

# Wolverhampton Speakers Club

## Help! - I Have To Write A Speech ...



Help! I've got to write a speech and I just don't know how to go about it ... I don't even know what I should speak about ...

The thing is, everyone has their own method - but I'll try to give you some pointers to help you get started.



## What shall I speak about?

Finding a subject often seems very difficult when you first start - your mind can just go blank!

If you are at work then you will usually know what you have to speak about, but when it's in the club you have to think of something yourself.

One thing you can do is to keep jotting down anything that comes into your head, but you can also note things down if you are prompted by a television or radio programme, or by something you read - in a book or a newspaper. You might also have some interests that you could speak about or something you want to air your views on.

Once you have a subject, you have to write the speech. The way you write a speech depends on its purpose.

## What's the purpose?

Speeches need a purpose of some kind otherwise they have no real substance to them and your listeners will not have much of an idea about what you're going on about!

There are generally three main types of speech depending on the purpose. There are speeches to ...

Entertain

Inform

Persuade



But also ...

## Exercises in the Guide to Public Speaking

Of course in WSC most of our speaking is framed around the Exercises in our 'Guide to Public Speaking', so that will help with the planning of your speech and maybe also the subject.



Sometimes it's obvious that a speaker has just embarked on writing a speech without really taking on board what's required because they haven't studied the Guide.

For each Exercise in the Guide you will find not only the requirements for the Exercise but also guidance on how to do it.

**So please, READ THE GUIDE!**



## Writing the speech

Once you have decided your purpose, the first steps in writing your speech involve deciding what's going to go in it and arranging it so that it will be easy for your audience to follow.

THEN you can start writing the actual words.



The arrangement of your speech is very important - we call it *Speech Construction* - let's look at that first

## Constructing your speech

You have something important to say and you should arrange it in a logical and consistent way so that your audience can easily follow your argument or message. That's what we mean by 'structure'.

Your structure holds everything together.

Your speech construction is a very important thing to do well. A speech without a clear structure will not go down well with your audience and will not get your message across - they will not know where you are going with it.

It is an interesting fact of human psychology that we often appreciate an odd number of things better than an even number, and that we especially respond to things in threes.

(Five is also possible for some speeches, depending upon the subject matter, but three is the most usual and effective).

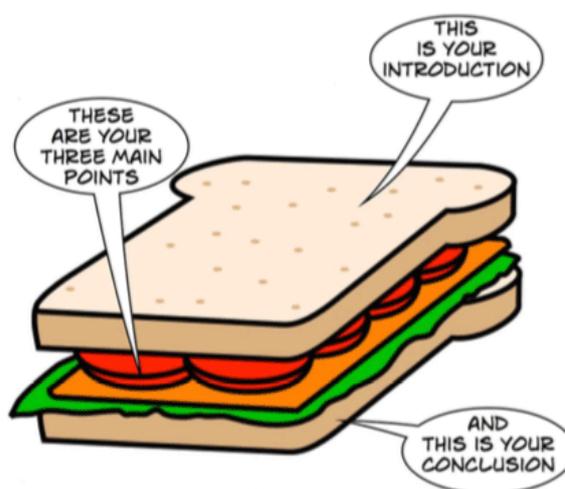
This is why a good speech structure is made up of three parts and the most usual structure for a speech is to write it in three connected parts and we will concentrate on that method here.

## Threes - the BLT

Consider a well-structured BLT sandwich – from top to bottom it has a slice of bread, then three fillings and finally another slice of bread to hold it all together.

This illustrates the most commonly used structure for a speech:

- An introduction
- Three main points
- A conclusion



## Ordering Your Ideas

We sort our ideas out so that we can put them in the different sections of our speech.

This is what speakers can find difficult at first, although you do get used to it, so we thought we'd have a look at one possible way of 'designing' a speech. This is not the only method, though, and you will probably develop your own way of doing it.

Whatever method works for you, that's the one you should use.

## Arranging your material



To show you how I arrange my material, I'm writing a speech about social media ...

That's great - thank you!

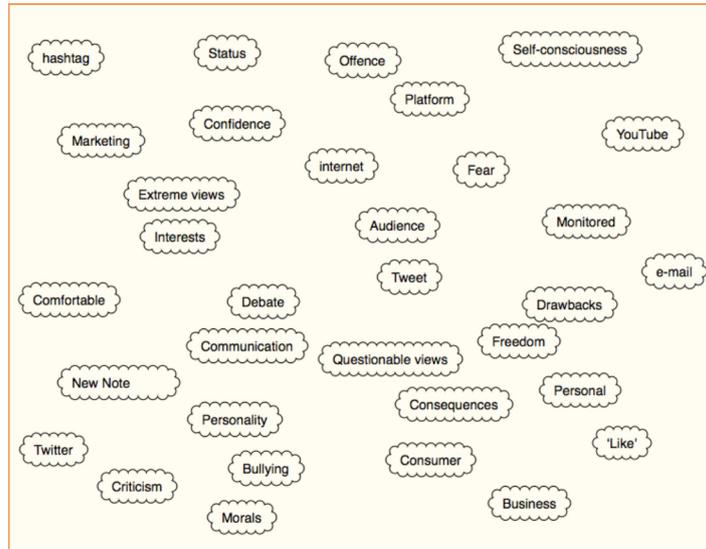


So, Dave ... the first stage is to put your main thoughts on paper.

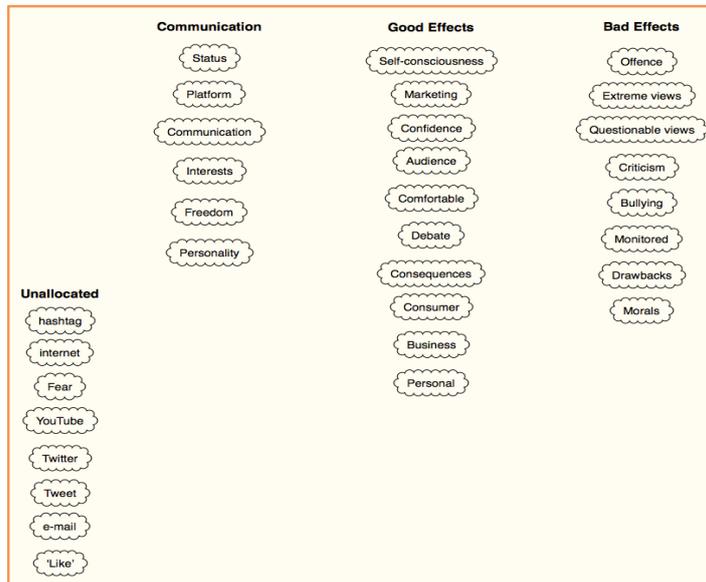
Think about your purpose of your speech and the outcome you seek and then make a collection of your own ideas and put your thoughts in writing – you could use various ways of doing this such as lists, diagrams, mind maps, outlines: whatever you prefer. You might use paper, your computer, cards, post-it notes, whiteboard, flip chart – whatever suits you and is at hand. Then add your research material to what you already know. All of this can be phrases, headings or just single words.

In the end you will have a whole 'cloud' of material, some of which will be useful, some not. Here is a material cloud that you might write for your social media speech:

## Material cloud



You can now decide your three main points - let's say: communication, positive (good effects) and negative (bad effects) and arrange the material that you want to use under the headings so that you can see a pattern emerging. It might now look like this:



At first glance this will tell you whether you have enough material to support each point – if not, you'll have either to research more material or think again about your main points.

## Beginning and ending

You will want to make an impact with your speech so it's important how you begin and end.

A strong ear-catching beginning is a call to attention to your audience, and we always try to end the speech with a strong statement that reinforces your message.



The main body of the speech - your three (or sometimes five) main points - can be approached in a number of ways

## Develop your main points

Some of the ways you can develop your main points might include:

- A logical progression of your main points, one leading on to another
- Outline a problem and suggest its solution
- Structure the speech based around past, present and future situations
- Consider the cause and effect for a particular situation
- Review the alternatives for any particular situation
- Structure your speech around simple itemised points
- Deliver a narrative or story to get your points across
- Consider a situation and examine points for and against
- Raise some debating points



Now you can begin writing!

I know what to do now ...  
thank you!!

