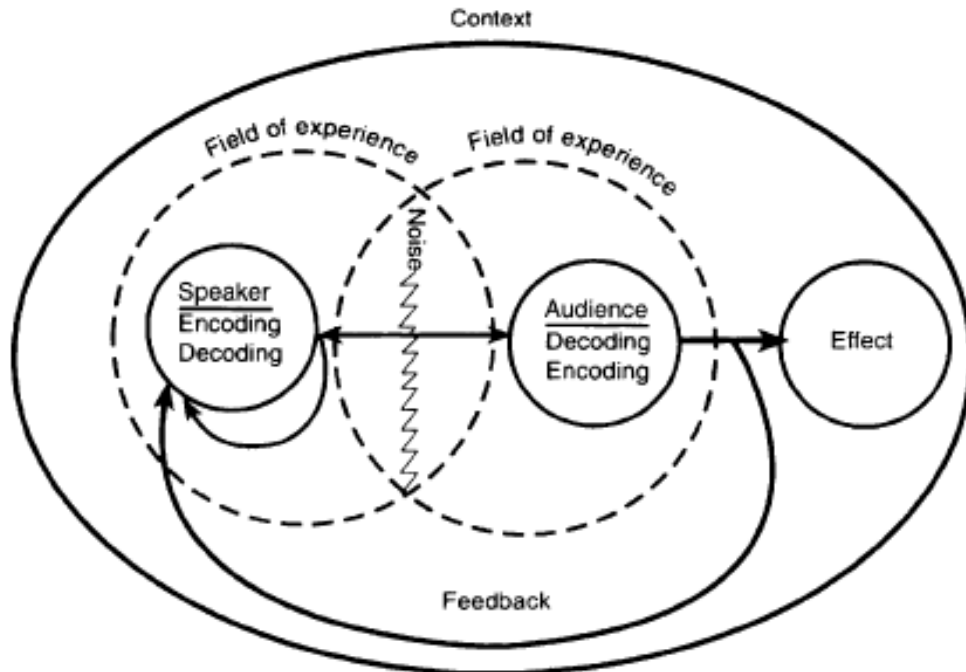


How Communication Works

The primary reason anyone speaks in public is to communicate with an audience. In order to do that well, it is important to think about your audience through every step of the preparation of the speech.

Communication between any two people involves the simultaneous sending and receiving of messages which require encoding and decoding skills on each end. So, while you may be speaking, your audience is sending messages to you at the same time through nonverbal means. Messages are the thoughts and feelings we have that we express through commonly agreed upon codes, or languages and behaviors. If we want to communicate about a "tree," for example, with an English-speaking audience, we must use the word *tree* because it is the commonly agreed upon code for that plant. Communicators encode the messages they wish to send, and must decode the messages they receive, as accurately as possible. All communicators must be skilled at selecting the proper code for each of their expressions if they are to be successful.



The diagram shown above illustrates that communication is a process by which a message goes from a sender to one or more receivers, who send feedback from the original message back to the sender. The diagram is a visual interpretation of the information on pages 4 and 5 of your student text.

Consider Your Audience

Why should the central focus of public speaking be the audience? Why is it not topic selection, outlining, or research? The simple truth is, your audience influences the topic you choose and every later step of the speechmaking process. Your selection of topic, purpose, and even major ideas should be based on a thorough understanding of your listeners. In a very real sense, your audience “writes” the speech.¹

GATHER AND ANALYZE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

Being audience-centered means keeping your audience in mind at every step of the speechmaking process. To do that, you need to first identify and then analyze information about your listeners. For example, just by looking at your audience in your speech class, you will be able to determine such basic information as approximately how old they are and the percentage of men and women in your audience; you also know that they are all students in a public-speaking class. To determine other, less obvious information, you may need to ask them questions or design a short questionnaire.

Audience analysis is not something you do only at the beginning of preparing your speech. It is an ongoing activity. The needs, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other characteristics of your audience influence the choices you make about your speech at every step of the speech-preparation process. That's why, in the audience-centered speech model, arrows connect the center of the diagram with each stage of designing and delivering your speech. At any point during the preparation and delivery of your message, you may need to revise your thinking or your material if you learn new information about your audience. So the model has arrows pointing both ways across the boundary between the central element and each step in the process. Chapter 5 includes a comprehensive discussion of the principles and strategies involved in analyzing your audience.

Being audience-centered involves making decisions about the content and delivery of your speech *before* you speak, based on knowledge of your audience's values, beliefs, and knowledge. It also means being aware of your audience's responses *during* the speech so that you can make appropriate adjustments.

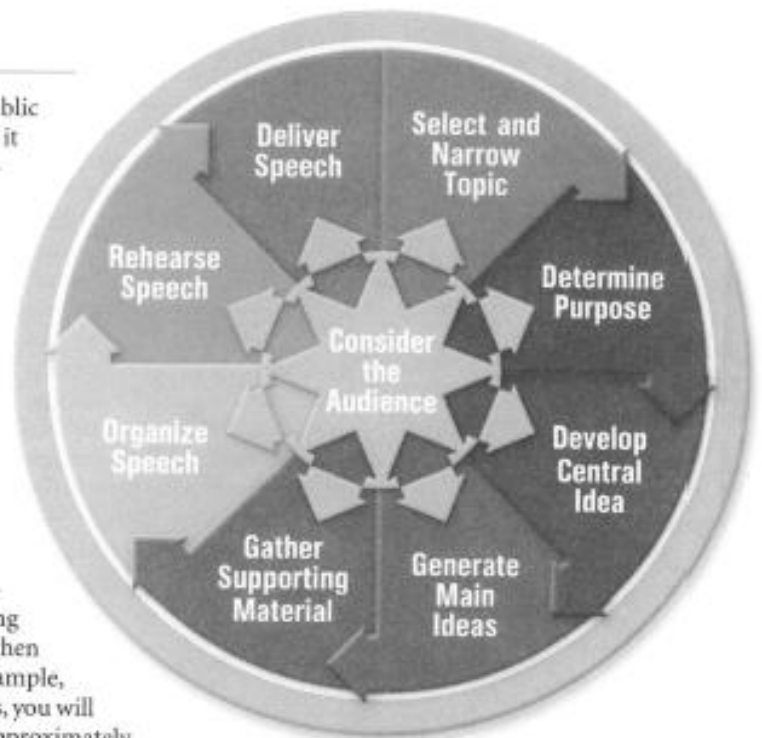


Figure 2.1 This model of the speechmaking process emphasizes the importance of considering your audience as you work on each task involved in designing and presenting a speech. As we discuss each task in depth throughout the book, we also use a smaller image of this model to flag information and advice that remind you to consider your audience.

RECAP



Elements of Audience Analysis

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Age
Gender
Sexual orientation
Cultural, ethnic, or racial background
Group membership
Socioeconomic status

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Attitudes: Likes and dislikes
Beliefs: What is perceived to be true or false
Values: What is perceived to be good or bad

SITUATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Time
Audience size
Location
Occasion

ANALYZING AND ADAPTING TO THE SPEAKING SITUATION

Questions to Ask

Time

What time of the day will I be speaking?
Where will I appear on the program?
What are the time limits for the speech?

Size

How many people will be in the audience?
Will the audience be so large I'll need a microphone?

Location

How will the room be arranged?
What is the room lighting like?
Will there be noise or distractions outside the room?

Occasion

What occasion brings the audience together?
Is the speech an annual or monthly event? Has a similar speaking occasion occurred with this audience before?

Adaptation Strategies

If your audience may be tired or not yet awake, consider increasing the energy level of your delivery.
Audiences are more likely to get the strongest impressions from those who speak first or last.
Most listeners do not appreciate speakers who exceed their time limit. Unless you are a spellbinding speaker, don't speak longer than your listeners expect you to.

Smaller audiences usually expect a more conversational, informal delivery quality; larger audiences usually expect a more formal presentation.
Make sure you understand the mechanics of the microphone system before you rise to speak.

If you want a more informal speaking atmosphere, consider arranging the chairs in a circle. In a large room, consider inviting people in the back of the room to move closer to the front, if necessary.
If the audience will be in the dark, it's more difficult to gauge their nonverbal responses. If you need to use presentation aids, make sure the room lighting is easy to adjust so people can see your images clearly.
Before the speech begins, consider strategies to minimize outside noise such as closing windows and doors, adjusting window blinds or shades, or politely asking that people in other nearby rooms be mindful of your presentation.

Make sure you understand what your listeners expect, and strive to meet those expectations.
Learn how other speakers have adapted to the audience. Ask for examples of what successful speakers have done to succeed with this audience. Or ask whether certain issues or topics may offend your audience.

RECAP



Methods of Delivery

DELIVERY METHOD	DESCRIPTION	DISADVANTAGES	ADVANTAGES
Manuscript speaking	Reading your speech from a prepared text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your speech is likely to sound as if it is being read. It takes considerable skill and practice to make the message sound interesting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can craft the message carefully, which is especially important if it is being presented to the media. The language can be beautifully refined, polished, and stylized.
Memorized speaking	Giving a speech from memory without using notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may forget your speech. You may sound over-rehearsed and mechanical. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can have direct eye contact with the audience. You can move around freely or use gestures while speaking, since you don't need notes.
Impromptu speaking	Delivering a speech without preparing in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your speech is likely to be less well organized and smoothly delivered. Your lack of advance preparation and research makes it more difficult to cite evidence and supporting material for the message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can more easily adapt to how your audience is reacting to you and your message during the speech. The audience sees and hears an authentic speech that is spontaneously delivered without notes.
Extemporaneous speaking	Knowing the major ideas, which have been outlined, but not memorizing the exact wording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It takes time to prepare an extemporaneous speech. It takes skill to deliver the speech well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is well organized and well researched. Your speech sounds spontaneous and yet appropriately polished.

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

If you are not reading from a manuscript, reciting from memory, or speaking impromptu, what's left? **Extemporaneous speaking** is the approach most communication teachers recommend for most situations. When delivering a speech extemporaneously, you speak from a written or memorized general outline, but you do not have the exact wording in front of you or in memory. You have rehearsed the speech so that you know key ideas and their organization, but not to the degree that the speech sounds memorized. An extemporaneous style is conversational; it gives your audience the impression that the speech is being created as they listen to it, and to some extent it is. Martin Luther King Jr. was an expert in speaking extemporaneously; he typically did not use a manuscript when he spoke. He had notes, but he often drew

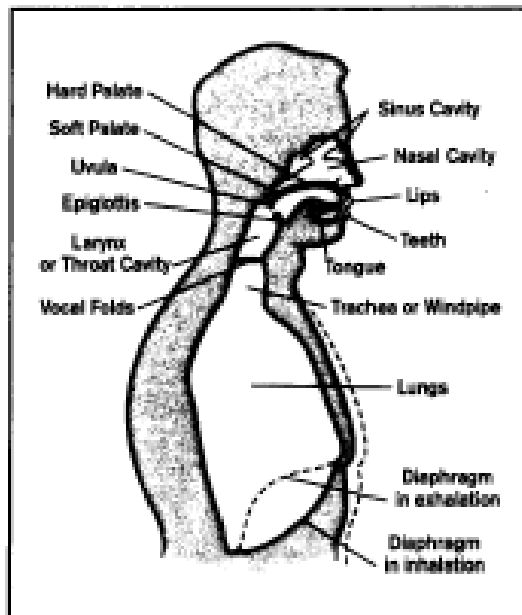
Extemporaneous speaking

Speaking from a written or memorized speech outline without having memorized the exact wording of the speech

Voice Production

Technically, speech sounds are produced by air that has been forced through the lungs by the action of certain rib muscles and the diaphragm, a flat muscle that separates the chest from the abdominal cavity. The exhaled air vibrates the vocal cords (or folds) in the larynx. The sound produced is modified by the resonators (throat, nose, mouth, and sinuses) and formed into vowels and consonants by the articulators (tongue, jaw, teeth, cheeks, lips, and hard and soft palates).

Breathing from the diaphragm instead of the chest is the foundation of good vocal production and something every actor, singer, or speaker should practice until it is second nature. The following exercises will show you how to breathe properly. Gaining control of your breathing and vocal apparatus can give you increased range and expression.



- 1 Lie down in a comfortable position and relax your back, neck, and shoulders. Put one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Breathe, keeping your chest still and letting your abdomen rise up and down.
- 2 Stand up and put your hand on your stomach. Stick out your tongue and pant like a dog. When you breathe in, your stomach moves out. Keep practicing this activity until breathing from your diaphragm comes naturally.
- 3 Using your diaphragm, take a deep breath and see how far you can count as you exhale. Do not force or speed up the count. If you start to get tense, breathe normally and start again. Practice this until you can exhale to a count of sixty.

Vocal Effects

- **Rhythm** You can speak swiftly or haltingly or in a jumble of words. The rhythm you choose will affect how the audience perceives you.
- **Pitch** Younger people generally speak at a higher pitch than older people do, and women speak at a higher pitch than men. Some people raise their pitch when angry, some lower it. You can convey excitement, suspense, and a host of other emotions through variations in pitch.
- **Volume** Volume—or the lack of it—can communicate urgency, secrecy, authority, or surprise.
- **Rate** You can vary the rhythm of your speech and the general rate at which you speak to alter the mood of your speech and to highlight different voices that might be included.

Vocal Effects, cont.

- **Pronunciation**- the act and manner of uttering words correctly and according to sound and stress. Double-check how to pronounce all names and terms.
- **Articulation** - the act of uttering each sound in a word clearly and distinctly. Be conscious of words you tend to mumble, slur, or abbreviate. Avoid vocal distracters, such as clearing your throat, smacking your lips, and clicking your tongue.
- **Intonation/Inflection** - the act of producing tones for accurate and effective pitch. Upward inflection denotes questions, unfinished thoughts, uncertainty, and insecurity – avoid up-talk. Downward inflection suggests statements of facts, commands, finality, control, certainty, and self-confidence.
- **Pitch** - high and low sounds of the voice.
- **Volume** - loud and soft sounds of the voice. Breathe through your diaphragm to ensure adequate air flow through your larynx (voice box) to produce adequate volume of sound. Watch the back of the room to gauge volume. Audience members squinting and turning their heads toward the side often suggest difficulty hearing the speaker.
- **Rhythm and Pace/Cadence** - the rate of speaking and the pauses that occur between words, phrases and sentences. Use repetition of key words and phrases for emphasis. Pauses are another effective means of providing emphasis. Avoid space fillers or vocalized pauses (um, uh, like, you know, well, so, yeah, whatever) that detract from your credibility.
- **Vocal Variety** - the pleasing combination of pitch, volume, rhythm and pace are elements that a speaker can control through practice with focus and conscious effort. A repetitive, monotone vocal pattern will lull your audience into a stupor. By varying inflection and overall pitch, a speaker communicates the subtlety of his/her ideas.
- **Vocal Quality** - the timbre (tone), resonance, and clarity of the speaking voice (mellow, full-bodied, breathy, harsh, nasal, gravely, whining, thin, bellowing, deep) are elements over which the speaker has less control based upon his/her anatomy and physiology.

Delivery: Non-Verbal Communication

1. Approach/Departure

- speaker should be poised, confident, and relaxed when approaching the podium; the communication between speaker and audience begins as soon as the audience is aware the speaker is about to present
- establish eye contact, and begin your hook without referring to your notes
- avoid any “pre-speech,” especially one expressing apprehension
- before leaving the podium, briefly pause and hold eye contact with the audience to express a positive attitude about the speaking experience

2. Eye Contact

- should be direct, sustained, and inclusive, as in normal conversation
- ***the most important aspect of nonverbal communication***
- Plato considered eyes the “window to the soul”—essential to expressing sincerity
- focus in on one person at a time and break eye contact downwardly rather than upwardly
- no matter how polished, reading a manuscript takes away from a speaker's effectiveness because it minimizes eye contact

3. Circular response

- the ongoing communication between speakers and their audiences: ideas flow from the speaker to the audience; listeners respond; speakers must interpret the response by the audience, and the process repeats: encoding & decoding back & forth
- if you notice looks of confusion or restlessness in your audience, you need to adapt your comments

4. Rapport

- sympathetic and understanding feeling that is desirable between a speaker and the audience, built through honesty and sincerity
- what Aristotle called ethos or goodwill
- maintained by good eye contact and circular response

5. Gestures

- use of the body to physically reinforce or emphasize a point
- should be relaxed, natural, deliberate, and minimal
- practice standing with your hands resting gently on the podium. When not gesturing, use your thumb to track your place on your note cards. When gesturing, use your hands purposefully to indicate size, number, shape, direction, or to symbolize an idea or concept, such as unity through clasped hands
- gestures should be deliberate movements that are well-timed to coincide with your verbal message rather than timid, brief jerks or obtrusive waving, sawing, or slashing motions.

- avoid potentially hostile or distracting messaging, such as holding or waving objects like pens, markers, or visual aids, pointing your fingers at your audience, digging your hands into your pockets, fondling your rings, locking your hands on your hips, or crossing your arms defensively or aggressively

6. **Facial Expressions**

- should fit the topic and be natural, not planned
- creates first impression; audience sees your face before they hear what you'll say
- begin with a sincere smile -- the audience will generally mirror your attitude
- A "deer-in-the-headlights" face will make your audience uncomfortable
- most expressive part of the body

7. **Poise**

- the use of good posture and the impression of being physically at ease and in control
- avoid any form of poor posture or distracting movement; don't slouch over or lean on the podium, shift from foot to foot, wiggle a foot or wrap one foot around the other, clutch the podium with a death grip, or pace back & forth near the podium
- instead, plant your feet about shoulder-width apart, pull your shoulder blades back just a bit, hold head upright with chin straight ahead, and speak from your diaphragm
- approach and exit the podium silently and with dignity

8. **Personal Appearance**

- should reinforce your delivery; a speech is a formal occasion
- do not wear distracting jewelry, make-up, hairstyles, or clothing, including shoes that make it difficult to stand or walk without making noise, especially if you are using a visual aid
- never chew gum or adjust your hair.

9. **Sincerity**

- the impression that the speaker cares about the audience and the subject matter and that he/she is being honest with them
- built through the use of sufficient, accurate, relevant evidence