplishments of the person you lost.
- Legacy – this type of eulogy allows you to focus on the achievements or projects that person is leaving behind; it could be his family, his profession or a project that he has undertaken.
- Using Main Points – this is the most common way of making not just a eulogy, but any kind of speeches. You choose major points about the person's life and use this to highlight your thoughts. Summarize the points you used in the entirety of your speech upon the conclusion of your eulogy.

Graduation

1. Thank teachers and your parents or other family members for their support, encouragement, help, aid or personal assistance during your years of studying.
2. Praise accomplishments and achievements of the class.
3. Reflect upon the past years, what has changed and is interesting enough to share with all?
4. Mention funny and exciting events, you can opt for funny oneliners or even small innocent jokes, poems or quotations from famous people if you like.
5. Motivate your fellow students and teachers and professors to look to the future.
6. Give advice, but avoid boring and totally not surprising cliches.
7. Entertain by telling humorous anecdotes and vivid stories. Offer an account of an interesting or humorous incident.
8. Express the feelings of the class. But do not go over the top.
9. Say farewell to all attendees. This acknowledgment at parting is the warming-up for the next and final step.
10. Wish the graduates of your class all the best and thank them for listening.

Entertainment

Usually brief 3–5 minutes. The speech to entertain requires more imagination, creativity, discretion, versatility, and judgment than perhaps any other type of speech. The purpose of the speech to entertain. Enjoyment is the desired response from the audience in a speech to entertain. Its function is to contribute favorably to the climate of fellowship among the listeners.

1. Carefully select an interesting, timely, and appropriate topic. Having something familiar in the talk that the audience can relate to will enhance listener interest. Having a novel or surprise feature in the talk will enhance attention.
2. Build your speech around a central theme, moral, or one-point idea.
3. Support your main point or central theme with colorful stories, narrative and examples.
4. Be imaginative and creative when delivering your talk. Few speeches demand more imagination and creativity than the speech to entertain.
5. Be genial and goodnatured when delivering your talk—irony is acceptable but not bitterness.
6. Be optimistic and modest when speaking and create an appropriate mood for your listeners.
7. Use plenty of humor.
8. Humor is the key ingredient in speeches to entertain. This can be accomplished through satire, irony, banter, ridicule, and wit. Some of the recognized constituents of humor are:
 - Exaggeration: the process of taking an idea or statement beyond the limits of reality.
 - Incongruity: the process of provoking an unexpected response from one's speech material.
 - Anticlimax: arranges a series of items in a growing order of significance only to end suddenly in the absurd.
 - Puns: involve the humorous use of a word that can be interpreted multiple ways.
 - Play on words: deals with the imaginative and creative use of language designed to produce a humorous response.

Acceptance

1. Open with graciously acknowledging the award, prize, honor or gift. Express gratitude for the recognition of your work or accomplishments.
2. Thank the organization or hosting company who gives the award by replying the presenting public speaker.
3. Thank the audience for their gracious comments and feedback on your achievements. Express your appreciation for recognizing your successes.
4. Thank all who made it possible that you achieve this honor. Give generous credit to whom have contributed to your success. Mention their names if it only affects a few persons. Or mention the most relevant individuals. But remember: no endless boring long thank you lists, with names nobody has ever heard of!
5. Conclude your feelings and emotions about being honored in one sentence. A good approach is answering this neat question: What do all nice words, the ceremony and compliments really mean to you?
6. Offer your points of view on what you consider the most important milestone. Focus in your public speaking speech on the values you stand for by using metaphors and archetypal narratives.
7. End with a speech topic about your sincere acknowledgement of the values or the goals of the award organization. Stress their importance.
8. Say: - for the last time - Thank You, and end with: Enjoy the rest of the evening...

9. ... and return to your seat amidst loud applause after delivering your speech!