

GLOBAL  
EDITION



# Public Speaking

## *An Audience-Centered Approach*

NINTH EDITION

Steven A. Beebe • Susan J. Beebe



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PEARSON

NINTH EDITION

# PUBLIC SPEAKING

AN AUDIENCE-CENTERED APPROACH

**Global Edition**

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PEARSON

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Dedicated to our parents,  
Russell and Muriel Beebe  
and Herb and Jane Dye

And to our children,  
Mark, Matthew, and Brittany Beebe



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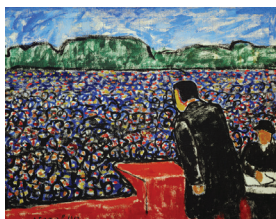
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# PREFACE

The ninth edition of *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach* is written to be the primary text in a course intended to help students become better public speakers. We are delighted that since the first edition of the book was published over two decades ago, educators and students of public speaking have found our book a distinctively useful resource to enhance public-speaking skills. We've worked to make our latest edition a preeminent resource for helping students enhance their speaking skills by adding new features and retaining the most successful elements of previous editions.

## New to the Ninth Edition

We've refined and updated the book you are holding in your hands to create a powerful and contemporary resource for helping speakers connect to their audience. We've added several new features and revised features that both instructors and students have praised.

## Support for First Speeches

In response to suggestions from instructors who use the book, we've created a new Chapter 2, *Developing Your First Speech*. The chapter gives students a concise overview of the audience-centered speaking model as it offers them suggestions for effectively and confidently making an initial speech early in the term of their public-speaking class.

## 2 DEVELOPING YOUR FIRST SPEECH

**OBJECTIVES**

After studying this chapter you should be able to do the following:

- 2.1** Explain why it is important to be audience-centered during each step of the speechmaking process.
- 2.2** Select and narrow an appropriate topic for a speech.
- 2.3** Differentiate between a general speech purpose and a specific speech purpose.
- 2.4** Develop a sentence that captures the central idea of a speech.
- 2.5** Identify three strategies for generating the main ideas for a speech.
- 2.6** Describe several types of supporting material that could be used to support speech ideas.
- 2.7** Develop a speech with three main organizational parts—an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
- 2.8** Identify successful strategies for rehearsing a speech.
- 2.9** Describe the essential elements of effective speech delivery.

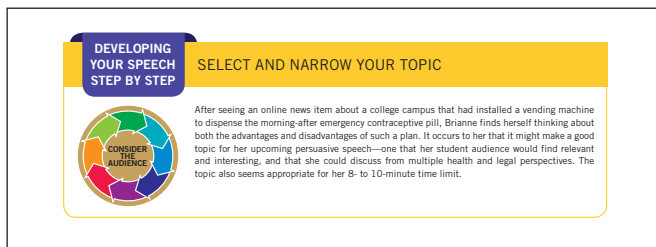
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Arthur Segal (1875–1944), *The Speaker*, 1912. Collection of Henri Nannen, Emden, Germany. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, N.Y.

If all my talents and powers were to be taken from me by some inscrutable Providence, and I had my choice of keeping but one, I would unhesitatingly ask to be allowed to keep the Power of Speaking, for through it, I would quickly recover all the rest.

—Daniel Webster



## New and Updated Features

In the ninth edition, new *Learning Objectives* appear at the start of each chapter to provide students with strategies and key points for approaching the chapter. Objectives reappear at key points in the chapter to help students gauge their progress and monitor their learning. An updated and expanded *Study Guide* at the end of each chapter reviews the learning objectives and key terms, and guides students to think critically about chapter concepts and related ethical issues. We have also added more margin *Recap* boxes and tables to help students check their understanding, review for exams, and to reference key advice as they prepare their speeches. Finally, we have updated the extended example that appears in *Developing Your Speech Step by Step* boxes throughout the book.

## New Speeches

We've added new annotated student speeches and speech examples throughout the book. In addition, nearly every speech in our revised Appendix B is new, selected to provide readers with a variety of positive models of effective speeches.

## New Examples and Illustrations

New examples and illustrations integrated in every chapter provide both classic and contemporary models to help

students master the art of public speaking. As in previous editions, we draw on both student speeches and speeches delivered by well-known people.

## New Material in Every Chapter

In addition to these new and expanded features, each chapter has been revised with new examples, illustrations, and references to the latest research conclusions. Here's a summary of the changes and revisions we've made:

### Chapter 1: The Art of Public Speaking

- New comparison of public speaking with conversation helps build confidence by showing students that speechmaking builds on skills they have already mastered.
- The benefits of public speaking for improving employment opportunities and developing empowering critical thinking skills are reinforced.
- Expanded summary of the history of public speaking adds discussion of Roman orators and of today's communication technologies.
- Updated research reinforces advice for overcoming speaking anxiety and building confidence.

### Chapter 2: Developing Your First Speech

- This new chapter provides an overview of the audience-centered speaking process, jump-starting the speechmaking process for students who are assigned to present speeches early in the term.
- Advice is provided for effectively delivering speeches via videoconferencing and similar communication technology.
- New sample first speech helps students see how another student speaker successfully applied the concepts discussed in the chapter.

### Chapter 3: The Boundaries of Freedom of Speech

- A revised and updated discussion of free speech helps students understand the evolution of interpretation of the First Amendment.
- New discussion and figure emphasize the global nature of free speech in the era of social media.
- New examples throughout the chapter keep material current and relevant to readers.

### Chapter 4: Listening and Critical Thinking Skills

- The chapter is streamlined by removing the discussion of receiver anxiety as a barrier to listening.
- Updated discussion of listening styles helps students use the strengths and overcome the challenges of their particular listening style.
- A new figure can be used by students as a guide or checklist when evaluating other speakers.
- Updated research throughout the chapter keeps material current and relevant to readers.

### Chapter 5: Audience Analysis

- An updated discussion of sex, gender, and sexual orientation emphasizes the importance of considering variations in listeners' gender and sexual identities.
- This chapter introduces the first of the updated *Developing Your Speech Step by Step* boxes, which provide students with an extended example of how to implement audience-centered speechmaking concepts.

### Chapter 6: Audience-Centered Speech Building

- Updated lists of potential speech topics can spark students' own topic brainstorming.
- New examples throughout the chapter keep the material in this popular chapter current and relevant to readers.

### Chapter 7: The Framework of Speech: The Supporting Materials

- An updated section on evaluating Internet resources adds new discussions of *Wikipedia* and page domains as it guides students to think critically about information they find on the Internet.
- New examples throughout the chapter model effective incorporation of the different types of supporting material discussed in the chapter.

### Chapter 8: Speech Outlines and Integration of Supporting Materials

- This chapter combines two previously separate but closely related chapters on organizing and outlining speeches.
- The combined chapter has been streamlined by removing the discussion of delivery outlines, as they are synonymous with speaking notes for many speakers.
- A revised discussion of signposting helps students understand how these organizational clues help communicate their message to listeners.
- The chapter offers information to help students evaluate technological options, such as using a tablet computer to hold speaking notes.
- A new *Sample Preparation Outline* gives students a complete model of the best practices in organization and outlining.

### Chapter 9: Beginning and Concluding Your Speech

- New examples of effective introductions and conclusions from both student and seasoned speakers show students how to implement the techniques described in the chapter.

### Chapter 10: Effective Language for Diverse Listeners

- New table reinforces students' understanding by providing a visual analysis of memorable word structures John F. Kennedy used in his inaugural address.
- New examples clarify discussions of metaphors, inversion, suspension, parallelism, antithesis, and alliteration.

### Chapter 11: Strategies for the Final Delivery

- This chapter provides additional guidance in effective use of eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions when delivering speeches using videoconferencing or similar technology.
- Discussions of using microphones and proper attire have been updated with advice on current trends.

### Chapter 12: Guidelines on Presentation Aids

- Updated information on two-dimensional presentation aids discusses using photographs, drawings, maps, graphs, and charts the “old-fashioned way,” as well as in computer-generated presentation aids.
- The discussion of computer-generated presentation aids has been extended beyond PowerPoint™ to include other popular presentation software.
- An updated discussion of using video aids and audio aids includes references to current technology, such as smartphones, that makes it easy for speakers to create their own video or audio aids, as well as an evaluation of cloud storage of presentation aids.

### Chapter 13: The Informative Speech

- New information on storytelling helps students understand the universal appeal of stories and their use in gaining and maintaining listeners' attention.
- New examples and updated research throughout the chapter keep material current and relevant to readers.

### Chapter 14: The Persuasive Speech

- Expanded discussion and examples clarify and enhance students' understanding of cognitive dissonance theory.
- Clarifications and examples help students understand theories related to persuasion and how those theories are applied at every step of the audience-centered speaking model to their persuasive speeches.

### Chapter 15: Steps in Persuasive Communication

- New section on reasoning by sign expands the repertoire of reasoning techniques students can use in their persuasive speeches.
- Advice for adapting persuasive techniques to culturally diverse audiences has been enhanced by introducing each technique with a reminder of the central role of the audience in public speaking.
- A new *Sample Persuasive Speech* gives students a complete model of how to use the motivated sequence and other principles of persuasion.

## Chapter 16: Speaking with a Purpose: Occasions and Ceremonies

- New chapter-opening examples reinforce the value of public speaking with dollars-and-cents evidence.
- New examples throughout the chapter demonstrate models of speeches for ceremonial occasions including commencement addresses, keynote addresses, and eulogies, as well as humorous speeches.

## Successful Features Retained in This Edition

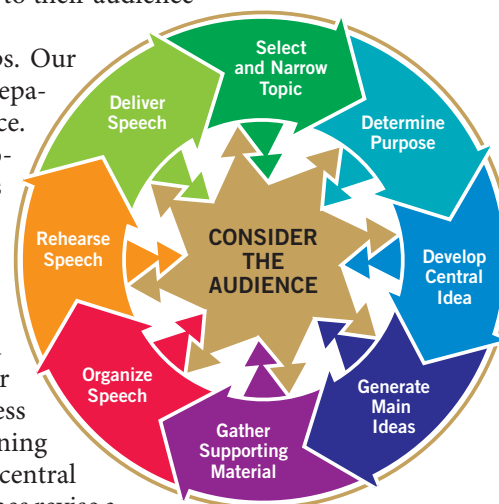
The goal of the ninth edition of *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach* remains the same as that of the previous eight editions: to be a practical and user-friendly guide to help speakers connect their hearts and minds with those of their listeners. While adding powerful new features and content to help students become skilled public speakers, we have also endeavored to keep what students and instructors liked best. Specifically, we retained five areas of focus that have proven successful in previous editions: our audience-centered approach; our focus on overcoming communication apprehension; our focus on ethics; our focus on diversity; and our focus on skill development. We also continue our partnership with instructors and students by offering a wide array of print and electronic supplements to support teaching and learning.

### Our Audience-Centered Approach

The distinguishing focus of the book is our audience-centered approach. More than 2,300 years ago, Aristotle said, “For of the three elements in speechmaking—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speaker’s end and object.” We think Aristotle was right. A good speech centers on the needs, values, and hopes of the audience, who should be foremost in the speaker’s mind during every step of the speech development and delivery process. Thus, in a very real sense, the audience writes the speech. Effective and ethical public speaking does not simply tell listeners only what they want to hear—that would be a manipulative, speaker-centered approach. Rather, the audience-centered speaker is ethically responsive to audience interests without abandoning the speaker’s end and object.

It is not unusual or distinctive for a public-speaking book to discuss audience analysis. What is unique about our audience-centered approach is that our discussion of audience analysis and adaptation is not confined to a single chapter; rather, we emphasize the importance of considering the audience throughout our entire discussion of the speech preparation and delivery process. From the overview early in the text of the public-speaking process until the final chapter, we illuminate the positive power of helping students relate to their audience by keeping their listeners foremost in mind.

Preparing and delivering a speech also involves a sequence of steps. Our audience-centered model integrates the step-by-step process of speech preparation and delivery with the ongoing process of considering the audience. Our audience-centered model of public speaking, shown here and introduced in Chapter 2, reappears throughout the text to remind students of the steps involved in speech preparation and delivery, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of considering the audience. Viewing the model as a clock, the speaker begins the process at the 12 o’clock position with “Select and Narrow Topic” and moves around the model clockwise to “Deliver Speech.” Each step of the speech preparation and delivery process touches the center portion of the model, labeled “Consider the Audience.” Arrows connecting the center with each step of the process illustrate how the audience influences each of the steps involved in designing and presenting a speech. Arrows pointing in both directions around the central process of “Consider the Audience” represent how a speaker may sometimes revise a





previous step because of further information or thought about the audience. A speaker may, for example, decide after having gathered supporting material for a speech that he or she needs to go back and revise the speech purpose. Visual learners will especially appreciate the illustration of the entire public-speaking process provided by the model. The colorful, easy-to-understand synopsis will also be appreciated by people who learn best by having an overview of the entire process before beginning the first step of speech preparation.

After introducing the model early in the book, we continue to emphasize the centrality of considering the audience by revisiting it at appropriate points throughout the book. A highlighted version of the model appears in several chapters, as a visual reminder of the place the chapter's topic occupies in the audience-centered speechmaking process. Similarly, highlighted versions appear in *Developing Your Speech Step by Step* boxes. Another visual reminder comes in the form of a miniature version of the model, the icon shown here in the margin. *When you see this icon, it will remind you that the material presented has special significance for considering your audience.*

## Our Focus on Communication Apprehension

### CONFIDENTLY CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

#### Delivering Your Speech Effectively

The content of your speech is important, but your delivery style will determine how your audience reacts to your message. Make sure that your non-verbal communication (gestures, stances, voice modulation, etc.) is appropriate and consistent with your message. Remember, a large crowd calls for a more formal presentation than a small group. Listeners make emotional connections with you through your delivery, so make sure you are articulate and accurate, dress according to the occasion, take into consideration the customs of your audience, and rehearse to be perfect. Feedback from the audience is also important for self-improvement. Invite questions and discussions related to the topics. Develop your own inimitable style of speech.

One of the biggest barriers that keeps a speaker, especially a novice public speaker, from connecting to his or her audience is apprehension. Fear of failure, forgetting, or fumbling words is a major distraction. In this edition, we help students to overcome their apprehension of speaking to others by focusing on their listeners rather than on their fear. We've updated and expanded our discussion of communication apprehension in Chapter 1, adding the most contemporary research conclusions we can find to help students overcome the anxiety that many people experience when speaking publicly. To help students integrate confidence-boosting strategies through their study of public speaking, we offer students powerful pointers for managing anxiety in the *Confidently Connecting with Your Audience* features found in each chapter.

## Our Focus on Ethics

Being audience-centered does not mean that a speaker tells an audience only what they want to hear; if you are not true to your own values, you will have become a manipulative, unethical communicator rather than an audience-centered one. Audience-centered speakers articulate truthful messages that give audience members free choice in responding to a message, while they also use effective means of ensuring message clarity and credibility.

From the first chapter onward, we link being an audience-centered speaker with being an ethical speaker. Our principles and strategies for being rhetorically skilled are anchored in ethical principles that assist speakers in articulating a message that connects with their audience. We not only devote an entire chapter (Chapter 3) to being an ethical speaker, but we also offer reminders, tips, and strategies for making ethical speaking and listening an integral part of human communication. As part of the *Study Guide* at the end of each chapter, students and instructors will find questions to spark discussion about and raise awareness of ethical issues in effective speechmaking.

## Our Focus on Diversity

Just as the topic of audience analysis is covered in most public-speaking textbooks, so is diversity. Sometimes diversity is discussed in a separate chapter; sometimes it is presented in "diversity boxes" sprinkled throughout a book. We choose to address diversity not as an add-on to the main discussion but rather as an integral part of being an audience-centered

speaker. To be audience-centered is to acknowledge the various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other differences present when people assemble to hear a speech. We suggest that inherent in the process of being audience-centered is a focus on the diverse nature of listeners in contemporary audiences. The topic of adapting to diverse audiences is therefore not a boxed afterthought but is integrated into every step of our audience-centered approach.

## Our Focus on Skill Development

We are grateful for our ongoing collaboration with public-speaking teachers, many of whom have used our audience-centered approach for more than two decades. We have retained those skill development features of previous editions that both teachers and students have applauded. What instructors tell us most often is “You write like I teach” or “Your book echoes the same kind of advice and skill development suggestions that I give my students.” We are gratified by the continued popularity of *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach*.

**Clear and Interesting Writing Style** Readers have especially valued our polished prose, concise style, and engaging, lively voice. Students tell us that reading our book is like having a conversation with their instructor.

**Outstanding Examples** Students need to be not only *told* how to speak effectively, but also *shown* how to speak well. Our powerful and interesting examples, both classic and contemporary and drawn from both student speakers and famous orators, continue to resonate with student speakers.

**Built-in Learning Resources** We’ve retained the following built-in pedagogical features of previous editions:

- Chapter outlines
- Learning objectives
- Crisply written narrative summaries

In the ninth edition, we have expanded many of our popular *Recap* boxes and tables to summarize the content of nearly every major section in each chapter. We’ve also provided a revised, expanded *Study Guide* at the end of each chapter.

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## Instructor and Student Resources

Public-speaking students rarely learn how to be articulate speakers only from reading a book. Students learn best in partnership with an experienced instructor who can guide them through the process of being an audience-centered speaker. And experienced instructors rely on support from textbook publishers. To support instructors and students who use *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach*, Pearson provides an array of supplementary materials for students and instructors. Key instructor resources include an Instructor’s Manual, Test Bank, and PowerPoint™ Presentation Package. These supplements are available at <http://www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Beebe> (instructor login required). MyTest online test-generating software is available at [www.pearsonmytest.com](http://www.pearsonmytest.com) (instructor login required).

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STEVEN A. BEEBE  
SUSAN J. BEEBE

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# 1

## THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING



Magnus Zeller (1888-1972). *The Orator*, circa 1920. Museum Associates/LACMA/Art Resource, NY

### OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter you should be able to do the following:

#### 1.1

Compare and contrast public speaking and conversation.

#### 1.2

Explain why it is important to study public speaking.

#### 1.3

Sketch and explain a model that illustrates the components and the process of communication.

#### 1.4

Discuss in brief the history of public speaking.

#### 1.5

Use several techniques to become a more confident speaker.

There are two kinds of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.

—Mark Twain

Perhaps you think you have heard this speaker—or even taken a class from him: His eyes were buried in his script. His words in monotone emerged haltingly from behind his mustache, losing volume as they were sifted through hair. Audiences rushed to see and hear him, and after they had satisfied their eyes, they closed their ears. Ultimately, they turned to small talk among themselves while the great man droned on.<sup>1</sup>

The speaker described here in such an unflattering way is none other than Albert Einstein. Sadly, although the great physicist could attract an audience with his reputation, he could not sustain their attention and interest because he lacked public-speaking skills.

As you begin reading this book, chances are that you are also beginning a course in public speaking. You're in good company; nearly a half million college students each year take a public-speaking class.<sup>2</sup> If you haven't had much previous experience speaking in public, you're also in good company. Sixty-six percent of students beginning a public-speaking course reported having had little or no public-speaking experience.<sup>3</sup>

The good news is that this book and this course will provide you with the knowledge and experience needed to become what Einstein was not: a competent public speaker.

## 1.1

Compare and contrast public speaking and conversation.

## What Is Public Speaking?

**Public speaking** is the process of presenting a message to an audience, small or large. You hear speeches almost every day. Each day when you attend class, an instructor lectures. When watching a newscast on TV or via the Internet, you get a “sound bite” of some politician delivering a speech. When you hear a comedian delivering a monologue on a late-night talk show or the Comedy Channel, you're hearing a speech designed to entertain you.

The skill of public speaking builds upon your normal, everyday interactions with others. In fact, as you begin to study and practice public speaking, you will discover that it has much in common with conversation, a form of communication in which you engage every day. Like conversation, public speaking requires you to focus and verbalize your thoughts.

When you have a conversation, you also have to make decisions “on your feet.” If your friends look puzzled or interrupt with questions, you may need to explain your idea a second time. If they look bored, you insert a funny story or talk more animatedly. As a public speaker, you will learn to make similar adaptations based on your knowledge of your listeners, their expectations for your speech, and their reactions to what you are saying. In fact, because we believe that the ability to adapt to your audience is so vital, this book focuses on public speaking as an audience-centered activity.

But if public speaking were exactly like conversation, Albert Einstein's lectures would have been more riveting, there would be no reason to take a public-speaking class, and there would be no need for this book. Let's take a look at some of the ways in which public speaking differs from conversation.

- *Public speaking requires more preparation than conversation.* Although you may sometimes be asked to speak on the spur of the moment, you will usually

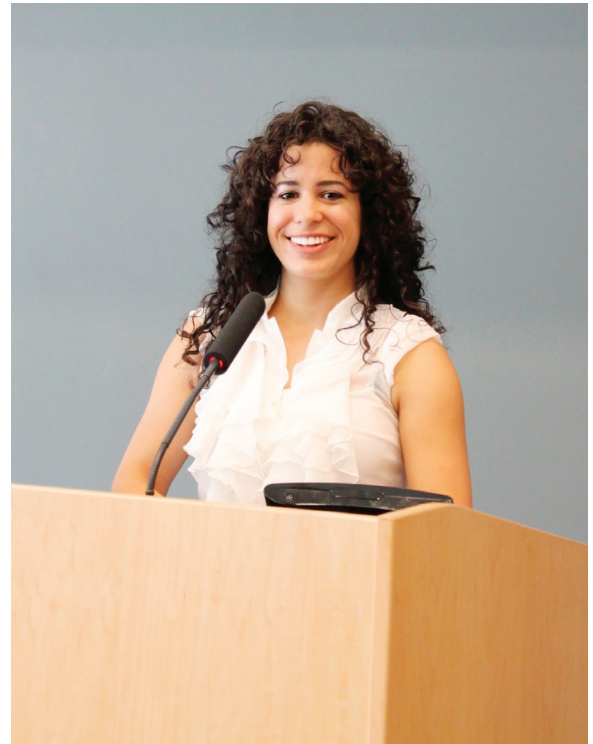
### public speaking

The process of presenting a message to an audience

know in advance whether you will be expected to give a talk on a specific occasion. A public speaker might spend hours or even days planning and practicing his or her speech.

- *Public speaking is more formal than conversation.* The slang or casual language we often use in conversation is usually not appropriate for most public speaking. Audiences expect speakers to use standard English grammar and vocabulary. The nonverbal communication of public speakers is also more formal than the nonverbal behavior of people engaged in ordinary conversation.
- *Public speaking involves more clearly defined roles for speaker and audience than conversation.* During a conversation, there is typically interaction between speaker and listener. But in public speaking, the roles of speaker and audience are more clearly defined and remain stable. Although in some cultures a call-and-response speaker–audience interaction occurs (such as saying “That’s right” or “Amen” when responding to a preacher’s sermon), in the majority of the United States, audience members rarely interrupt or talk back to speakers.

Learning the new skills of public speaking can be challenging and take time. What are the benefits to you of putting in the effort to become an effective speaker?



Public speakers take more time to prepare their remarks than conversationalists do. Public speaking is also more formal than conversation, with defined roles for speaker and audience.

Photo: val lawless/Shutterstock

## Why Study Public Speaking?

Although you’ve heard countless speeches during your lifetime, you may still have questions about why it’s important for *you* to study public speaking. Here are two reasons: By studying public speaking you will gain long-term advantages related to *empowerment* and *employment*.

### Empowerment

You will undoubtedly be called on to speak in public at various times in your life: as a student participating in a seminar class; as a businessperson convincing your boss to let you undertake a new project; as a concerned citizen addressing the city council’s zoning board. In each of these situations, the ability to speak with competence and confidence will provide **empowerment**. To be empowered is to have the resources, information, and attitudes that allow you to take action to achieve a desired goal. Being a skilled public speaker will give you an edge that less skilled communicators lack—even those who may have superior ideas, training, or experience. It will position you for greater things. Former presidential speechwriter James Humes, who labels public speaking “the language of leadership,” says, “Every time you have to speak—whether it’s in an auditorium, in a company conference room, or even at your own desk—you are auditioning for leadership.”<sup>4</sup>

One of the empowering resources that you develop by studying public speaking is **critical thinking**. To think critically is to be able to listen and analyze information you hear so that you can judge its accuracy and relevance. While you are learning

### 1.2

Explain why it is important to study public speaking.

#### empowerment

Having resources, information, and attitudes that lead to action to achieve a desired goal

#### critical thinking

Analyzing information to judge its accuracy and relevance

## RECAP

## WHY STUDY PUBLIC SPEAKING?

- Empowerment: You will gain confidence and skill in communicating with others.
- Employment: You will enhance your career and leadership opportunities.

how to improve your speaking in this course, you are also learning the critical thinking skills to sort good ideas from bad ideas. Being a critical thinker and an effective communicator is a powerful and empowering combination.

Yet, if you're typical, you may experience fear and anxiety about speaking in public. As you start your journey of becoming an effective public speaker, you may have questions about how to bolster your confidence and manage your apprehension. Before you finish this chapter, you'll have read about more than a dozen strategies to help you feel both more empowered and more confident. Being both a confident and an empowered public speaker is within your grasp. And being an empowered speaker can open up leadership and career opportunities for you.

## Employment

If you can speak well, you possess a skill that others value highly. In fact, industrialist Charles M. Schwab once said, "I'll pay more for a person's ability to speak and express himself than for any other quality he might possess."<sup>5</sup> Billionaire stock investor Warren Buffet agrees. In an interview with CNN reporter Christiane Amanpour, extolling the virtues of his public-speaking course, he said, "If you improve your communication skills I guarantee you that you will earn 50 percent more money over your lifetime."<sup>6</sup>

Whether you're currently employed as an entry-level employee or aspire to the highest rung of the corporate leadership ladder, being able to communicate effectively with others is key to success in any line of work. The skills you learn in a public-speaking course, such as how to ethically adapt information to listeners, organize your ideas, persuade others, and hold listeners' attention, are among the skills most sought after by any employer. In a nationwide survey, prospective employers of college graduates said they seek candidates with "public-speaking and presentation ability."<sup>7</sup> Other surveys of personnel managers, both in the United States and internationally, have confirmed that they consider communication skills the top factor in helping graduating college students obtain employment (see Table 1.1).<sup>8</sup>

**TABLE 1.1** TOP SKILLS VALUED BY EMPLOYERS

RANK	RESULTS OF SURVEY OF PERSONNEL DIRECTORS <sup>9</sup>	RESULTS OF SURVEY OF A COLLEGE CAREER SERVICES DEPARTMENT <sup>10</sup>	RESULTS OF SURVEY OF PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS <sup>11</sup>	SURVEY RESULTS FROM SEVERAL RESEARCH STUDIES <sup>12</sup>
1	Spoken communication skills	Communication and interpersonal skills	Communication skills	Communication skills
2	Written communication skills	Intelligence	Honesty and integrity	Analytical/research skills
3	Listening ability	Enthusiasm	Teamwork	Technical skills
4	Enthusiasm	Flexibility	Interpersonal skills	Flexibility/adaptability
5	Technical competence	Leadership	Motivation/initiative	Interpersonal skills

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# The Communication Process

1.3

Sketch and explain a model that illustrates the components and the process of communication.

Even the earliest communication theorists recognized that communication is a process. The models they formulated were linear, suggesting a simple transfer of meaning from a sender to a receiver, as shown in Figure 1.1. More recently, theorists have created models that better demonstrate the complexity of the communication process. Let's explore what some of those models can teach us about what happens when we communicate.

## Communication as Action

Although they were simplistic, the earliest linear models of communication as action identified most of the elements of the communication process. We will explain each element as it relates to public speaking.

**Source** A public speaker is a **source** of information and ideas for an audience. The job of the source or speaker is to **encode**, or translate, the ideas and images in his or her mind into verbal or nonverbal symbols (a **code**) that an audience can recognize. The speaker may encode into words (for example, "The fabric should be 2 inches square") or into gestures (showing the size with his or her hands).

**Message** The **message** in public speaking is the speech itself—both what is said and how it is said. If a speaker has trouble finding words to convey his or her ideas or sends contradictory nonverbal symbols, listeners may not be able to **decode** the speaker's verbal and nonverbal symbols back into a message.

**Channels** A message is usually transmitted from sender to receiver via two **channels**: *visual* and *auditory*. Audience members see the speaker and decode his or her nonverbal symbols—eye contact (or lack of it), facial expressions, posture, gestures, and dress. If the speaker uses any visual aids, such as graphs or models, these too are transmitted along the visual channel. The auditory channel opens as the speaker speaks. Then the audience members hear words and such vocal cues as inflection, rate, and voice quality.

**Receiver** The **receiver** of the message is the individual audience member, whose decoding of the message will depend on his or her own particular blend of past

### source

The public speaker

### encode

To translate ideas and images into verbal or nonverbal symbols

### code

A verbal or nonverbal symbol for an idea or image

### message

The content of a speech and the mode of its delivery

### decode

To translate verbal or nonverbal symbols into ideas and images

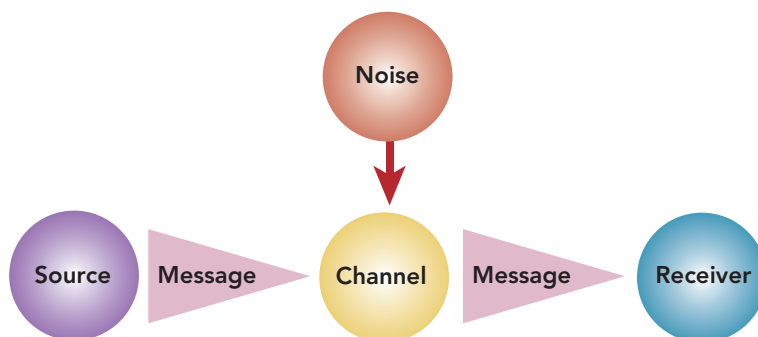
### channels

The visual and auditory means by which a message is transmitted from sender to receiver

### receiver

A listener or an audience member

**FIGURE 1.1** The earliest models viewed communication as the action of transferring meaning from source to receiver.



Source: Copyrighted by Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ

experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and values. As already emphasized, an effective public speaker should be receiver- or audience-centered.

**Noise** Anything that interferes with the communication of a message is called *noise*. Noise may be physical and external. If your 8 A.M. public-speaking class is frequently interrupted by the roar of a lawn mower running back and forth under the window, it may be difficult to concentrate on what your instructor is saying. A noisy air conditioner, a crying baby, or incessant coughing is an example of **external noise** that may make it difficult for audience members to hear or concentrate on a speech.

Noise may also be internal. **Internal noise** may stem from either *physiological* or *psychological* causes and may directly affect either the source or the receiver. A bad cold (physiological noise) may cloud a speaker's memory or subdue his or her delivery. An audience member worrying about an upcoming exam (psychological noise) is unlikely to remember much of what the speaker says. Regardless of whether it is internal or external, physiological or psychological, or whether it originates in the sender or the receiver, noise interferes with the transmission of a message.

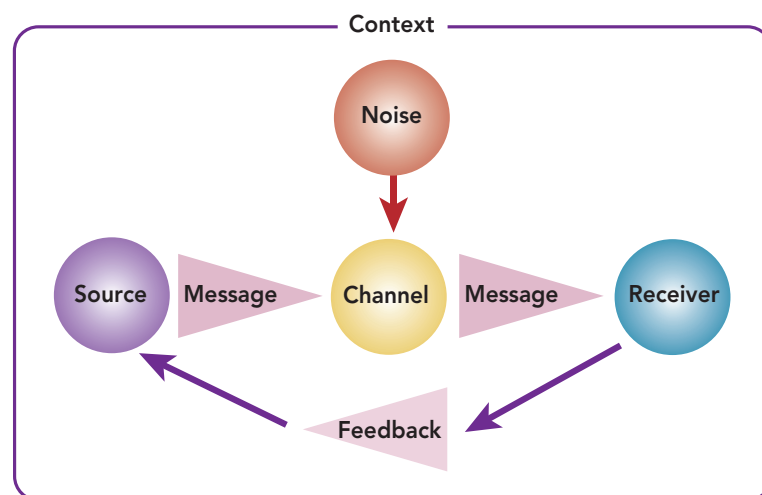
## Communication as Interaction

Realizing that linear models were overly simplistic, later communication theorists designed models that depicted communication as a more complex process (see Figure 1.2). These models were circular, or interactive, and added two important new elements: feedback and context.

**Feedback** As we've noted, one way in which public speaking differs from casual conversation is that the public speaker does most or all of the talking. But public speaking is still interactive. Without an audience to hear and provide **feedback**, public speaking serves little purpose. Skillful public speakers are audience-centered. They depend on the nods, facial expressions, and murmurs of the audience to adjust their rate of speaking, volume, vocabulary, type and amount of supporting material, and other variables to communicate their message successfully.

**Context** The **context** of a public-speaking experience is the environment or situation in which the speech occurs. It includes such elements as the time, the place, and

**FIGURE 1.2** Interactive models of communication add the element of feedback to the earlier action models. They also take into consideration the communication context.



Source: Copyrighted by Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ

### external noise

Physical sounds that interfere with communication

### internal noise

Physiological or psychological interference with communication

### feedback

Verbal and nonverbal responses provided by an audience to a speaker

### context

The environment or situation in which a speech occurs

the speaker's and audience's cultural traditions and expectations. To rephrase John Donne, no *speech* is an island. No speech occurs in a vacuum. Rather, each speech is a blend of circumstances that can never be replicated exactly.

The person whose job it is to deliver an identical message to a number of different audiences at different times and in different places can attest to the uniqueness of each speaking context. If the room is hot, crowded, or poorly lit, these conditions affect both speaker and audience. The audience that hears a speaker at 10 A.M. is likely to be fresher and more receptive than a 4:30 P.M. audience. A speaker who fought rush-hour traffic for 90 minutes to arrive at his or her destination may find it difficult to muster much enthusiasm for delivering the speech.

Many of the skills that you will learn from this book relate not only to the preparation of effective speeches (messages) but also to the elements of feedback and context in the communication process. Our audience-centered approach focuses on “reading” your listeners’ responses and adjusting to them as you speak.

## Communication as Transaction

The most recent communication models do not label individual components. Transactive models focus instead on communication as a simultaneous process. As the model in Figure 1.3 suggests, we send and receive messages concurrently. In a two-person communication transaction, both individuals are sending and receiving at the same time. When you are listening, you are simultaneously expressing your thoughts and feelings nonverbally.

An effective public speaker should not only be focused on the message he or she is expressing but also should be tuned in to how the audience is responding to the message. A good public speaker shouldn't wait until the speech is over to gauge the effectiveness of a speech. Instead, because of the transactive nature of communication, a speaker should be scanning the audience during the speech for nonverbal clues to assess the audience's reaction, just as you do when you have a conversation with someone.

Although communication models have been developed only recently, the elements of these models have long been recognized as the keys to successful public speaking. As you study public speaking, you will continue a tradition that goes back to the very beginnings of Western civilization.

**FIGURE 1.3** A transactive model of communication focuses on the simultaneous exchanges that happen between source and receiver.



Source: Copyrighted by Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ

### RECAP

#### THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Audience and speaker send messages simultaneously. Elements of the process include:

- Source: The originator of the message
- Message: The content of what is expressed both verbally and nonverbally
- Channel: The means by which a message is expressed from sender to receiver
- Receiver: The listener or audience member who sees and hears the message
- Feedback: Responses provided by an audience to a speaker
- Context: The situation and environment in which the speech occurs

## The Rich Heritage of Public Speaking

Long before many people could read, they listened to public speakers. **Rhetoric** can be described as the use of words and symbols to achieve a goal. Although rhetoric is often defined as the art of speaking or writing aimed at persuading others (changing or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior), whether you're informing, persuading, or even entertaining listeners, you are using rhetoric because you are trying to achieve a goal.

1.4

Discuss in brief the history of public speaking.

### rhetoric

The use of words and symbols to achieve a goal

## The Golden Age of Public Speaking

The fourth century B.C.E. is called the golden age of rhetoric in the Greek Republic because it was during this time that the philosopher Aristotle formulated guidelines for speakers that we still follow today. In later chapters in this book you will be learning principles and practices of public speaking that were first summarized by Aristotle in his classic book *The Art of Rhetoric*, written in 333 B.C.E.

Roman orators continued the Greek rhetorical tradition. The Roman orator Cicero was known not only for being an excellent public speaker but also for what he wrote about how to be an effective speaker. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, born in what is today Spain and known as Quintilian, also sought to teach others how to be an effective speaker. As politicians and poets attracted large followings in ancient Rome, Cicero and Quintilian sought to define the qualities of the “true” orator. Quintilian famously wrote that the ideal orator should be “a good person speaking well.” On a lighter note, it is said that Roman orators invented the necktie. Fearing laryngitis, they wore “chin cloths” to protect their throats.<sup>13</sup>

Centuries later, in medieval Europe, the clergy were the most polished public speakers. People gathered eagerly to hear Martin Luther expound his Articles of Faith. In the eighteenth century, British subjects in the colonies listened to the town criers and impassioned patriots of what would one day become the United States.

## Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Age of Political Oratory

Vast nineteenth-century audiences heard speakers such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster debate states’ rights; they listened to Frederick Douglass, Angelina Grimke, and Sojourner Truth argue for the abolition of slavery and to Lucretia Mott plead for women’s suffrage; they gathered for an evening’s entertainment to hear Mark Twain as he traveled the lecture circuits of the frontier.

Students of nineteenth-century public speaking spent very little time developing their own speeches. Instead, they practiced the art of **declamation**—the delivery of an already famous address. Favorite subjects for declamation included speeches by such Americans as Patrick Henry and William Jennings Bryan and by the British orator Edmund Burke. Collections of speeches, such as Bryan’s own ten-volume set of *The World’s Famous Orations*, published in 1906, were extremely popular.

Hand in hand with declamation went the study and practice of **elocution**, the expression of emotion through posture, movement, gesture, facial expression, and voice. From the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, elocution manuals—providing elaborate and specific prescriptions for effective delivery—were standard references not only in schools but also in nearly every middle-class home in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

## The Technological Age of Public Speaking

In the first half of the twentieth century, radio made it possible for people around the world to hear Franklin Delano Roosevelt decry December 7, 1941, as “a date which will live in infamy” following the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. In the last half of the century, television provided the medium through which audiences saw and heard the most stirring speeches:

- Martin Luther King Jr. proclaiming his dream of equality
- Ronald Reagan beseeching Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall”
- Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel looking beyond the end of one millennium toward the next with “profound fear and extraordinary hope”

With the twenty-first century dawned a new era of speechmaking. It was to be an era that would draw on age-old public-speaking traditions—an era in which U.S.

### declamation

The delivery of an already famous speech

### elocution

The expression of emotion through posture, movement, gesture, facial expression, and voice



Civil rights leader and human rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered one of the great speeches of history as the keynote of the August 1963 civil rights march on Washington, D.C. Turn to Appendix B to study Dr. King’s famous speech.

Photo: AP Images

soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan would watch their children’s commencement addresses live via streaming video. And it was to be an era that would summon public speakers to meet some of the most difficult challenges in history—an era in which President Obama would empathize with the grief felt by the community of Newtown, Connecticut, after 20 young children and six adults were shot to death at Sandy Hook Elementary School. He assured his listeners that “. . . you’re not alone in your grief; that our world too has been torn apart; that all across this land of ours, we have wept with you, we’ve pulled our children tight.”<sup>15</sup> Speakers of the future will continue to draw on a long and rich heritage, in addition to forging new frontiers in public speaking.

You may be more likely to hear a speech today presented as a YouTube video or a podcast and delivered on your smartphone or other digital device than you are a live-and-in person presentation. In fact, you may be taking this course in an online format and may present your speeches to your classmates and instructor as video recordings. Although the electronic context of the message influences both how the message may be prepared and received, the primary process of developing and presenting your speech is the same as it has been for centuries. We will offer tips and strategies for delivering a speech via video in Chapter 11.

The ancient Romans identified five classical *canons*, or elements of preparing and presenting a speech:

- *Invention*: the creative process of developing your ideas
- *Arrangement*: how the speech is organized
- *Style*: your choice of words
- *Memory*: the extent to which you use notes or rely on your memory to share your ideas
- *Delivery*: the nonverbal expression of your message

Whether you are presenting your message in person or via video, you will find that these same five elements will shape how your audience responds to your message.

Another unchanging truth of public speaking is that the core of all you do in public speaking is a focus on your audience. Your audience will ultimately determine if your message has achieved your objective. For this reason, we suggest that you keep your audience foremost in your mind from the first moments of thinking about your speech topic to the time when you utter the concluding sentence of your speech. In the next chapter we present a step-by-step guide to preparing any speech that will connect speaker to audience regardless of the channel used.

## RECAP

### THE RICH HERITAGE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Period	Event
Fourth to first centuries B.C.E.	Greek rhetoric flourishes in the Age of Aristotle. Roman orators continue the tradition.
Fifteenth century	European clergy are the primary practitioners of public speaking.
Eighteenth century	American patriots make impassioned public pleas for independence.
Nineteenth century	Abolitionists and suffragists speak out for change; frontier lecture circuits flourish.
Twentieth century	Electronic media make possible vast audiences.
Twenty-first century	A new era of speechmaking uses rapidly evolving technology and media while drawing on a rich heritage of public speaking.

## Improving Your Confidence as a Speaker

1.5

Use several techniques to become a more confident speaker.

Actor and celebrated emcee George Jessel once wryly observed, “The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops . . . until you stand up to speak in public.” Perhaps public speaking is a required class for you, but, because of the anxiety you feel when you deliver a speech, you’ve put it off for as long as possible.

The first bit of comfort we offer is this: *It’s normal to be nervous*. In a classic survey seeking to identify people’s phobias, public speaking ranked as the most

anxiety-producing experience most people face. Forty-one percent of all respondents reported public speaking as their most significant fear: Fear of death ranked only sixth!<sup>16</sup> Based on these statistics, comedian Jerry Seinfeld suggests, “Given a choice, at a funeral most of us would rather be the one in the coffin than the one giving the eulogy.” New research continues to confirm that most people are apprehensive about giving a speech.<sup>17</sup> Other studies have found that more than 80 percent of the population feels anxious when they speak to an audience.<sup>18</sup> Some people find that public speaking is quite frightening: Studies suggest that about 20 percent of all college students are highly apprehensive about speaking in front of others.<sup>19</sup>

Even if your anxiety is not overwhelming, you can benefit from learning some positive approaches that allow your nervousness to work *for you*.<sup>20</sup> First, we will help you understand why you become nervous. Then we will offer specific strategies to help you speak with greater comfort and less anxiety.

## Understand Your Nervousness

What makes you feel nervous about speaking in public? Why do your hands sometimes shake, your knees quiver, your stomach flutter, and your voice seem to go up an octave? What is happening to you?<sup>21</sup>

Researchers have found that public-speaking anxiety is both a *trait* (a characteristic or general tendency that you may have) and a *state* (anxiety triggered by the specific incidence of giving a speech to an audience).<sup>22</sup> A study by two communication researchers found that among the causes of public-speaking anxiety were fear of humiliation, concern about not being prepared, worry about one’s looks, pressure to perform, personal insecurity, concern that the audience wouldn’t be interested in oneself or the speech, lack of experience, fear of making mistakes, and an overall fear of failure.<sup>23</sup> Another study found that men are likely to experience more anxiety than women when speaking to people from a culture different from their own.<sup>24</sup> There is also evidence that being a perfectionist may be linked to increased apprehension when speaking to others.<sup>25</sup> As you read the list of possible speaking-anxiety causes, you’ll probably find a reason that resonates with you because most people feel some nervousness when they speak before others. You’re not alone if you are apprehensive about giving a speech.<sup>26</sup> Understanding why you and many others may experience apprehension can give you insights into how to better address your anxiety.<sup>27</sup>

**Your Biology Affects Your Psychology** Increasingly, researchers are concluding that communication apprehension may have a genetic or biological basis: Some people may inherit a tendency to feel anxious about speaking in public.<sup>28</sup> You may wonder, “So if I have a biological tendency to feel nervous, is there anything I can do to help manage my fear?” The answer is *yes*. Even if you are predisposed to feel nervous because of your genetic makeup, there are strategies you can use to help manage your apprehension.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps you’ve heard that the secret to serenity is to focus on the things you can change, rather than on the things you can’t, and to have the wisdom to know the difference between what is changeable and what isn’t. For increased serenity when speaking in public, we suggest you focus on behaviors that you can change, enhancing your speaking skills, rather than on your biologically based speaking apprehension, which is much more difficult to change. A better understanding of the biological reasons you feel apprehensive is a good starting point on the journey to speaking with greater confidence and serenity.<sup>30</sup>

**Your Psychology Also Affects Your Biology** Your view of the speaking assignment, your perception of your speaking skill, and your self-esteem interact to create anxiety.<sup>31</sup> You want to do well, but you’re not sure that you can or will. Presented with this conflict, your brain signals your body to switch to its default fight-or-flight mode:

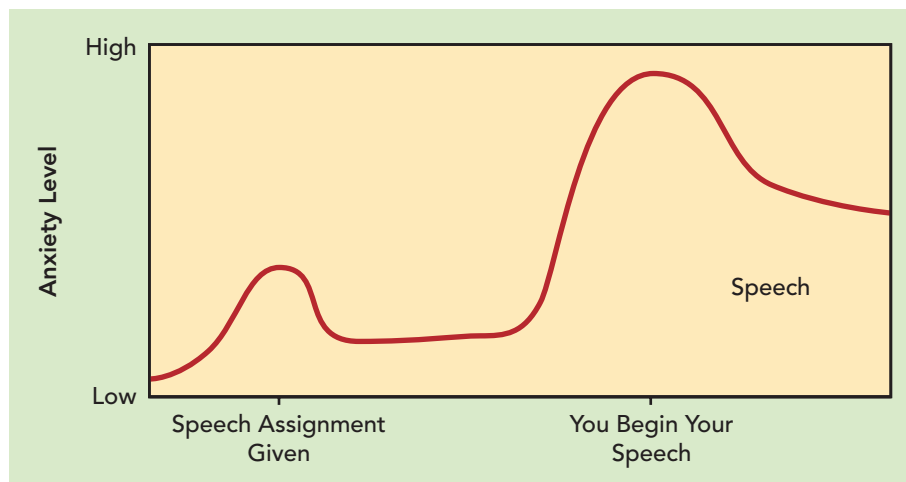
You can either fight to respond to the challenge or flee to avoid the cause of the anxiety. Your body responds by summoning more energy to deal with the conflict you are facing. Your breathing rate increases, more adrenaline pumps through you, and more blood rushes through your veins.<sup>32</sup> To put it more technically, you are experiencing physiological changes because of your psychological state, which explains why you may have a more rapid heartbeat, shaking knees and hands, a quivering voice, and increased perspiration.<sup>33</sup> You may also experience butterflies in your stomach because of changes in your digestive system. As a result of your physical discomfort, you may make less eye contact with your audience, use more vocalized pauses (“Um,” “Ah,” “You know”), and speak too rapidly. Although you see your physical responses as hindrances, your brain and body are simply trying to help you with the task at hand. Sometimes they offer more “help” than needed, and their assistance is not useful.

**Your Apprehension Follows a Predictable Pattern** When are you most likely to feel nervous about giving a speech in your communication class? Research suggests there are typical times when people feel nervous. As shown in Figure 1.4, many people feel most nervous right before they give their speech. That’s when the uncertainty about what will happen next is very high.<sup>34</sup> If you’re typical, you’ll feel the second-highest level of anxiety when your instructor explains the speech assignment. You’ll probably feel the *least* anxiety when you’re preparing your speech.

One practical application of this research is that now you can understand when you’ll need the most help managing your anxiety—right before you speak. It will also help to remember that as you begin to speak, anxiety begins to decrease—often dramatically. Another application of the research is to help you realize that you’ll feel less anxious about your speech when you’re doing something positive to prepare for it. Don’t put off working on your speech; if you start preparing well in advance, you’ll not only have a better speech, you’ll also feel less anxious about presenting it.

To identify patterns in how people experience communication apprehension, one researcher measured speakers’ heart rates when they were delivering speeches and asked them several questions about their fear of public speaking.<sup>35</sup>

**FIGURE 1.4** Research reveals a pattern of nervousness common to many public speakers, who feel the most nervous right before their speech begins, with anxiety tapering off as the speech continues. Students may also feel a smaller peak of worry at the time their instructor assigns them to give a speech.



Source: Copyrighted by Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ

After studying the results, he identified the following four styles of communication apprehension.

- **Average.** You have an *average style* of communication apprehension if you have a generally positive approach to communicating in public; your overall heart rate when speaking publicly is in the average range. Speakers with this style rated their own speaking performance the highest compared to those with other styles.
- **Insensitive.** The *insensitive style* is likely to be your style only if you have had previous experience in public speaking. Perhaps because of your experience, you tend to be less sensitive to apprehension when you speak; you have a lower heart rate when speaking and rate your performance as moderately successful.
- **Inflexible.** If you have an *inflexible style*, you have the highest heart rate when speaking publicly. Some people use this high and inflexible level of anxiety to enhance their performance: Their fear motivates them to prepare and be at their best. For others, the anxiety of the inflexible style creates so much tension that their speaking performance is diminished.
- **Confrontational.** You have a *confrontational style* if, like many people, you have a very high heart rate as you begin presenting a speech, and then your heart rate tapers off to more average levels. This style occurred in people who reported a strong emotional, or affective, response to speaking and was characteristic of more experienced speakers, or people with at least some public-speaking background.

What difference does it make which style of communication apprehension you have? First, it may help to know that you are not alone in how you experience apprehension and that others likely share your feelings. Although each person is unique, there are nonetheless general styles of apprehension. Second, having a general idea of your own style may give you greater insight into how to better manage your apprehension. For example, if you know that your apprehension tends to spike upward at the very beginning of speaking to an audience (the confrontational style), you will need to draw on strategies to help manage your anxiety at the beginning of your talk. Finally, the research on apprehension styles lends support to the theory that communication apprehension may be a genetic trait or tendency.<sup>36</sup> This means that, depending on your own tendencies, you may need more information to help *you* develop constructive ways of managing the apprehension you may feel.

What else can you do to understand and manage your fear and anxiety? Consider the following observations.

**You Are Going to Feel More Nervous Than You Look** Realize that your audience cannot see evidence of everything you feel.

When she finished her speech, Carmen sank into her seat and muttered, “Ugh, was I shaky up there! Did *you* see how nervous I was?”

“Nervous? You were nervous?” asked Kosta, surprised. “You looked pretty calm to me.”

Worrying that you are going to appear nervous to others may only *increase* your anxiety. Your body will exhibit more physical changes to deal with your self-induced state of anxiety. So even if you do feel nervous, remember that your listeners aren’t able to see what you feel. The goal is to present an effective speech using the skills you are learning in this course.<sup>37</sup>

**You Are Not Alone** President John F. Kennedy was noted for his superb public-speaking skills. When he spoke, he seemed perfectly at ease. Former British prime minister Winston Churchill was also hailed as one of the twentieth century’s great orators. Amazingly, both Kennedy and Churchill were extremely fearful of speaking in public. The list of famous people who admit to feeling nervous before they speak may surprise you: Barbra Streisand, Al Roker, Andrea Bocelli, Mariah Carey, Katie Couric, Julia Roberts, Conan

O'Brien, Jay Leno, Carly Simon, and Oprah Winfrey have all reported feeling anxious and jittery before speaking in public.<sup>38</sup> Almost everyone experiences some anxiety when speaking. It is unrealistic to try to eliminate speech anxiety. Instead, your goal should be to manage your nervousness so that it does not create so much internal noise that it keeps you from speaking effectively.

**You Can Use Your Anxiety** Extra adrenaline, increased blood flow, pupil dilation, increased endorphins to block pain, increased heart rate, and other physical changes caused by anxiety improve your energy level and help you function better than you might otherwise. Your heightened state of readiness can actually help you speak better, especially if you view the public-speaking event positively instead of negatively. Speakers who label their increased feelings of physiological arousal as “nervousness” are more likely to feel anxious and fearful, but the same physiological feelings could also be labeled as “enthusiasm” or “excitement.” You are more likely to gain the benefits of the extra help your brain is trying to give you if you think positively rather than negatively about speaking in public. Don't let your initial anxiety convince you that you cannot speak effectively.

## How to Build Your Confidence

“Is there anything I can do to help manage my nervousness and anxiety when I give a speech?” you may wonder. Both contemporary research and centuries of experience from seasoned public speakers suggest some practical advice.<sup>39</sup> We summarize their suggestions in Table 1.2 below.

**Know Your Audience** Know to whom you will be speaking, and learn as much about your audience as you can. The more you can anticipate the kind of reaction your listeners will have to your speech, the more comfortable you will be in delivering your message.<sup>40</sup> As you are preparing your speech, periodically visualize your listeners'

### RECAP

#### UNDERSTAND YOUR NERVOUSNESS

Keep in mind:

- Nervousness is your brain trying to help you.
- Nervousness is predictable: It peaks right before you speak.
- You'll feel more nervous than you look.
- You are not alone.
- It's normal to be nervous.
- Your nervousness can improve your performance because of enhanced physiological responses.

**TABLE 1.2** TIPS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE

#### What to Do Before You Speak

- Don't procrastinate; give yourself plenty of time to work on your speech.
- Learn as much as possible about your audience.
- Select a topic you are interested in or know something about.
- Be prepared and well organized.
- Be familiar with how you will begin and end your speech.
- Rehearse aloud while standing, and try to re-create the speech environment.
- Use breathing techniques to help you relax.
- Channel nervous energy.
- Visualize being successful.
- Give yourself a mental pep talk.

#### What to Do as You Speak

- Focus on connecting your message to your audience rather than on your fear.
- Look for and respond to positive listener support for you and your message.

#### What to Do After You Speak

- Focus on your accomplishments and success rather than only on reviewing what you may have done wrong.
- Seek other speaking opportunities to gain experience and confidence.

Source: Copyrighted by Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ

response to your message. Consider their needs, goals, and hopes as you prepare your message. Be audience-centered rather than speaker-centered. Don't keep telling yourself how nervous you are going to be.<sup>41</sup> An audience-centered speaker focuses on connecting to listeners rather than focusing on fear. Chapter 4 provides a detailed approach to analyzing and adapting to your audience.

**Don't Procrastinate** One research study confirmed what you probably already know: Speakers who are more apprehensive about speaking put off working on their speeches, in contrast to speakers who are less anxious about public speaking.<sup>42</sup> The lack of thorough preparation often results in a poor speech performance, reinforcing the speaker's perception that public speaking is difficult. Realize that if you fear that you'll be nervous when speaking, you'll tend to put off working on your speech. Take charge by tackling the speech assignment early, giving yourself every chance to be successful. Don't let your fear freeze you into inaction. Prepare early.

**Select an Appropriate Topic** You will feel less nervous if you talk about something that is familiar to you or with which you have had some personal experience. Your comfort with the subject of your speech will be reflected in your delivery.

Judy Shepard, whose son Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered in 1998 for being gay, is a frequent conference speaker and ardent proponent of gay rights. Always apprehensive about giving a speech during her college years, she said, "Speech class was my worst nightmare."<sup>43</sup> But today, because of her fervent belief in her cause, she gives hundreds of speeches. "This is my survival; this is how I deal with losing Matt," she explained to students at South Lakes High School in Reston, Virginia.<sup>44</sup> Talking about something you are passionate about can boost your motivation and help you manage your fear. In the chapters ahead, we offer more detailed guidance about how to select a topic.

**Prepare** One formula applies to most speaking situations you are likely to experience: The better prepared you are, the less anxiety you will experience. Being prepared means that you have researched your topic and practiced your speech several times before you deliver it. One research study found clear evidence that rehearsing your speech reduces your apprehension.<sup>45</sup> Being prepared also means that you have developed a logically coherent outline rather than one that is disorganized and difficult to follow. Transitional phrases and summaries can help you present a well-structured, easy-to-understand message.

**Be Organized** One of the key skills you'll learn in *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach* is the value of developing a well-organized message. For an effective speech, it's important to have a central idea. All other information should be aligned to support this idea. Communication researcher Melanie Booth-Butterfield suggests that speakers can better manage their apprehension if they rely on the rules and structures of a speaking assignment, including following a clear outline pattern, when preparing and delivering a speech.<sup>46</sup> Her research showed that anxiety about a speech assignment decreased and confidence increased when speakers closely followed the directions and rules for developing a speech. So, to help manage your apprehension about speaking, listen carefully to what the specific assignment is, ask for additional information if you're unclear about the task, and develop a well-organized message.

**Know Your Introduction and Your Conclusion** You are likely to feel the most anxious during the opening moments of your speech. Therefore, it is a good idea to have a clear plan for how you will start your speech. We aren't suggesting memorizing your introduction word for word, but you should have it well in mind. Being familiar with your introduction will help you feel more comfortable about the entire speech.

If you know how you will end your speech, you will have a safe harbor in case you lose your place. If you need to end your speech prematurely, a well-delivered conclusion can permit you to make a graceful exit.

**Make Practice Real** When you practice your speech, pretend that you are giving the speech to the audience you will actually address. Stand up. Imagine what the room looks like, or consider rehearsing in the room in which you will deliver your speech. What will you be wearing? Practice rising from your seat, walking to the front of the room, and beginning your speech. Practice aloud, rather than just saying the speech to yourself. A realistic rehearsal will increase your confidence when your moment to speak arrives.

**Breathe** One symptom of nervousness is a change in your breathing and heart rate. Nervous speakers tend to take short, shallow breaths. To help break the anxiety-induced breathing pattern, consider taking a few slow, deep breaths before you rise to speak. No one will detect that you are taking deep breaths if you just slowly inhale and exhale before beginning your speech. Besides breathing deeply, try to relax your entire body. Deep breathing and visualizing yourself as successful will help you relax.

**Channel Your Nervous Energy** One common symptom of being nervous is shaky hands and wobbly knees. As we noted earlier, what triggers this jiggling is the extra boost of adrenaline your body is giving you—and the resulting energy that has to go somewhere. Your muscles may move whether you intend them to or not. Take control by channeling that energy. One way to release tension is to take a leisurely walk before you arrive wherever you will be speaking. Taking a slow, relaxing walk can help calm you down and use up some of your excess energy. Once you are seated and waiting to speak, grab the edge of your chair (without calling attention to what you are doing) and gently squeeze the chair to release tension. No one needs to know you're doing this—just unobtrusively squeeze and relax, squeeze and relax. You can also purposely tense and then release your muscles in your legs and arms while you're seated. You don't need to look like you're going into convulsions; just imperceptibly tense and relax your muscles to burn energy. One more tip: You may want to keep both feet on the floor and gently wiggle your toes rather than sit with your legs crossed. Crossing your legs can sometimes cause one leg or foot to go to sleep. Keeping your feet on the floor and slightly moving your toes can ensure that all of you will be wide awake and ready to go when it's your turn to speak.

As you wait to be introduced, focus on remaining calm. Act calm to feel calm. Give yourself a pep talk; tense and release your muscles to help you relax. Then, when your name is called, walk to the front of the room in a calm and collected manner. Before you present your opening, attention-catching sentence, take a moment to look for a friendly, supportive face. Think calm and act calm to feel calm.



Physical symptoms of nervousness are signs that your body is trying to help you meet the challenge of public speaking. Labeling your body's arousal as excitement can help build your confidence as you speak, as can the other tips described in this chapter.

Photo: Cultura Limited/SuperStock

## CONFIDENTLY CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

### Be One with the Audience

Public speaking is the art of connecting with your audience. Make your speech interesting, logical, and organized around a central message, which may be emphasized upon at the introduction and the conclusion. Knowing the audience demographics and expectations is vital. Barriers may be broken down with the help of humor. Anxiety is common. It may be dealt with through tactics like rehearsals, deep breathing, positive self-talk, and visualization. Non-defensive body language is essential. Shift your focus from left to right to make everyone feel included. If you feel too nervous, look at anyone in the audience who nods or smiles at you, or treat the whole audience as “one individual.”

**Visualize Your Success** Studies suggest that one of the best ways to control anxiety is to imagine a scene in which you exhibit skill and comfort as a public speaker.<sup>47</sup> As you imagine giving your speech, picture yourself walking confidently to the front and delivering your well-prepared opening remarks. Visualize yourself giving the entire speech as a controlled, confident speaker. Imagine yourself calm and in command. Positive visualization is effective because it boosts your confidence by helping you see yourself as a more confident, accomplished speaker.<sup>48</sup>

Research has found that it’s even helpful to look at a picture of someone confidently and calmly delivering a speech while visualizing yourself giving the speech; such positive visualization helps manage your apprehension.<sup>49</sup> You could even make a simple drawing of someone speaking confidently.<sup>50</sup> As you look at the image, imagine that it’s you confidently giving the speech. It’s helpful if the visual image you’re looking at is a person you can identify with—someone who looks like you or someone you believe is more like you than not.<sup>51</sup>

**Give Yourself a Mental Pep Talk** You may think that people who talk to themselves are slightly loony. But silently giving yourself a pep talk can give you confidence and take your mind off your nervousness. There is some evidence that simply believing that a technique can reduce your apprehension may, in fact, help reduce your apprehension.<sup>52</sup> Giving yourself a positive message such as “I can do this” may be a productive way to manage your anxiety. Here’s a sample mental speech you could deliver to yourself right before you speak: “I know this stuff better than anyone else. I’ve practiced it. My message is well organized. I know I can do it. I’ll do a good job.” Research provides evidence that people who entertain thoughts of worry and failure don’t do themselves any favors.<sup>53</sup> When you feel yourself getting nervous, use positive messages to replace negative thoughts that may creep into your consciousness. Examples include the following:

#### Negative Thought

I’m going to forget what I’m supposed to say.

So many people are looking at me.

People think I’m dull and boring.

I just can’t go through with this.

#### Positive Self-Talk

I’ve practiced this speech many times. I’ve got notes to prompt me. If I lose my place, no one will know I’m not following my outline.

I can do this! My listeners want me to do a good job. I’ll seek out friendly faces when I feel nervous.

I’ve got some good examples. I can talk to people one-on-one, and people seem to like me.

I have talked to people all my life. I’ve given presentations in classes for years. I can get through this because I’ve rehearsed and I’m prepared.

**Focus on Your Message, Not on Your Fear** The more you think about being anxious about speaking, the more you will increase your level of anxiety. Instead, think about what you are going to say. In the few minutes before you address your listeners, mentally review your major ideas, your introduction, and your conclusion. Focus on your ideas rather than on your fear.

**Look for Positive Support** Evidence suggests that if you think you see audience members looking critical of you or your message, you may feel more apprehensive and nervous when you speak.<sup>54</sup> Stated more positively, when you are aware of positive audience support, you will feel more confident and less nervous. To reiterate our previous advice: It is important to be audience-centered. Although you may face some audience members who won't respond positively to you or your message, the overwhelming majority of listeners will be positive. Looking for positive, reinforcing feedback and finding it can help you feel more confident as a speaker. One study found that speakers experienced less apprehension if they had a support group or a small "learning community" that provided positive feedback and reinforcement.<sup>55</sup> This research finding has implications for you as a speaker and listener. When you have a speaking assignment, work with others to provide support both as you prepare and when you present your speech. When you're listening to speakers in your communication class, help them by being a positive, supportive listener: Provide eye contact and offer additional positive nonverbal support, such as nodding in agreement and maintaining a positive but sincere facial expression. You can help your fellow students feel more comfortable as speakers, and they can do the same for you; watch for their support. One study found that nonnative speakers may feel anxious and nervous because English is not their native language; so providing positive and supportive feedback is especially important when you know a speaker is quite nervous.<sup>56</sup>

**Seek Speaking Opportunities** The more experience you gain as a public speaker, the less nervous you will feel.<sup>57</sup> As you develop a track record of successfully delivering speeches, you will have more confidence.<sup>58</sup> This course in public speaking will give you opportunities to enhance both your confidence and your skill through frequent practice. Researchers have found that those speakers who were the most nervous at the beginning of a public-speaking class experienced the greatest decreases in nervousness by the end of the class.<sup>59</sup> Another research study found that students who took a basic public-speaking course later reported having less apprehension and more satisfaction about speaking than students who had not had such a course.<sup>60</sup> To add to the practice you will get in this class, consider joining organizations and clubs such as Toastmasters, an organization dedicated to improving public-speaking skills by providing a supportive group of people to help you polish your speaking and overcome your anxiety.

**Focus on What You Have Accomplished, Not on Your Fear** When you conclude your speech, you may be tempted to fixate on your fear. You might amplify in your own mind the nervousness you felt and think everyone could see how nervous you looked. Resist that temptation. When you finish your speech, tell yourself something positive to celebrate your accomplishment. Say to yourself, "I did it! I spoke and people listened." Don't replay your mental image of yourself as nervous and fearful. Instead, mentally replay your success in communicating with your listeners. There is evidence that as you continue to gain experience presenting speeches you will gain confidence and have a greater willingness to communicate. So when you finish your speech, congratulate yourself on having achieved your goal knowing that your success is likely to result in more success in the future.<sup>61</sup>

Because managing communication apprehension is such an important skill for most public speakers, in each chapter of this book we'll remind you of tips to help you enhance your confidence. Look for techniques of *confidently connecting with your audience* in the margins.

## RECAP

### BUILD CONFIDENCE

- Label your physical arousal as *excitement*.
- Understand and plan for your anxiety style.
- Focus on your audience and message.
- Don't wait; prepare early.
- Follow guidelines for speech assignments carefully.
- Make practice as real as possible.
- Breathe and exercise to channel nervous energy.
- Visualize success and use mental pep talks.
- Look for support from listeners.
- Form a "support community" of classmates.
- Congratulate yourself after you speak.