

Toastmasters International Competent Communicator Program

You may be more comfortable communicating by electronic mail or telephone than in person. Speaking to large or small groups, or even one-to-one may intimidate or frighten you. Yet good communication skills are vital if you want to be successful. Corporate leaders say that the ability to communicate well orally is one of the most important skills their recruiters look for in job candidates. Businesses want people who express themselves clearly and confidently, and are persuasive and comfortable communicating with a wide range of people.

By joining Toastmasters you will embark on a journey that will greatly improve your life. In Toastmasters, you will learn more than just communication skills in the club because the rewards are many as you progress through the various programs. Members learn by studying the manuals, practicing and helping one another.

The Basic Communications Manual has 10 speech projects, each designed to develop your speaking skills one step at a time. Every project builds upon what you've learned in the preceding project. The first project is "The Ice Breaker" speech and is based on an easy subject - yourself. In subsequent speech projects you will learn to speak with confidence, clarity, persuasiveness and enthusiasm.

"How Do I Get Started?"

For the New Member, we encourage you to read the **Competent Communication Manual** you have received and look at the first 8 pages in the manual. This covers the Mission Statements of Toastmasters International and the Club, along with "**The Toastmasters Experience**" – a broad introduction to what you can expect.

Skip to page 58 in the manual and review the materials through page 75. This is one of your best **Reference Guides** as to what happens within the club and during the meetings. It includes information on the "**Communication and Leadership Tracks**," "**Other Communications and Leadership Opportunities**," and general information "**About the Club**." On page 72 you will find "**Your Toastmasters Survival Guide**" which gives some good tips on how to conquer nervousness.

Finally, review the materials in **Project #1**, beginning on page 9, the first that a new member experiences. We encourage members to begin working on some notes and then be ready to give the "**Ice Breaker**" speech as soon as possible, or within the first two to three meetings after joining. Any officer would be happy to assist or be a Mentor until our VP Education assigns someone on a more permanent basis. Note, that if there is one of the officers or one of the more experienced Club members in the Club that you know, you can ask to be assigned to that member right away. We can always change Mentors along the way, or even work with two or more members who have different talents that you want to learn.

The 10 Competent Communication Speeches

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Speech 1 - The Ice Breaker

For your first speech project, you will introduce yourself to your fellow club members and give them some information about your background, interests and ambitions. Practice giving your speech to friends or family members, and strive to make eye contact with some of your audience. You may use notes during your speech if you wish.

Objectives:

- To begin speaking before an audience.
- To discover speaking skills you already have and skills that need some attention.

Time:

- 4 – 6 minutes

Speech 2 - Organize Your Speech

Good speech organization is essential if your audience is to follow and understand your presentation. You must take the time to put your ideas together in an orderly manner. You can organize your speech in several different ways; choose the outline that best suits your topic. The opening should catch the audience's attention, the body must support the idea you want to convey, and the conclusion should reinforce your ideas and be memorable. Transitions between thoughts should be smooth.

Objectives:

- Select an appropriate outline which allows listeners to easily follow and understand your speech.
- Make your message clear, with supporting material directly contributing to the message.
- Use appropriate transitions when moving from one idea to another.
- Create a strong opening and conclusion.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Speech 3 - Get to the Point

Every speech must have a general and a specific purpose. A general purpose is to inform, to persuade, to entertain or to inspire. A specific purpose is what you want the audience to do after listening to your speech. Once you have established your general and specific purposes, you will find it easy to organize your speech. You will also have more confidence, which makes you more convincing, enthusiastic and sincere. Of course, the better organized the speech is, the more likely it is to achieve your purpose.

Objectives:

- Select a speech topic and determine its general and specific purposes.
- Organize the speech in a manner that best achieves those purposes.
- Ensure the beginning, body and conclusion reinforce the purposes.
- Project sincerity and conviction and control any nervousness you may feel.

- Strive not to use notes.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Speech 4 - How to Say It

Words are powerful. They convey your message and influence the audience and its perception of you. Word choice and arrangement need just as much attention as speech organization and purpose. Select clear, accurate, descriptive and short words that best communicate your ideas and arrange them effectively and correctly. Every word should add value, meaning and punch to the speech.

Objectives:

- Select the right words and sentence structure to communicate your ideas clearly, accurately and vividly.
- Use rhetorical devices to enhance and emphasize ideas.
- Eliminate jargon and unnecessary words. Use correct grammar.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Speech 5 - Your Body Speaks

Body language is an important part of speaking because it enhances your message and gives you more credibility. It also helps release any nervousness you may feel. Stance, movement, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact help communicate your message and achieve your speech's purpose. Body language should be smooth, natural and convey the same message that your listeners hear.

Objectives:

- Use stance, movement, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact to express your message and achieve your speech's purpose.
- Make your body language smooth and natural.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Project 6 - Vocal Variety

Your voice has a major effect on your audience. A lively, exciting voice attracts and keeps listeners' attention. A speaking voice should be pleasant, natural, forceful, expressive and easily heard. Use volume, pitch, rate and quality as well as appropriate pauses to reflect and add meaning and interest to your message. Your voice should reflect the thoughts you are presenting.

Objectives:

- Use voice volume, pitch, rate and quality to reflect and add meaning and interest to your message.
- Use pauses to enhance your message.
- Use vocal variety smoothly and naturally.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Project 7 - Research Your Topic

Your speech will be more effective if you can support your main points with statistics, testimony, stories, anecdotes, examples, visual aids and facts. You can find this material on the Internet, at a library and in other places. Then take the information collected and carefully support points with specific facts, examples and illustrations, rather than with just your own opinions.

Objectives:

- Collect information about your topic from numerous sources.
- Carefully support your points and opinions with specific facts, examples and illustrations gathered through research.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Project 8 - Get Comfortable with Visual Aids

Visual aids help an audience understand and remember what they hear; they are a valuable tool for speakers. The most popular visual aids are computer-based visuals, overhead transparencies, flip charts, white-boards and props. The type of visual aid you choose depends on several factors, including the information you wish to display and the size of the audience. Visuals must be appropriate for your message and the audience, and be displayed correctly with ease and confidence.

Objectives:

- Select visual aids that are appropriate for your message and the audience.
- Use visual aids correctly with ease and confidence.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Project 9 - Persuade with Power

The ability to persuade people---getting them to understand, accept and act upon your ideas---is a valuable skill. Your listeners will more likely be persuaded if they perceive you as credible, if you use logic and emotion in your appeal, if you carefully structure your speech and if you appeal to their interests. Avoid using notes because they may cause listeners to doubt your sincerity, knowledge and conviction.

Objectives:

- Persuade listeners to adopt your viewpoint or ideas or to take some action.
- Appeal to the audience's interests.
- Use logic and emotion to support your position.
- Avoid using notes.

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes

Project 10 - Inspire Your Audience

An inspirational speech motivates an audience to improve personally, emotionally, professionally or spiritually and relies heavily on emotional appeal. It brings the audience together in a mood of fellowship and shared desires, builds the audience's enthusiasm, then proposes a change or plan and appeals to the audience to adopt this change or plan. This speech will last longer than your previous talks, so make arrangements in advance with the VP Education for extra time.

Objectives:

- To inspire the audience by appealing to noble motives and challenging the audience to achieve a higher level of beliefs or achievement.
- Appeal to the audience's needs and emotions, using stories, anecdotes and quotes to add drama.

Time:

- 8 -10 minutes