

2026-27 PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING A FIRST CLASS SPEECH:

Brainstorm and Research Potential Topics.

Do a Google search on your topics.

Create and memorize your Introduction and Conclusion but not word for word. Memorize each as a story. Grab your audience's attention with something of interest in the Introduction and Conclude with something of interest to the audience that reflects back on the speech and speech theme.

Use **key words and develop stories** around the key words for the main section of your speech. Then add or drop key word stories to keep your speech within time limits of 5 to 8 minutes.

Be sure to talk to your audience. Rotate your vision throughout the audience and look into their eyes. Make your audience feel you are telling your key word stories to all of them personally.

Remember not to overemphasize or use facts over and over in your speech without adding background information and interesting support stories to go with the facts. Keep in mind providing entertainment and fascinating ideas is far more interesting than making a speech based completely on dry facts. Add humor and interesting observations if at all possible.

Remember, if it isn't interesting to you, it will not be interesting to your audience.

Talk to your audience as if you are talking to a friend. Remember, the excitement you have for your topic will be reflected right back to you from your audience.

Do not memorize the words to your speech word for word. **Tell stories based upon your keywords.** There is nothing more boring than listening to a speech that has been either memorized or read to the audience.

Try to convey to the audience that you are really excited about the topic no matter how **nervous** you are. In many ways the audience will appreciate your nervousness in a positive way, but they will be completely unmoved by someone simply reporting facts after facts all in a row.

Use gestures and walk around if you feel comfortable doing it. Think about how boring a presentation on an overhead projector is with the teacher simply sitting at the projector and lecturing.

Have a good time with your speech and your audience will too. Be enthusiastic and have fun. Your enthusiasm about your topic will be far more impressive to your judges than any amount of boring facts.

THE FOLLOWING ARE TOASTMASTERS CLUB KEY POINTS FOR OUTSTANDING SPEECHES:

The Main Question? The audience always has an unspoken question: “What’s in it for me?” Within the first minute, you need to answer their question and let them know why they are listening to you. Keep this point in mind as you develop your speech.

Better yet, attract their interest. **Give them an “interesting” reason to listen to you.**

Create an alluring **speech title of five words or less.**

Jump right into your presentation. You have **30 seconds to capture your audience’s attention.** Use your first few seconds wisely with a quick quip, question, an anecdote, or a self-effacing story. Done with the right tone, being vulnerable or playfully self-deprecating gets the audience on your side from the start.

Include humor in your speech. The quickest way to break down the invisible walls between the speaker and the audience is humor.

Streamline your presentation. Don’t try to provide too much information.

Use storytelling to establish conflict. If you start with “Life is good, things are great, and I look forward to the rest of my life,” people start looking forward to walking out. Instead, use stories to illustrate how to overcome or strive for something. For example, describe an unfolding problem, such as arriving late at the airport. The audience can then review their life path of arriving late or facing other stressful situations. The story allows them to join you, listen, learn, and be entertained by character development.

Pauses. Provide room in your speech to applause, slow down, and wait for your audience to appreciate what you have said.

Activities. Because people remember 80% of what they are and do (as opposed to what they hear), give them something to practice. Pose a question and ask for a show of hands.

Commit it to memory. Once you have decided what you want to say, crafted a strong speech, and incorporated some additional polish, focus on what is often the most difficult aspect, **memorize your key words and the ideas for the stories that go with them.**

A strong opening and a memorable closing should be your primary focal points. Whether building a sentence or a speech, keep in mind the most impactful points lie at the beginning and at the end.

Circular structure. The circular speech structure, where the ending picks up the threads of the opening. The verbiage from the opening can be woven into the conclusion, supporting the speech with symmetry and balance.

Try not to use unnecessary words like AH, UM, and ER.

SPEECH TECHNIQUES

Lead with a Bold Opening: Start with a strong question or a surprising statistic about your project to instantly grab attention.

Share Personal Stories: People remember emotions much better than one fact after another.

End with a Direct Call to Action: Never leave the audience guessing. Tell your members exactly what sustainable project or donation step they need to take next.