

That's your speech for one of the next Toastmasters meetings!

choose a topic you like – prepare a presentation following the speech objectives – tell the Toastmasters of the Day what you need (equipment, introduction) – present it within the time frame

PROJECT 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

An entertaining speech need not be funny. It simply gives the audience an opportunity to enjoy themselves in some way. The speech may have a message, but the message is not the major focus of the speech. Relate your talk to the audience and its interests, incorporating personal experiences. Be positive, avoid lecturing, and strive for simplicity. The audience should not have to work too hard to follow your presentation.

OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Entertain the audience by relating a personal experience.
- ▶ Organize an entertaining speech for maximum impact.

Time: Five to seven minutes

THE ENTERTAINING SPEECH

Entertainment is a universal human need, more in demand today than ever before. Conventions and civic, professional, and social club meetings always need entertaining speakers for its programs. Many speakers assume that entertaining is easy and end up boring their audience to tears. Taking time to learn and practice the fundamentals will help you project that lighthearted relaxation audiences love.

A speech that entertains is like the sizzle in a steak. It is not substantial within itself and it is not meant to be. Its value lies in the enjoyment of the audience. People do not want to work hard mentally, and they don't want to hear anything negative or gloomy.

While some entertaining speeches include humor, a speech need not be funny in order to entertain. The dramas you watch on television, for example, may not have a single funny line in them and yet you thoroughly enjoy them. Your audience may be entertained by your presentation of interesting information or the story of your recent trip. Hearing a dramatic narrative can be just as pleasurable as a humorous talk.

Whatever your approach, keep in mind that you are not there to give the audience deep understanding. Your purpose is to provide an interesting diversion. This doesn't mean the speech can't have a message. But the message should not be the major focus of the speech.

SELECTING A TOPIC

Consider what you do in your free time, what you enjoy reading about, your general interests and use these subjects as the basis for your talk. You could also speak about a common experience with which your audience is familiar. For example, you could talk about driving, shopping, or other day-to-day experiences your audience will have shared.

If the group you will be speaking to has a specific purpose, relate your talk at least loosely to the group and its purposes. For example, if you will be speaking to a gardening club, your talk should be related to gardening and your gardening experiences. When a speaker is personally involved with a topic, most likely the audience will become involved as well. The more personal involvement, interest, and enthusiasm you bring to a speech, the more likely your audience will respond positively.

ORGANIZING YOUR SPEECH

An entertaining speech is more loosely organized than most other types of speeches, but it still should have the following structure:

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- ▶ **Opening.** The opening should provoke an immediate response from the audience, setting the mood for the talk.
- ▶ **Body.** There should be a general direction to your speech, but it need not be rigidly organized into points and transitions. Make the body of the speech a sequence of little buildups to a climax or punch line, followed by a breathing space for the audience to get ready for the next buildup. The construction may be loose and casual, but it should never be careless. Keep the momentum going all the way to the end.
- ▶ **Conclusion.** The conclusion should be brief, sudden, and definite. Save some of your best material for last. Your conclusion should not be an anticlimax. Avoid leaving the impression that you have suddenly run out of material. The audience should feel that your intention has been accomplished and you have reached a natural stopping point.

HAVE A GOOD TIME

If you want your audience to enjoy themselves, you must appear to be enjoying yourself. Be good-natured and optimistic. Avoid focusing on negative things except to make fun of them. The audience does not want argument, persuasion, or lecture. They want to be entertained and they expect you to be their leader. As you construct your speech, keep these points in mind:

- ▶ **Simplicity.** The audience should not have to work too hard to follow your presentation. Keep your thoughts and speech organization simple.
- ▶ **Vividness.** Choose your words carefully and make them have impact. For example, instead of saying, "He stood up," say, "He leaped from his chair, his eyes blazing." Strive to create images so real they will linger in listeners' minds.
- ▶ **Twists.** The secret of a successful story is the use of unexpected twists and turns. Your audience is ready to be delighted and thrilled by the unexpected, just as if they were in an amusement park. Don't disappoint them by plodding along in a straight line.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

For this project, prepare, rehearse, and deliver a five- to seven-minute speech whose purpose is simply to entertain the audience. Relate some personal experience. Build up the aspects of the experience to keep the audience entertained. If you wish, assume that your Toastmasters club audience represents some specific group, and practice your ability to relate your talk to their purpose and interests (be sure to advise the Toastmaster of the meeting of this fact).

The audience does not want argument, persuasion, or lecture. They want to be entertained and they expect you to be their leader.

Title _____	
Evaluator _____	Date _____

Note to the Evaluator: The speaker is to entertain the audience in a five- to seven-minute talk by relating a personal experience. Pay particular attention to the structure of the talk. Although it will not be as rigidly organized as other types of speeches, it should have some readily apparent organization. In addition to your verbal evaluation, please give written answers to the questions below.

- ▶ What indicated to you that the audience was entertained?

- ▶ Briefly describe the talk's organization as you perceived it.

- ▶ How effectively did the speaker use vivid descriptions and anecdotes or stories?

- ▶ How did the conclusion relate to the rest of the talk?

- ▶ How could the speaker improve the talk?

- ▶ What would you say is the speaker's strongest asset in entertaining speaking?

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