How to Write a Speech

Writing a speech is in many ways like writing a paper, except that there is no penalty for spelling and punctuation errors.

• Assess how much time your speech should take. If you don't have a time limit, try to keep your speech brief yet informative.
• Think about your audience and let your perception of the audience shape the tone of your speech as you write it.
• Begin with an introduction that establishes who you are, what your purpose is, what you'll be talking about and how long you're going to take. You may want to include a joke, anecdote or interesting fact to grab the audience's attention.
• Organize your information into three to seven main points and prioritize them according to importance and effectiveness.
• Delete points that aren't crucial to your speech if you have too many for your time frame.
• Start with your most important point, and then go to your least important point and move slowly back toward the most important. Link your introduction, points and conclusions together with smooth transitions.
• Write a conclusion that summarizes each of your points, restates your main purpose and leaves the audience with a lasting impression.
• Use commanding language to express authority. For example, instead of saying "I hope you will...," say "I recommend you ..."
• Address the audience in the second person ("you") to make the audience a part of your presentation.
• Use the jargon of the people you'll be addressing to establish a bond, if appropriate. For example, if addressing a group of computer programmers, use technical language.
• Keep your language simple and concise by avoiding complicated sentences and big words. This will help your audience better understand your speech.
• Hold the audience's attention by keeping your language action-oriented. Use specific nouns and use verbs in the active voice. For example, instead of saying "The report was written by Mike," say, "Mike wrote the market analysis."

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