ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF
PUBLIC SPEAKING

SEVENTH EDITION

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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Seventh Edition

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Pearson

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About the Cover
The cover image is intended to capture the idea of the ten steps to successful public speaking and that once you climb the steps, you'll see things differently. Mastering the art of public speaking will change you and your world view significantly, giving your more confidence and more power.

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PUBLIC SPEAKING SAMPLE ASSISTANTS (SPEECHES AND OUTLINES)

to *Essential Elements of Public Speaking*, Seventh Edition

I t's a great pleasure to write an introduction to this seventh edition of *Essential Elements of Public Speaking.* This book and this course will guide you through one of the most important courses you'll take in your entire college career. Public speaking is a course that will prove exciting, challenging, and immensely practical. It is also a course that is likely to create some anxiety and apprehension; this is normal. Fortunately, the anxiety and apprehension can be managed, and we'll deal with that challenge right at the beginning, in Chapter 1.

This text and this course will help you master the skills you'll need to give effective informative, persuasive, and special occasion speeches and to speak more effectively in and for a group. It will also teach you the skills of listening, especially the skills of critical listening. It will help you increase your personal and professional communication abilities and will enhance a wide variety of academic and career skills such as organization, research, and language usage.

This book is purposely short but not simplified or "dumbed down." An "essentials" book is not an elementary book; it's an *efficient* book. And that's what this book aims to be—an efficient tool that will help you learn the essential skills for preparing and presenting effective informative, persuasive, and special occasion speeches to an audience and to apply these skills in small group settings.

What's New in the Seventh Edition

Revel™

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the authors' narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

Learn more about Revel
www.pearson.com/revel

Rather than simply offering opportunities to read about and study communication, Revel facilitates deep, engaging interactions with the concepts that matter most. For example, when learning about public speaking, students are presented with a Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA). The results of the assessment prompt students to examine their level of apprehension and consider how they could reduce their nervousness in public speaking situations. By providing opportunities to read about and practice communication in tandem, Revel engages students directly and immediately, which leads to a greater mastery of course material.

A wealth of student and instructor resources and interactive materials can be found within Revel, such as:

- **Audio Speech Examples and Annotations** In-line audio examples of effective and ineffective speaking approaches are enhanced with audio demonstrations, adding dimension and reinforcing learning in a way that a printed text cannot. In the Public Speaking Sample Assistants, outlines and full speeches are annotated by the author to highlight how the concepts in the text have been effectively applied.

PUBLIC SPEAKING SAMPLE ASSISTANT

A PREPARATION OUTLINE WITH ANNOTATIONS (MOTIVATED SEQUENCE ORGANIZATION)

This outline illustrates how you might construct an outline and a speech using the motivated sequence. In a longer speech, if you wanted to persuade an audience to establish a youth center, you might want to select two or three general arguments rather than limiting yourself to the one argument about reducing juvenile crime.

The Youth Center

General purpose:	To persuade
Specific purpose:	To persuade my listeners to vote in favor of Proposition 14 establishing a community youth center
Thesis:	A youth center will reduce juvenile crime.

I. If you could reduce juvenile crime by some 20 percent by just flipping a lever, would you do it?
   A. Thom's drug store was broken into by teenagers.
   B. Loraine's video store windows were broken by teenagers.

I. Attention step

The speaker asks a question to gain attention and follows it with specific examples that audience members have experienced. The question and examples focus on one issue: the need to reduce juvenile crime. If the speech were a broader one that included other reasons for the center, then these would be previewed here as well.

II. Juvenile crime is on the rise.
   A. The overall number of crimes has increased.
      1. In 2003 there were 32 juvenile crimes.
      2. In 2010 there were 47 such crimes.
      3. In 2013 there were 63 such crimes.
   B. The number of serious crimes also has increased.
      1. In 2003 there were 30 misdemeanors and 2 felonies.
      2. In 2013 there were 35 misdemeanors and 28 felonies.

II. Need step

The speaker states the need directly and clearly and shows that a problem exists. The speaker then demonstrates that the rise in crime is significant both in absolute numbers and in the severity of the crimes. To increase the listeners' ability to understand these figures, it would help if these figures were written on a whiteboard, on a prepared chart, or on PowerPoint slides. In a longer speech, other needs might also be identified in this step; for example, the need to offer teenagers a place where they can learn useful vocational and social skills.

III. A youth center will help reduce juvenile crime.
   A. Three of our neighboring towns reduced juvenile crime after establishing a youth center.
      1. In Marlboro there was a 20 percent decline in overall juvenile crime.
      2. In both Highland and Ellenville, the number of serious crimes declined 25 percent.
   B. The youth center will not increase our tax burden.
      1. New York State grants will pay for most of the expenses.
      2. Local merchants have agreed to pay any remaining expenses.

III. Satisfaction step

In this step the speaker shows the listeners that the proposal to establish a youth center has great benefits and no significant drawbacks.

The speaker argues that the youth center will satisfy the need to reduce juvenile crime by showing statistics from neighboring towns. The speaker also answers the objection and removes any doubts about increased taxes. If the speaker had reason to believe that listeners might have other possible objections, those objections, too, should be answered in this step.

IV. Juvenile crime will decrease as a result of the youth center.
   A. If we follow the example of our neighbors, our juvenile crime rates are likely to decrease by 20 to 25 percent.
   B. Thom's store would not have been broken into.
   C. Loraine's windows would not have been broken.

IV. Visualization step

Here the speaker visualizes what the town would be like if the youth center were established, using both the statistics developed earlier and the personal examples introduced at the beginning of the speech.

- **Videos and Video Quizzes** A variety of videos are interspersed throughout the narrative. Sketchnote videos walk students through important core concepts, while clips of expert advice and speech examples boost mastery of those concepts. Many videos are bundled with correlating self-checks, enabling students to test their knowledge. The two excellent speeches in Chapters 11 and 12 are available with accompanying video.
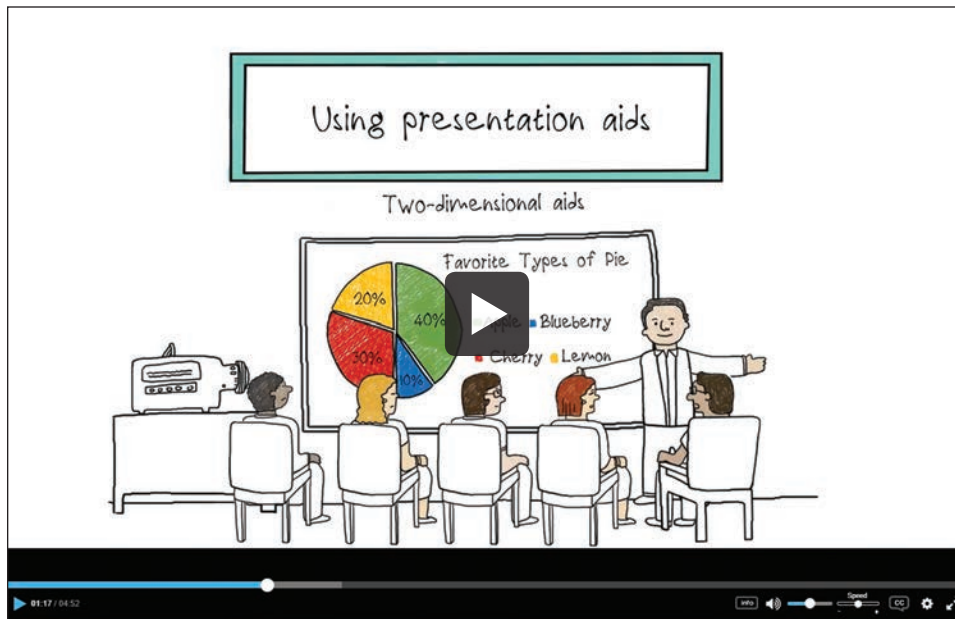
- **New and Interactive Figures** Figures, such as 8.4: A Sample Conclusion, give students a hands-on experience, increasing their ability to grasp difficult concepts. By allowing students to examine specific parts of a speech or model and offering accompanying examples and explanations, broad and theoretical concepts become easier to understand.

Figure 8.4   A Sample Conclusion

In this brief talk, I identified four main reasons why sports and education should be separated:

Here the speaker repeats his main assertion or thesis.

- Sports programs drain funds from other activities and programs.
- Sports programs divert attention, time, and energy away from more important subjects.
- Sports programs create an in-group and an out-group.
- Sports programs set up unrealistic goals.

The speaker summarizes the four points he made in the speech.

When school issues come up for a vote or for debate, think about these reasons as to why sports and education should be separated. Or, when your nephew or niece or daughter or son asks about playing sports, consider discussing the very real disadvantages of sports in education.

This brief motivation is an attempt to get the listeners to apply what's been said in the speech to their own lives.

By the way, I still enjoy playing basketball; it's a great sport. It just doesn't belong in schools.

Here the speaker closes in a way that signals the end of the speech.

- **Integrated Writing Opportunities** To help students connect chapter content with their own personal and social lives, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts: Journal: Public Speaking Choice Point questions provide opportunities for free-form, topic-specific responses (one per module) while the Shared Writing prompt at the end of every chapter offers an opportunity for focused, brief responses that students can share with each other.

To access your own Revel account and get more information about the tools and resources in Revel, go to www.pearson.com/revel.

This new seventh edition of *Essential Elements of Public Speaking* also contains major structural and content changes. All of these changes were made to make the text narrative flow more freely and to give greater emphasis where needed. These changes should make the book easier to read, more easily adaptable to different teaching/learning styles, and more in line with today's public speaking.

Structural Change

There are a few structural changes in this edition that should be noted:

- In the previous edition, audience analysis and research were covered in the same chapter. In this edition, each topic is given its own chapter: Analyze Your Audience (Chapter 4) and Research Your Speech (Chapter 5).

- Similarly, the chapter on wording, rehearsing, and presenting the speech has been divided into two chapters: Word and Rehearse Your Speech (Chapter 9) and Present Your Speech (Chapter 10).

- The speeches—instead of being placed in an appendix—are now included in the relevant chapters. So, the speech of self-presentation appears in Chapter 1 (Introducing Public Speaking); both a poorly-constructed and a well-constructed informative speech appear in Chapter 11 (Informing Your Audience); both a poorly constructed and a well-constructed persuasive speech appear in Chapter 12 (Persuading Your Audience); and the special occasion speeches, which were in Chapter 11 in the previous edition, now appear in Chapter 13 (Speaking on Special Occasions). A complete list of speeches (and outlines) is provided in the Specialized Table of Contents.

Chapter Overview and Updates

Throughout the text, there are new and updated Viewpoints (photos and captions), Journal: Public Speaking Choice Points, and Ethical Choice Points. Explanations of these features have been added with the feature's first appearance in Chapter 1 and are explained further under "Text Features" below. To keep the text current we have given increased attention to online public speaking and updated the research. Stylistic revisions and organizational changes were made throughout to make the text flow more smoothly. Here is a brief discussion of the chapters' main content and some notable changes.

Part One: Fundamentals of Public Speaking consists of two chapters that introduce public speaking and listening.

- **Chapter 1** (Introducing Public Speaking) discusses the benefits of studying public speaking, the essential elements in the public speaking process, public speaking apprehension, the ten steps for preparing a speech, and the speech of self-introduction. New to this chapter are an expansion of the discussion of ethics and a new self-test on ethical public speaking. The discussion of apprehension includes more coverage on the nature of apprehension and the factors causing apprehension. A new annotated sample speech of self-introduction offers specific guidelines on this common first speech assignment. Also in Revel are three new videos: What Should I Study Public Speaking, TED's Secret to Great Public Speaking, and Why Is Ethics Important in Free Speech.

- **Chapter 2** (Listening and Criticism) covers the role of listening in public speaking, guidelines for effective listening, critical evaluation in public speaking, and the role of culture in listening and criticism. The coverage of listening remains essentially as in the previous edition with some new photos and some stylistic changes. In Revel, Chapter 2 includes a new video exploring how to listen across cultures.

Part Two. Preparing and Presenting Public Speeches consists of eight chapters that cover the ten essential steps in preparing a public speech.

- **Chapter 3** (Select Your Topic, Purposes, and Thesis, Step 1) covers selecting and limiting speech topics, phrasing speech purposes, and developing, wording, and applying the thesis. New to this chapter is the addition of the tree diagram as a method for limiting topics along with an illustrated diagram, and new examples. A new video in Revel explores how to choose the right topic for your speech.

- **Chapter 4** (Analyze Your Audience, Step 2) covers the importance of audience analysis and adaptation, specific characteristics of audiences to consider when preparing a speech and suggestions for adapting to these variations. This chapter contains new examples and a major new section on universals of audiences, that is, those characteristics that all audiences have in common and that a speaker needs to understand (unique, diverse, profit seeking, time limited, involved, and receptive). In Revel, new videos include topics such as communicating to different audiences, getting to know your audience, analyzing your audience, and how to connect with a virtual audience.

- **Chapter 5** (Research Your Speech, Step 3) considers the reasons for and the types of research, the major sources of information, the criteria for evaluating information, integrating and citing research, and how to avoid plagiarism. This chapter contains additional guidelines for evaluating information and an expansion of the plagiarism section with a new self-test on what is and what is not plagiarism as well as discussions of the types of plagiarism (direct, self, mosaic, and accidental), and what determines fair use and common knowledge. It also contains a new exercise on selecting sources. Revel expands its video offerings to include videos on finding supporting materials, selecting sources right for your research, the issues with cherry-picking data, evaluating sources, and oral citations.

- **Chapter 6** (Collect Supporting Materials, Step 4) covers the traditional supporting materials: examples, illustrations, and narratives; analogies; definitions; testimony; and numerical data (as well as quotations, comparisons and contrasts, fact series, and repetition and restatement). New student examples are used to illustrate the varied forms of support.

- **Chapter 7** (Using Presentation Aids, Step 4, continued) continues the discussion of using supporting materials, here on presentation aids—their importance, the types of aids (reorganized into static and dynamic aids), computer-assisted presentation aids (along with new PowerPoint slides), and general guidelines for using all types of presentation aids. The chapter in Revel features new videos about types of presentation aids, how typeface influences presentations, and how to use presentation aids.

- **Chapter 8** (Organize Your Speech, Steps 5, 6, and 7) covers three closely related steps in the public speaking process: developing your main points, organizing the main points, and constructing the introduction, conclusion, and transitions. A section on outlining with examples of the preparation, delivery, and template outlines concludes the chapter. The video program in Revel has been expanded to include videos on structuring speeches, how spoilers can improve speeches, introductions and conclusions, how to use signposting, and using outlines for speech presentation.

- **Chapter 9** (Word and Rehearse Your Speech, Steps 8 and 9) covers language (choosing words and constructing sentences for oral presentation) and offers a variety of suggestions for rehearsing the speech. This chapter now includes a discussion of abstraction (moved from the informative speaking chapter), an expansion on sentence construction, and a more thorough discussion of cultural sensitivity and cultural identifiers. In Revel, new video topics discuss whether profanity is ever okay to use in public speaking, examine Roosevelt's first inaugural speech, and present an overview of delivery.

- **Chapter 10** (Present Your Speech, Step 10) discusses the varied methods of presentation (including a new section on the memorized speech), effective vocal delivery, and effective bodily action, along with suggestions for using notes and handling questions. Several new videos in Revel explore what news anchors can teach us about public speaking, modes of delivery, how vocal fry and upspeak affect speech, why we use filler words, vocal delivery, how politicians know their audience, physical delivery, and how to run a successful social media Q & A.

Part Three: Types of Speeches contains four chapters that cover the major speaking purposes: speaking to inform, speaking to persuade, speaking on special occasions, and speaking in and for the group.

- **Chapter 11** (Informing Your Audience) covers the principles of informative speaking and the three major types of informative speeches (the speech of description, definition, and demonstration). This chapter contains a variety of new examples and a new annotated excellent informative speech on mental illness. In Revel, Chapter 11 includes two new videos featuring sweating and showcasing an informative speech: Mental Illness.
- **Chapter 12** (Persuading Your Audience) covers the principles of persuasive speaking, the three persuasive proofs (*logos, pathos*, and *ethos*), and the three types of persuasive speeches (speeches on questions of fact, value, and policy). This chapter also contains new student examples and a new poorly constructed speech. The video program in Revel has been expanded to include videos on analyzing the persuasive situation, Monroe's motivated sequence, persuasive appeals, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- **Chapter 13** (Speaking on Special Occasions) covers the wide variety of special occasion speeches, for example, the speech of introduction, presentation and acceptance, the eulogy, the toast, the speech to secure goodwill, and a brief consideration of the speech of concession in a Viewpoint. This chapter now contains a new section on the general principles of special occasion speeches and new speeches of introduction and dedication. In Revel, all new videos showcase Senator John McCain's concession speech, Tiger Woods' body language, a tribute to Steve Prefontaine, and an elegy for a special person by Eric Keller.
- **Chapter 14** (Speaking in Groups) focuses on the skills of group membership and group leadership and the skills for presenting the group's thinking and decisions. Revel features many new videos including the speech "Helping Annie," and videos discussing how to balance group roles, leadership styles, and how to give a great virtual presentation.

Text Features

This book is a complete learning package, enhanced by a variety of features that make this course and this book more interesting, more relevant, and more useful.

- **Ten Steps to Public Speaking** guide you in the preparation and presentation of a public speech. The 10-step system makes the preparation and presentation of a public speech more efficient by breaking the process into discrete, manageable steps that are addressed in detail throughout the book. A major section of Chapter 1 presents the 10 steps in brief. Here you'll learn to accomplish everything from selecting a topic to organizing your materials, rehearsing, and presenting your speech. The remaining chapters parallel the steps outlined in this section and elaborate on each step—helping you to gradually refine and perfect your public speaking skills.
- **Learning Objectives** Learning objectives appear at the beginning of the chapter, at the beginning of each major section or module, and in the summary at the end

of the chapter. These objectives highlight the major concepts of the chapter and identify what the student should be able to do after reading the text.

- **Ethics** Because public speaking is a powerful medium that can have enormous consequences, it has important ethical or moral implications. In this book, ethics is introduced in Chapter 1 as an essential element of public speaking; in addition, each chapter contains an **Ethical Choice Point** box describing a situation that raises an ethical issue and asks you to identify the choices you have available and what you would do. By the end of the text, you should have formulated a clear and defensible ethical standard to govern your own public speaking, listening, and critical evaluation.

- **Culture** The effectiveness of public speaking principles varies from one culture to another. Depending on cultural factors, different audiences may respond to speakers in different ways. As a result of the tremendous cultural variations in the ways in which people respond to speakers and speeches and the fact that we now live in a multicultural world, cultural insights are integrated throughout this text. Among the issues discussed are how members of different cultures give and respond to public criticism (Chapter 2), the cultural factors a speaker should consider when analyzing different audiences (Chapter 4), appropriate cultural identifiers (Chapter 9), and the cultural differences in audience responses to emotional and credibility appeals (Chapter 12).

- **Public Speaking Choice Points**, brief scenarios presenting a variety of situations in which a choice or decision has to be made, ask the reader to identify and evaluate the available choices in terms of their predicted outcomes. These choice points, which appear in each module, address a variety of issues concerning apprehension, revealing information about the self, evaluating research sources, selecting main points, and formulating the right introduction. In Revel, this feature becomes a journal prompt, eliciting a free-form, topic-specific response addressing topics at the module level. Most of the journal prompts help students make connections between public speaking topics and their own experiences. **Public Speaking Exercises** appear at the end of every chapter and ask students to work actively with the concepts discussed in the text and cover a wide variety of essential communication skills. Completing these exercises will help readers apply the material in the chapter to specific situations and thereby increase and perfect their own communication skills. In Revel, the exercises are often interactive or short-answer writing opportunities.

- **Preview diagrams** appear throughout the text and provide a quick visual of the content to follow, making it easier for students to get an overview before reading the specifics. In Revel, these interactive diagrams allow students to preview how the content will build in the chapter.

- **Self-tests** have been integrated at various points in the text to stimulate involvement and to personalize the material. In this edition, these tests focus on a wide variety of public speaking issues: apprehension, ethics, critical comments, plagiarism, presentation software, and credibility. In Revel, students can answer these self-tests digitally and receive feedback immediately.

- **Photo captions,** called **Viewpoints**, ask readers to consider a variety of public speaking issues, many of which are research based and/or focus on the themes of social media, the workplace, and culture.

- **Shared writing prompts** at the end of each chapter elicit a focused, brief response addressing topics at the chapter level, which students can share with each other. Students can see and respond to their classmates' comments, thereby facilitating discussion online as well as in the classroom. Instructors have access to students' responses and can also assign them as homework.

Instructor and Student Resources

Key instructor resources include an Instructor's Manual (ISBN 0-13-577422-5), TestBank, (ISBN 0-13-581932-6), and PowerPoint Presentation Package (ISBN 0-13-577405-5). These supplements are available at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc (instructor login required). MyTest online test-generating software (ISBN 0-13-577403-9) is available at www.pearsonmytest.com (instructor login required). For a complete list of the instructor and student resources available with the text, please visit the Pearson Communication catalog, at www.pearsonhighered.com/communication.

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Jamesteohart/Shutterstock

The first step is often the most difficult; taking it, however, is the only way to get to the top.

INTRODUCING PUBLIC SPEAKING

CHAPTER TOPICS	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
The Benefits of Studying Public Speaking	**1.1**	Identify the benefits of studying public speaking.
The Essential Elements of Public Speaking	**1.2**	Define *public speaking* and its essential elements.
Managing Communication Apprehension	**1.3**	Explain the nature of communication apprehension and suggest ways of managing your fear of public speaking.
Preparing and Presenting a Speech: The 10 Steps in Brief	**1.4**	Identify the 10 steps necessary for preparing and presenting a public speech.
The Speech of Self-Introduction	**1.5**	Explain the general guidelines for a speech of self-introduction.

Public speaking—presenting a prepared speech to a face-to-face or an online audience—is one of the essential skills you'll need to function effectively in today's society. The higher up you go in the world's hierarchy—say, from intern, to junior analyst, to manager, to CEO—the more important public speaking becomes. This text explains the essential skills and strategies that you'll need to prepare and present effective public speeches.

Although public speaking principles were probably developed soon after our species began to talk, it was in ancient Greece and Rome that our tradition of public speaking got its start. This Greco–Roman tradition has been enriched by the experiments, surveys, field studies, and historical studies that have been done since classical times and that continue to be done today.

Contemporary public speaking—the kind discussed in this text—builds on this classical heritage with its emphasis on substance, ethical responsibilities of the speaker, and strategies of organization; but it also incorporates insights from the humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, and computer science and information technology. Likewise, perspectives from different cultures are being integrated into our present study of public speaking.

Perhaps the most notable change is the advent of online public speaking—in podcasts, webinars, and YouTube videos ranging from how to unpack your iPhone, to how to bake a cake, to how to fix a lawn mower, to how cataract surgery is performed. This new form of public speaking relies on the principles that were developed for face-to-face public speaking, though there are also principles specific to speaking online.

This introductory chapter discusses the benefits you'll derive from studying public speaking—whether face-to-face or online–the essential elements of every speech, how to manage the very normal fear of speaking in public, and the 10 steps involved in preparing and presenting a speech. It concludes with a discussion of the speech of self-introduction as an application of the 10 steps and an often-used classroom experience.

THE BENEFITS OF STUDYING PUBLIC SPEAKING

1.1 Identify the benefits of studying public speaking.

Fair questions to ask of any course or textbook are "What will I get out of this?" and "How will the effort and time I put into this class and this textbook benefit me?" Here are just three categories of benefits you'll derive from this text and from your course work in public speaking.

1.1.1 Public Speaking Abilities

At the most obvious level, you'll become a more accomplished and more effective public speaker, whether you're face-to-face or online in a podcast, webinar, or YouTube video. Speakers aren't born; they're made. Through instruction, exposure to different speeches, experience with diverse audiences, feedback on your own speeches, and individual learning experiences, you can and will become a more effective speaker. Regardless of your present level of competence, you'll improve your effectiveness in preparing and presenting public speeches through proper training—hence, this course and this book.

At the end of this course you'll be a more competent, confident, and effective public speaker. You'll also be a more effective listener—more open yet more critical, more empathic yet more discriminating–and you'll emerge a more competent and discerning critic of public communication. You'll learn to organize and explain complex concepts and processes clearly and effectively to a wide variety of listeners. You'll also learn to support arguments with all the available means of persuasion and to present persuasive appeals to audiences of various types.

As a leader (and in many ways you can look at this course as training in leadership skills), you'll need the skills of effective public speaking to help preserve a free and open society. As a speaker who wants your message understood and accepted, as a listener who needs to evaluate and critically analyze ideas and arguments before making decisions, and as a critic who needs to evaluate and judge the thousands of public communications you hear every day, you will draw on the skills you'll acquire in this course.

1.1.2   Personal and Social Competencies

In your study of public speaking you'll also learn a variety of personal and social competencies. Perhaps one of the most important is to manage your fear of communication situations in general and of public speaking in particular. You may not eliminate your fear entirely; but you'll be able to manage your fear so it works for you rather than against you. This is a topic we address later in this first chapter, in the section on Managing Communication Apprehension.

You'll also develop greater self-confidence in presenting yourself and your ideas to others—competencies that are consistently ranked high in lists of what employers look for in hiring and promoting (Morealle & Pearson, 2008).

As you master the skills of public speaking, you'll grow in personal power; you'll become more effective in influencing the thinking and behavior of others. At the same time, power enables you to empower others, whether as an organizational manager, political leader, blogger, older sibling, or member of any of hundreds of groups.

1.1.3   Academic and Career Skills

As you learn public speaking, you'll also learn a wide variety of academic and career skills, many of which are largely communication skills (as you can tell from reading the employment ads, especially for middle-management positions in just about any field you can name). For example, you'll learn to:

- develop an effective and comfortable communication style (whether for conversation with friends, posting on Instagram, or for that important job interview)

- use verbal and nonverbal messages with greater clarity and persuasiveness

Yuri_Arcurs/E+/Getty Images

VIEWPOINTS

Career Applications

Each of the photos in this text, labeled **Viewpoints**, asks your opinion, your viewpoint, on a variety of public speaking issues. So, when you come upon the photos throughout the book, be sure to read and reflect on the issue raised in the caption. Consider your own professional life as you imagine it to be 5 or 10 years from now. *How might the skills of public speaking benefit you in your soon-to-be professional life*?

- conduct research efficiently and effectively, using the latest and the best techniques available

- critically analyze and evaluate arguments and evidence from any and all sources

- understand human motivation and make effective use of your insights in persuasive encounters

- communicate your competence, character, and charisma to make yourself believable

- give and respond appropriately to criticism, increase your insight into your own strengths and weaknesses, and provide useful and constructive feedback to others

1.1.4 Deriving the Most Benefits from Your Study of Public Speaking

Given that the benefits of studying public speaking will permeate all aspects of your personal and professional life, make a commitment to put a major effort into this course so you'll be able to derive the most benefits. This public speaking course is quite different from all your other courses—it aims to provide you not only with knowledge and understanding of the topics of public speaking (ethics, persuasion, strategic argument, critical analysis, and more) but also with the skills for success that will make a difference every day of your life.

- **Give your speeches at the time they are scheduled,** whether face to face or online. Lateness puts added pressure on the instructor, other students, and the class as a whole, often necessitating a rearrangement of the schedule—something no one enjoys. So, do whatever is within your power to follow the schedule.

- **Respect time limits.** Most public speaking syllabi are crammed—speeches are scheduled so that everyone gets the same opportunities. But that's only possible if everyone respects the time limits. So, when you rehearse your speech, give attention to time and, when necessary, revise the speech so it fits into the time allotted.

- **Listen supportively to others.** Getting up and giving a speech to a class or sending a video or podcast online are not easy tasks. But in a face-to-face class, if the audience acts positively toward the speaker, it can help put the speaker at ease. In the same way, showing support in an online environment will make it easier for the speaker's next efforts.

- **Give listening cues.** Make eye contact with the speaker and allow your positive feelings to be expressed in your facial expressions, posture, and head movements. Let the speaker see that you're listening. This will help the speaker feel comfortable. In an online environment, participate according to the norms established for the class.

- **Avoid entering the room during a student presentation.** This is likely to increase the nervousness of the speaker. It also takes attention away from the speaker.

- **Give your full attention to the speaker.** Avoid playing games on your smartphone, texting, or surfing online during class and especially during a student's speech. Turn off your cell phone, or at least put it on vibrate.

- **Offer constructive criticism.** The norm of most public speaking classrooms (whether on- or offline) is that criticism is expected; it's a useful learning device for the speaker, the critic, and, in fact, for everyone in the course.

- **Come to class regularly.** Although class attendance is important in all courses, it's doubly important in the public speaking course. The reason is simply that speakers are helped by audience feedback and criticism. In addition, you'll learn a great deal from observing the efforts of others.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

1.2   Define *public speaking* and its essential elements.

Figure 1.1 presents a model of public speaking that illustrates some of the important concepts and processes, each of which is discussed in this section.

1.2.1   Speaker

In public speaking, the **speaker** delivers a talk and usually is not interrupted, unlike in a conversation in which the speaking intervals are short and there are frequent interruptions. As the public speaker, you're the center of the transaction: You and your speech are the reason for the gathering. But notice that you, as the speaker, are still receiving messages—from hearing or reading your own material as well as from the audience's reactions. Consequently, Figure 1.1 uses a two-headed arrow to illustrate that messages go both ways.

In this course, your role as speaker is a bit different than it will be later in life. Here you're in a learning environment where you're expected to make mistakes as well as to profit from feedback from others (and to give constructive feedback to others). Outside of the classroom, your role as public speaker will be largely to inform others about something (as a teacher, a health-care provider, or an engineer, for example) or to influence others (as a lawyer arguing for a client, as a parent addressing the PTA, or as a sales representative closing the deal, for example).

1.2.2   Audiences

An **audience** is a group of people listening to or reading a message or speech. The audience in public speaking is relatively large, ranging from groups of perhaps 10 or 12 to hundreds of thousands, even millions.

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the audience is represented as a gradient of color to illustrate that there are different types of audiences. There is the **immediate audience** who, say, hear the speech in a face-to-face setting or attend the webinar. But there is also an audience we might call the **remote audience** who hears the speech from other sources. Perhaps these audience members read about it on a blog, see it on television, or

JOURNAL 1.1
Public Speaking Choice Point
PREPARING A PODCAST: THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING
Throughout this text you'll find items labeled **Public Speaking Choice Point**. These items present brief scenarios where a decision needs to be made. These Choice Points are designed to encourage you to apply the material discussed in the text to specific situations by (1) analyzing your available choices, (2) evaluating your choices in terms of their possible advantages and disadvantages, and (3) making a communication decision.

Cathy is preparing two podcasts on the values of public speaking, one geared to high school students and one to management trainees. *What are some of the things Cathy might say in both of these speeches? What might she say to one group but not to the other?*

Figure 1.1   A Model of the Essential Elements of Public Speaking

Contexts
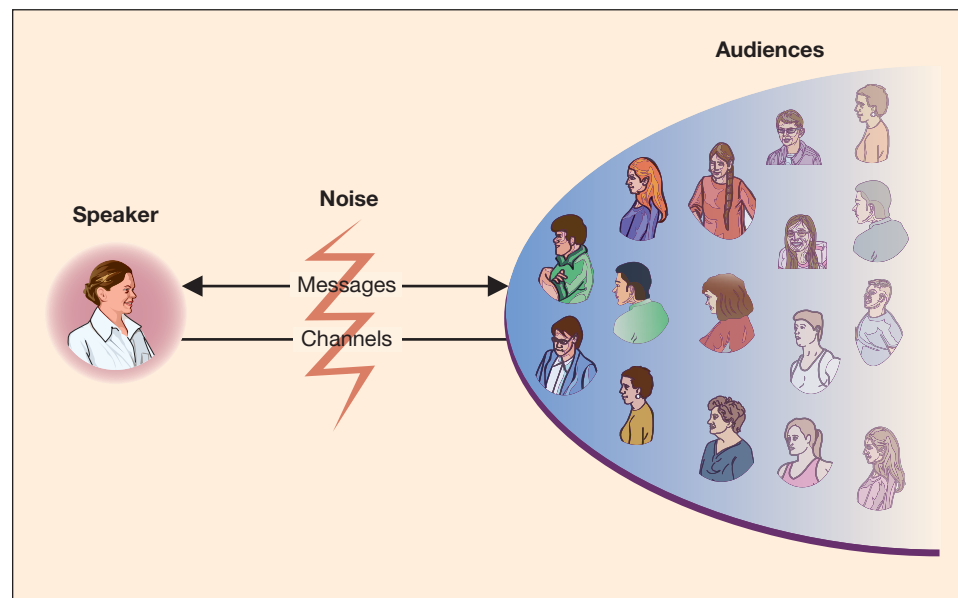
get opinions from Twitter or Facebook. The audience is also illustrated as a parabola to represent the fact that the audience is potentially infinite.

Recognizing that both immediate and remote audiences exist is crucial to understanding the influence of public speaking throughout history as well as in any specific public speaking situation you might name. Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was presented to a relatively small audience, but it had influence far beyond that audience and that specific time. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech was presented to thousands but influenced millions. The same is true, though on a smaller scale, with all speeches, including those you'll present in this class. When you address 20 or 30 students in class, that's 20 or 30 people who might relay your message or arguments to others; and these people may continue the process. With social media, remote audiences are becoming significantly larger and more important. As you grow in influence and in public speaking competence, so will your influence on both immediate and remote audiences.

It's important to note that as a message passes from one audience member to another, it becomes more distorted, more unlike what the speaker intended. This is well illustrated in the game of "telephone" in which a message is spoken to one person who then relays it to another, and that person relays it to another, and so on. With each relay, the message becomes more and more distorted. By the time the message is repeated for the sixth or seventh time, it hardly resembles the original.

Public speaking also incorporates active involvement by the listeners. Listeners/readers are speakers (senders of messages) in the same way that the public speaker is also an audience member. In some public speaking situations, listeners will tweet comments during the speech to which the speaker may want to respond. Similarly, other audience members can see these messages and may offer additional comments to the speaker and to each other. In webinars, the feedback may be immediate if the speaker allows for questions during or at the end of the presentation; but, it may also be delayed as when someone writes a review on Yelp or posts a reaction on a blog. In face-to-face public speaking, listeners send messages back to the speaker through their nonverbal behavior indicating rapt attention, boredom, or agreement, for example.

JOURNAL 1.2
Public Speaking Choice Point
CULTURAL INSENSITIVITY
Liam is giving a speech critical of bull-fighting, something he sees as animal cruelty. A significant number of audience members, however, celebrate this as a part of their culture. *What options does Liam have for introducing this topic? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach? What should Liam do to remain true to his convictions and yet not insult audience members and appear culturally insensitive?*

1.2.3 Messages and Channels

Messages conveyed in public speaking include both verbal and nonverbal signals to inform or persuade. Public speaking messages can be sent through a variety of channels. A **channel**, in public speaking, is simply the medium through which messages are sent; for example, face-to-face conversations, social media, and newspapers would all be channels. In some cases, the message is long, though generally not longer than 60 minutes. In other cases, the speech is extremely short, as in Twitter messages (which are, essentially, public speeches). TED speeches must all conform to the 18-minute (approximately) limit.

Traditionally, public speaking involved a speaker standing before an audience—and that is still the basis of all public speaking—but it has grown. Both auditory and visual channels are still significant in public speaking. Through the auditory channel you send spoken messages—your words and your sentences. Through the visual channel—eye contact (or the lack of it), body movement, hand and facial gestures, and clothing—you send visual messages.

Increasingly, public speaking is mediated; public speeches are frequently delivered in a television studio and heard by millions in their own living rooms or caught on camera and shared through social media. Similarly, speeches and podcasts may be digitally recorded and made available day and night to millions of internet users. Politicians and business leaders currently post their speeches on websites, blogs, Twitter, and newsgroups.

1.2.4   Noise

Noise is anything that distorts the message and prevents listeners from receiving the message as you intended it to be received. Noise may be physical (others talking loudly, cars honking, illegible handwriting, "restricted access" to an article), physiological (hearing or visual impairment, articulation disorders), psychological (preconceived ideas, wandering thoughts), or semantic (misunderstood meanings, ambiguous language).

Most public speaking involves visual as well as spoken messages, so it's important to realize that noise also may be visual. Sunglasses that conceal the nonverbal messages from your eyes would be considered noise, as would dark print on a dark background in your PowerPoint or Prezi slides, or your dog jumping onto your lap during your webinar.

All public speaking situations involve noise. You won't be able to totally eliminate noise, but you can try to reduce its effects. Making your language more precise, organizing your thoughts more logically, creating a simple background for your webinar presentation, and reinforcing your ideas with presentation aids are some ways to combat the influence of noise.

1.2.5   Contexts

As illustrated in Figure 1.1 at the beginning of this section, the public speaker and the audiences operate in a **context**—a physical, socio-psychological, temporal, and cultural context—that will influence both the speaker and the audience.

- The **physical context** is the actual place in which you give your speech (the room, hallway, park, or auditorium, and whether face to face or computer mediated). A presentation given in a small, intimate room needs to be very different from a podcast that might be listened to while driving to work.

- The **socio-psychological context** is the relationship between speaker and audience; for example, is a supervisor speaking to workers or a worker speaking to supervisors? Is a principal addressing teachers, or is a parent addressing a principal? This socio-psychological context also includes the audience's attitudes toward and knowledge of you and your subject.

- The **temporal context** includes factors such as the time of day and where your speech fits into the sequence of events. For example, does your speech follow another presentation that has taken an opposing position? Is your speech the sixth in a series exploring the same topic?

Another aspect of the temporal context that needs to be considered is whether your speech is synchronous or asynchronous—big words for simple concepts. In **synchronous public speaking**, the speaker presents the speech and the audience hears it at the same time. This is the situation in face-to-face public speaking and in webinars, and it allows for some degree of audience participation. In **asynchronous public speaking**, the speaker presents the speech at one time and the listeners hear it at another time. This is the situation you have in podcasts and posted videos. Audience interaction is limited to commenting on the speech directly to the speaker via email, on Twitter, or on any of the social media sites with "likes," "thumbs up," "thumbs down," or comments.

- The **cultural context** concerns the beliefs, lifestyles, values, and behaviors that the speaker and audience members bring with them that bear on the topic and purpose of the speech. Largely because cultures teach boys and girls different attitudes, beliefs, values, and ways of communicating, gender may also be viewed as a cultural variable.

1.2.6   Ethics

Because your speech will have an effect on your audience, you have an obligation to consider **ethics**—issues of right and wrong, or the moral implications of your message. When you develop your topic, present your research, create persuasive appeals, and do any of the other tasks related to public speaking, there are ethical issues to be considered (Bok, 1978; Jaksa & Pritchard, 1994; Johannesen, 1996; Neher & Sandin, 2007; Tompkins, 2011).

Think about your own beliefs and respond to the following situations in this quiz, indicating whether each scenario is ethical or unethical.

1. _____ A speaker talks about evidence supporting the position advocated but omits contradictory evidence. Or, similarly, a speaker cites testimony and gives the person's positive qualifications but omits the person's negative disqualifications.

2. _____ A speaker reworks a quotation by a famous scientist, say, to support the advocated position.

3. _____ A speaker uses a visual aid found on the internet.

4. _____ A speaker uses emotional appeals–for example, fear of getting ill or the desire for status–to persuade an audience.

5. _____ A speaker crops a photo, omitting the part that contradicts the position advocated.

6. _____ A speaker uses figures from a poll taken twenty years ago on a fast-changing topic, but doesn't mention when the poll was taken.

7. _____ A speaker copies a speech off the internet and presents it as original.

Here are some responses that most writers on and instructors of public speaking and ethics would likely give. But, not all; some writers, instructors, and students may disagree with one or all of these responses. All of these issues are raised again and covered more fully throughout this text.

1. **A speaker talks about evidence supporting the position advocated but omits contradictory evidence.** A speaker isn't obligated to discuss evidence and argument that does not support his or her position or to identify the negative qualities of a witness's testimony. That's the opponent's job. But, if the speaker deliberately *conceals* relevant details that would influence the audience against the position advocated, it would be unethical.

2. **A speaker reworks a quotation by a famous scientist, say, to support the advocated position.** This would be unethical. Quotations need to be presented in full and presented with the original intention of the author. However, a speaker may change a quotation for special effect if it's identified as such, as in cases of paraphrasing or adding special emphasis.

3. **A speaker uses a visual aid found on the internet.** If this is for your class speech (that is a non-profit, educational activity), it's generally considered acceptable to use it if you identify its origin. If you were to profit financially from the speech with the visual aid, then you would need to secure permission.

4. **A speaker uses emotional appeals–for example, fear or the desire for status–to persuade an audience.** Emotional appeals are frequently a large part of public speaking, and especially persuasive speaking, and there is generally nothing unethical about using emotional appeals. However, if the speaker uses emotional appeals to cover up the absence of sound argument and evidence or to undermine the thought processes of the listeners, then it would be unethical.

5. **A speaker crops a photo, omitting the part that contradicts the position advocated.** This would be unethical because the speaker is preventing the audience from seeing the truth as presented in the entire photo and as the photographer photographed it.

6. **A speaker uses figures from a poll taken twenty years ago on a fast-changing topic, but doesn't mention when the poll was taken.** This would be unethical. The speaker is deliberately concealing information that is relevant to the audience thinking clearly and logically about the issue.

7. **A speaker copies a speech off the internet and presents it as original.** This is clearly unethical and illustrates one of the most important ethical concepts in all college courses, *plagiarism,* a topic discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Researching Your Speech.

ETHICAL CHOICE POINT

SILENCING A SPEECH AND SPEAKER

Because of the central importance of ethics in public speaking, each of the chapters contains an Ethical Choice Point in which a brief scenario of an ethical dilemma is presented, and you're asked to consider your ethical options and your ethical decision. The first of these, "Silencing a Speech and Speaker," *is presented here.*

Your college has invited a politician to speak at a graduation. Students are planning to protest this speaker who has repeatedly advocated positions that many find abhorrent. The protest is to take the form of drowning out the speaker with everything from bullhorns to music to videos shown on the auditorium walls. A representative of this protesting group approaches you and asks for your support. You oppose the beliefs of this speaker and yet you strongly believe in free speech. *What are some of your options for being true to both your political convictions and your free speech beliefs? What would you say?*

MANAGING COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

1.3 Explain the nature of communication apprehension and suggest ways of managing the fear of public speaking.

Communication apprehension refers to a fear of speaking in a variety of communication situations, as opposed to **public speaking apprehension**, which is fear of speaking to a live or online audience and the one on which we focus here.

Some people fear interpersonal interactions or group discussions, but the greatest number of people fear public speaking. After all, you're the center of attention, whether

speaking to of 20 or 30 people or creating a podcast that will be heard by thousands. Plus, you're being evaluated. Your fear is normal. Fortunately, this fear is also something that can be managed and made to work for you rather than against you. So, let's deal with this fear of public speaking and explain what it is and how you can manage it.

You may wish to pause here and consider your own apprehension about speaking in public by taking the accompanying test (McCroskey, 1970).

Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)

Directions: Below are 34 statements that people sometimes make about themselves. Please indicate whether you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5.

1. _____ While preparing for giving a speech, I feel tense and nervous.

2. _____ I feel tense when I see the words *speech* and *public speech* on a course outline when studying.

3. _____ My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.

4. _____ Right after giving a speech I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.

5. _____ I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up.

6. _____ I have no fear of giving a speech.

7. _____ Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.

8. _____ I look forward to giving a speech.

9. _____ When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.

10. _____ My hands tremble when I am giving a speech.

11. _____ I feel relaxed while giving a speech.

12. _____ I enjoy preparing for a speech.

13. _____ I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.

14. _____ I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I don't know.

15. _____ I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.

16. _____ I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving a speech.

17. _____ My mind is clear when giving a speech.

18. _____ I do not dread giving a speech.

19. _____ I perspire just before starting a speech.

20. _____ My heart beats very fast just as I start a speech.

21. _____ I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before my speech starts.

22. _____ Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.

23. _____ Realizing that only a little time remains in a speech makes me very tense and anxious.

24. _____ While giving a speech, I know I can control my feelings of tension and stress.

25. _____ I breathe faster just before starting a speech.

26. _____ I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before giving a speech.

27. _____ I do poorer on speeches because I am anxious.

28. _____ I feel anxious when the teacher announces the date of a speaking assignment.

29. _____ When I make a mistake while giving a speech, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow.

30. _____ During an important speech I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.

31. _____ I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speech.

32. _____ My heart beats very fast while I present a speech.

33. _____ I feel anxious while waiting to give my speech.

34. _____ While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Scoring: To determine your score on the PRPSA, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Add scores for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34

Step 2. Add the scores for items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, and 26

Step 3. Complete the following formula:

PRPSA = 72 - Total from Step 2 + Total from Step 1

If you scored 131 or higher, you would be considered to have high communication apprehension. If you scored between 98 to 130, you'd be considered to have moderate apprehension. A score lower than 98 would indicate you have little apprehension.

Assuming you're like most people and your score is higher than 98, don't despair. There are lots of ways you can manage your public speaking apprehension. However, let's first discuss the nature of communication apprehension and then we'll consider four of the most important strategies for addressing public speaking apprehension: (1) reduce the influence of those factors that cause apprehension, (2) restructure your thinking, (3) practice performance visualization, and (4) desensitize yourself (Bodie, 2010; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). These techniques, previewed in Figure 1.2, will

Figure 1.2 Ways to Manage Public Speaking Apprehension
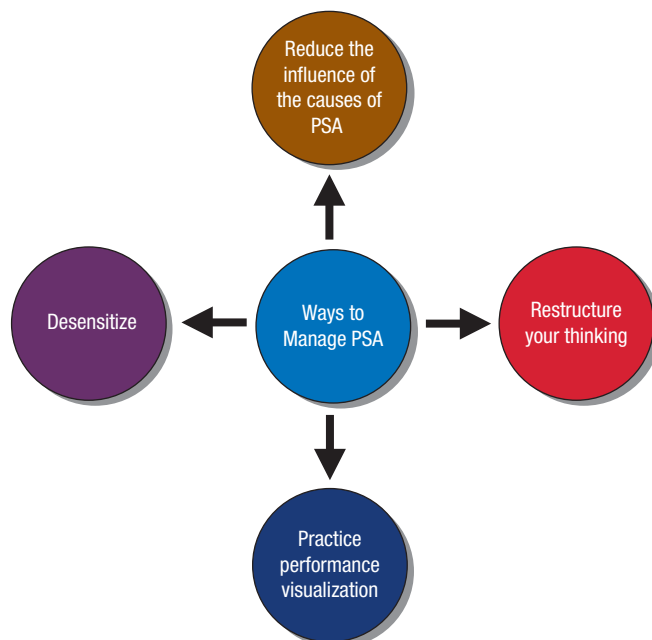
also help you manage apprehensiveness, social anxiety, and discomfort in most social and work communication situations.

1.3.1   The Nature of Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension can exist as a trait or a state and exists on a continuum, varying from mild to severe. Let's look at each of these characteristics.

Trait and State Apprehension

Some people have a general communication apprehension that shows itself in all communication situations. These people suffer from **trait apprehension**—a general fear of communication, regardless of the specific situation. Their fear appears in conversations, small group settings, and public speaking situations. Not surprisingly, if you have high trait apprehension, you're also more likely to experience embarrassment in a variety of social situations (Withers & Vernon, 2006). Similarly, people high in apprehensiveness are likely to have problems in the work environment. For example, they may perform badly in employment interviews and may contribute fewer ideas in group meetings (Butler, 2005).

Other people experience communication apprehension in only certain communication situations. These people suffer from **state apprehension**—a fear that is specific to a given communication situation. For example, a speaker may fear public speaking but have no difficulty in talking with two or three other people. Or a speaker may fear job interviews but have no fear of public speaking. State apprehension is extremely common. Some will find online public speaking easier than face to face and still others will feel the reverse.

Contrary to popular belief, neither trait nor state apprehension is necessarily harmful. In fact, apprehension can work for you. Fear can energize you. It may motivate you to work a little harder—to produce a speech that will be better than it might have been had you not been fearful. It might also help to realize that the audience cannot see the apprehension that you may be experiencing. Even though you may think that audience members can hear your heart beat faster, they can't. They can't see your knees tremble. They can't sense your dry throat—at least not most of the time. And there is some evidence to show that nervousness in public speaking is not necessarily evaluated negatively by the audience (Cuddy, 2015).

Apprehension Exists on a Continuum

Communication apprehension can vary from mild to severe; it exists on a continuum. Some people are so apprehensive that they're unable to function effectively in any communication situation and will try to avoid communication as much as possible. Other people are so mildly apprehensive that they appear to experience no fear at all; they're the ones who actively seek out communication opportunities. Most of us are between these extremes.

1.3.2   Reduce the Causes of Apprehension

If you can reduce the factors that cause apprehension, you'll be able to reduce your apprehension significantly. The following suggestions are based on research identifying the major factors contributing to your fear of public speaking (Beatty, 1988; Bodie, 2010; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998).

- **Reduce Newness.** Reduce the newness of public speaking by gaining experience and practicing. New and different situations like public speaking are likely to make anyone anxious, so try to reduce the newness and uniqueness. One way to do this is to get as much public speaking experience as you can. Experience will show you that the rewarding feeling of accomplishment you gain from public speaking will outweigh any initial anxiety. Try also to familiarize yourself with the public speaking context. For example, try to rehearse in the room in which you'll give your speech.

- **Reduce self-focus.** Reduce your self-focus by visualizing public speaking as conversation. When you're the center of attention, as you are in public speaking, you may feel especially conspicuous, which often increases anxiety. It may help, therefore, to think of public speaking as another type of conversation (some theorists call it "enlarged conversation"). Or if you're comfortable talking in groups, visualize your audience as a small group.

- **Reduce differences.** Reduce your perceived difference from the audience by stressing similarity. When you feel similar to (rather than different from) your audience, your anxiety should lessen. This is especially important when your audience consists of people from cultures that are different from your own (Stephan & Stephan, 1992). In such cases you're likely to feel fewer similarities with your listeners and experience greater anxiety (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984; Gudykunst, Yang, & Nishida, 1985). So, with all audiences, but especially with multicultural groups, stress similarities such as shared attitudes, values, or beliefs. This tactic will make you feel more affiliated with your listeners and therefore more confident as a speaker.

- **Reduce fear of failure.** Reduce your fear of failure by thoroughly preparing and practicing. Much of the fear you experience is a fear of failure. Adequate and even extra preparation will lessen the possibility of failure and the accompanying apprehension (Smith & Frymier, 2006). Because apprehension is greatest during the beginning of the speech, try memorizing the first few sentences of your speech. If there are complicated facts or figures, be sure to write them out and plan to read them. This way you won't have to worry about forgetting them completely.

- **Reduce negativity.** Reduce any negative thoughts. Put aside any thoughts of failure and focus on the positive side—you're learning a new skill that will help you throughout your life. Be positive about it.

- **Reduce perceived importance.** Reduce the importance that you place on this specific public speaking situation. This may seem a contradiction to our emphasis on the importance of public speaking. But this suggestion refers to the importance of the actual performance—not the learning of the skills. One way to do this is to use the 10/10/10 method (Welsh, 2009) and ask yourself what your speech presentation—whatever it turns out to be— will mean 10 minutes from now? Ten months from now? Ten years from now? It's a useful procedure to gain different

perspectives on a variety of issues and choices you deal with every day. Another way to do this is to reduce the "public" in public speaking. Instead of looking at presenting your speech as a *public performance*, think of it as a *conversation* with a group of friends.

- **Reduce perfectionism.** Reduce any perfectionistic attitudes and beliefs. If you go into your speaking assignments with the thought that you have to be perfect, you're likely to be disappointed. After all, no one is perfect. You're now in a learning environment where you can learn from your failures as well as from your successes.

- **Reduce excess energy that creates anxiety.** Get rid of some of your excess energy by moving about and breathing deeply. Physical activity—including movements of the whole body as well as small movements of the hands, face, and head—lessens apprehension. Using a presentation aid, for example, will temporarily divert attention from you and will allow you to get rid of your excess energy as you move to display it. Also, try breathing deeply a few times before getting up to speak. You'll feel your body relax, and this will help you overcome your initial fear of walking to the front of the room.

- **Avoid chemicals.** Avoid using chemicals as tension relievers. Unless prescribed by a physician, avoid any chemical means for reducing apprehension. Tranquilizers, marijuana, artificial stimulants, or alcohol are likely to create problems rather than reduce them. These chemicals can impair your ability to remember parts of your speech, to accurately read audience feedback, and to regulate the timing of your speech. Instead, research would advise you to consider the value of exercise and diet. For example, moderate exercise and fermented foods such as sauerkraut decrease stress and anxiety, which should in turn reduce any speaking apprehension (Davidson, 2014).

1.3.3   Restructure Your Thinking

Cognitive restructuring is a proven technique for reducing a great number of fears and stresses (Beck, 1988; Ellis, 1988; Nordahl & Wells, 2007). The general idea behind this technique is that the way you think about a situation influences the way you react to the situation. If you can change the way you think about a situation (reframe it, restructure it, reappraise it), you'll be able to change your reactions. So, if you think that *public* speaking will produce stress (fear, apprehension, anxiety), then reappraising it as the less threatening *conversation* will reduce the stress, fear, apprehension, and anxiety.

Much public speaking apprehension is based on unrealistic thinking, on thinking that is self-defeating. For example, you may think that you're a poor speaker or that you're boring or that the audience won't like you or that you have to be perfect. Instead of thinking in terms of these unrealistic and self-defeating assumptions, substitute realistic ones, especially when tackling new things like public speaking.

Positive and supportive thoughts may help you restructure your thinking. Remind yourself of your successes, strengths, and virtues. Concentrate on your potential, not on your limitations. Use **self-affirmations** such as "I'm friendly and can communicate this in my speeches," "I can learn the techniques for controlling my fear," "I'm a competent person and have the potential to be an effective speaker," and "I can make mistakes and learn from them."

1.3.4   Practice Performance Visualization

A variation of cognitive restructuring is **performance visualization**, a technique designed specifically to reduce the outward signs of apprehension and also to reduce the negative thinking that often creates anxiety (Ayres, 2005).

JOURNAL 1.3
Public Speaking Choice Point
DEALING WITH APPREHENSION
This is Harry's first experience with public speaking and he's very nervous. He's afraid he'll forget his speech or stumble somehow. So, he's wondering if it would be a good idea to alert the audience of this fear. *What are Harry's options for dealing with this issue? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option? What would you advise Harry to do?*

First, develop a positive attitude and a positive self-perception. Visualize yourself in the role of an effective public speaker. Visualize yourself walking to the front of the room—fully and totally confident, fully in control of the situation. The audience is in rapt attention and, as you finish, bursts into wild applause. Throughout this visualization avoid all negative thoughts. As you visualize yourself as an effective speaker, take note of how you walk, look at your listeners, handle your notes, and respond to questions; also, think about how you will feel about a successful public speaking experience.

Another way to do this is to use **power priming**, a technique designed to give you confidence and a sense of power (Cuddy, 2015; Galinsky & Kilduff, 2013). Although there is considerable debate on the efficacy of power priming, you might want to give it a try (Dominus, 2017). Some examples of power priming before giving your speech include assuming a power position (in which you strike a powerful pose and hold it for a minute or two), recalling a time when you had authority over others, or even reading about powerful people or just reading powerful words.

Second, model your performance on that of an especially effective speaker. View a particularly competent public speaker on video; YouTube and other online video services make these easy to access and enjoyable to watch. As you view the video, gradually shift yourself into the role of speaker; become the speaker you admire.

1.3.5   Desensitize Yourself

Systematic desensitization is a technique for dealing with a variety of fears, including those involved in public speaking (Dwyer, 2005; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998; Wolpe, 1957). The general idea is to create a hierarchy of behaviors leading up to the desired but feared behavior (say, speaking before an audience). One specific hierarchy might look like this:

5. Giving a speech in class
4. Introducing another speaker to the class
3. Speaking in a group in front of the class
2. Answering a question in class
1. Asking a question in class

The main objective of this experience is to learn to relax, beginning with relatively easy tasks and progressing to the behavior you're apprehensive about—in this case, giving a

Mikolette/E+/Getty Images

speech in class. You begin at the bottom of the hierarchy and rehearse the first behavior mentally over a period of days until you can clearly visualize asking a question in class without being uncomfortable. Once you can accomplish this, move to the second level. Here you visualize a somewhat more threatening behavior—say, answering a question. Once you can do this, move to the third level, and so on, until you get to the desired behavior.

In creating your hierarchy, use small steps to help you get from one step to the next more easily. Each success will make the next step easier. You might then go on to engage in the actual behaviors after you have comfortably visualized them: ask a question, answer a question, and so on.

PREPARING AND PRESENTING A SPEECH: THE 10 STEPS IN BRIEF

1.4   Identify the 10 steps necessary for preparing and presenting a public speech.

With the nature and benefits of public speaking and an understanding of communication apprehension and some ways for managing it, we can look now at the essential steps for preparing an effective public speech. As previewed in Figure 1.3, these are the steps: (1) select your topic, purposes, and thesis; (2) analyze your audience; (3) research your topic; (4) collect supporting materials; (5) develop your main points; (6) organize your speech materials; (7) construct your introduction, conclusion, and transitions and outline your speech; (8) word your speech; (9) rehearse your speech; and (10) present your speech.

1.4.1   Step 1: Select Your Topic, Purposes, and Thesis

Your first step is to select your topic, your general and specific purposes, and your thesis (or main idea).

Figure 1.3   The Steps in Public Speaking Preparation and Delivery

Speakers differ in the order in which they follow these steps. Some speakers, for example, prefer to begin with audience analysis; they ask themselves what the audience is interested in and then select the topic and purpose. Some speakers prefer to identify their main points before conducting extensive research, whereas others prefer to allow the points to emerge from the research. The order presented here will prove useful to most speakers for most situations, but you can vary the order to serve your purposes. As long as you cover all steps, you should be in good shape.

1 Select your topic, purposes, and thesis

2 Analyze your audience

3 Research your topic

4 Collect supporting materials

5 Develop your main points

6 Organize your speech materials

7 Construct your introduction, conclusion, and transitions

8 Word your speech

9 Rehearse your speech

10 Present your speech
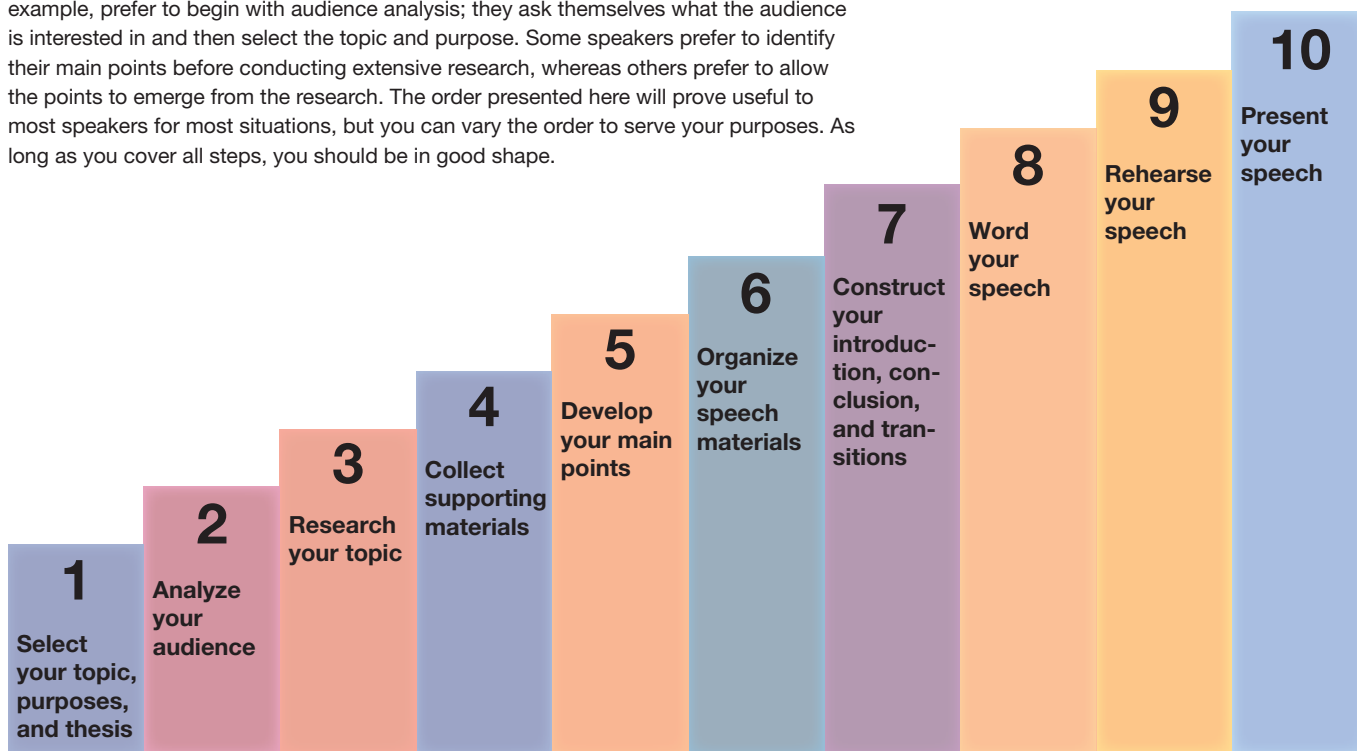
Select a **topic** that is *appropriate* both to you as the speaker (one that you're interested in and want to learn more about) and to your audience (one that they're interested in and want to know more about), *culturally sensitive,* and *limited in scope.*

Select your **general purpose**. In an *informative speech* you would seek to define a term or theory, describe how something works, or demonstrate how to do something. In a *persuasive speech* you would seek to influence your audience's attitudes or behaviors: to strengthen, weaken, or change them or to move them to action. In the *special occasion speech,* which contains elements of both information and persuasion, you would seek to introduce another speaker, present a tribute, secure the goodwill of the listeners, entertain the audience, or serve a variety of other ceremonial functions.

Select your **specific purpose**. For example, specific informative purposes might be *to inform the audience about a proposed education budget* or *to describe the way a television pilot is audience tested*. Specific persuasive purposes might be *to persuade audience members to support a proposed budget* or *to influence them to vote for Smith*. Specific purposes for special occasion speeches might include *introducing a guest speaker to a class, celebrating a holiday*, or *giving a toast at a friend's wedding.*

Formulate your **thesis** or central idea in one sentence. This is the essence of your speech, the one thing you want your audience to remember. If your speech is informative, your thesis is the main idea that you want your audience to understand; for example: a newspaper company is organized into three divisions. If your speech is persuasive, then your thesis is the central idea that you want your audience to accept or believe; for example, we should adopt the new e-mail system.

1.4.2   Step 2: Analyze Your Audience

In public speaking, your audience is central to your topic and purpose–whether they are sitting in front of you or watching you on their laptops, tablets, or smartphones. Your success in informing or persuading an audience rests largely on **audience analysis**—the extent to which you know your listeners and the extent to which you've adapted your speech to them.

For example, ask yourself:

- Do you need to adapt your speech on the basis of the audience's age, gender makeup, or culture?

Hxdbzxy/123rf

VIEWPOINTS

Analyzing an Audience

Sophia wants to give her speech on the value of atheism. *If this speech were to be given to your class, what are some of the things Sophia would need to know about her audience? And what might Sophia do with this information? That is, given this information, how will this help Sophia adapt her speech to this specific audience?*

- Do you need to adapt your speech to the audience's knowledge or lack of knowledge on a topic? If they're knowledgeable, then your speech needs to build on what they already know; if this is a new topic, then you'll need to start with the basics.

- Do you need to adapt your speech on the basis of their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions?

1.4.3   Step 3: Research Your Topic

If your speech is to be worthwhile and if both you and your audience are to profit from it, you'll need to **research** your topic—to conduct a systematic search for relevant information. The most obvious value to doing research is that you'll find examples, illustrations, and definitions to help you inform your listeners; testimony, statistics, and arguments to support your major ideas; and personal anecdotes, quotations, and stories to help you bring your topics to life.

Research will also help you establish your credibility—your competence, your mastery over the material. If audience members see you as credible—as having done your research—the more likely are they to believe in you, apart from any specific argument you might make.

As you would in a term paper, cite the research—briefly and simply—in what is called an **oral citation**. For example: *In my explanation of xyz, I'm following the ideas of ABC in the* ABC Guide to Corporations or *as stated in the last issue of* The Washington Post or *The Federal Bureau of Statistics notes that....* The lack of an oral citation (when one is needed) would amount to **plagiarism**—taking credit for someone else's work, a kind of intellectual theft which you definitely want to avoid (See Chapter 5).

1.4.4   Step 4: Collect Supporting Materials

Once you've identified your thesis, know something about your audience, and have begun to do your research, turn your attention to supporting each point. Tell the audience what it needs to know about the newspaper divisions. Convince the audience that the new e-mail system is better than the present one.

In the informative speech your **supporting materials**—for example, definitions, statistics, examples, illustrations, and visual and audio aids—will enable you to define, describe, or demonstrate what you want. In a persuasive speech your support is—in addition to the supporting materials already noted—**proof**, material that offers evidence, argument, and motivational appeal and establishes your credibility.

1.4.5   Step 5: Develop Your Main Points

Once you have worded your thesis, identify the main ideas you want to use to clarify or support it. We'll call these the **main points** of the speech. You can identify these main points by asking strategic questions about your thesis. For informative speeches the most helpful questions are "What?" and "How?" For example, for the thesis "A newspaper company now has three divisions," you'd ask, "What are the divisions?" Your answers might yield something like the following in outline form:

Thesis: "A newspaper company has three divisions." (What are the divisions?)

    I. The publishing division makes major decisions for the entire paper.

    II. The editorial division produces news and features.

    III. The business division sells advertising and prints the paper.

For a persuasive speech the question you'd ask is "Why?" For example, if your thesis is "We should adopt the new e-mail system," then the inevitable question is

"Why should we adopt the new system?" Your answers to this question will identify the major parts of the speech, which might look like this:

> Thesis: "We should adopt the new e-mail system." (Why should we adopt the new e-mail system?)
>
> I. The new system is easier to operate.
>
> II. The new system has a better spell checker.
>
> III. The new system provides more options for organizing messages.

1.4.6   Step 6: Organize Your Speech Materials

The appropriate **organization** of your materials will help your audience understand and retain what you say. It will help your audience follow your train of thought. In fact, you might want to tell your audience something about the organization you'll use—for example, *I'm going to follow a chronological pattern in describing the events leading up to the riots* or *I'm going to first present the problems that the current system creates and then the solutions that will eliminate these problems.*

1.4.7   Step 7: Construct Your Introduction, Conclusion, and Transitions

In your introduction, try to accomplish these three goals.

- **First, gain your listeners' attention.** A provocative statistic, a little-known fact, an interesting story, or a statement explaining the topic's significance will help secure this initial attention.

- **Second, establish connections among yourself, the topic, and the audience.** To establish such connections, you might tell audience members why you're speaking on this topic, why you're concerned with the topic, and why you're competent to address them.

- **Third, orient your audience;** tell them what you're going to talk about.

In your conclusion, you can do three things (though not all conclusions need all three).

- **First, summarize your ideas.** For example, you might restate your main points, summing up what you've told the audience.

- **Second, motivate the audience.** For example, you might ask for a specific response (for instance, to volunteer at the local hospital), restate the importance of the issue for the audience, or suggest future actions your listeners might take (this function is most appropriate for persuasive speeches).

- **Third, wrap up your speech.** Develop a crisp ending that makes it clear to your audience that your speech is at an end.

Use **transitions** to connect the parts of your speech to help the audience follow your train of thought. Use transitions:

- **between your introduction and your first major proposition**; for example, "Let's now look at the first of these three elements"

- **between each of your main points**; for example, "But not only is cigarette smoking dangerous to the smoker, it's also dangerous to the nonsmoker."

- **between your last main point and your conclusion**; for example, "As we saw, there were three sources of evidence against the butler: motive, means, and opportunity."

1.4.8   Step 8: Word Your Speech

Because your audience will hear your speech only once, make what you say instantly intelligible. Don't talk down to your audience; but do make your ideas, even complex

ones, easy to understand in one hearing. Use words that are simple rather than complex, concrete as well as abstract. Use language that is personal and informal rather than impersonal and formal.

1.4.9 Step 9: Rehearse Your Speech

You've prepared your speech to deliver to an audience, so your next step is **rehearsal**. Practice your speech, from start to finish, out loud, at least four times before presenting it in class. During these rehearsals, time your speech to make sure that you stay within the specified time limits. Include in your outline any notes that you want to remember during the actual speech—notes to remind you to use a presentation aid, for example, or to read a quotation.

Prepare to speak extemporaneously, a method in which you rehearse your speech thoroughly but avoid memorizing it. You may, however, wish to memorize your main points and their order and perhaps your introduction and conclusion.

1.4.10 Step 10: Present Your Speech

In your actual presentation, use your voice and physical gestures to reinforce your message. Make it easy for your listeners to understand your speech. Any vocal irregularities or body movements that draw attention to themselves (and away from what you're saying) should be avoided. Here are a few guidelines that will prove helpful.

- When called on to speak, approach the front of the room with enthusiasm. Even if you feel nervous, like most speakers, show your desire to speak with your listeners.

- When at the front of the room, don't begin immediately; instead, pause, engage your audience eye to eye for a brief moment, and then begin to talk directly to the audience.

- Throughout your speech, maintain eye contact with your entire audience; avoid concentrating on only a few members or looking out of the window or at the floor.

THE SPEECH OF SELF-INTRODUCTION

1.5 Explain the general guidelines for a speech of self-introduction.

Now that you've covered the 10 steps for constructing and presenting a speech—each of which is discussed in greater detail in the chapters that follow—try out your new skills. A common first assignment in many public speaking courses is the **speech of self-introduction**, a brief speech in which you introduce yourself to others. This

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assignment is often used to create a community within the classroom so that students get to know one another as individuals as they begin applying the principles of public speaking. It is also a speech that would be given in your bid for student election, to your new work colleagues, or in your introduction to your podcast or webinar. Usually, the speech is for two to five minutes and consists of a few hundred words. (In Chapter 13 another type of introductory speech is considered—the speech in which you introduce another speaker, often a person of some note.)

1.5.1 Guidelines for the Speech of Self-Introduction

Here are guidelines for the speech of self-introduction.

1. **Present your self-introduction with all its parts.** Even if the speech is for two minutes, it still needs its major parts—introduction, body, and conclusion.
2. **Consider your own public speaking apprehension.** Most students are fearful of public speaking, so consider whether you want to bring up your own fears of speaking in front of a group. The advantage of talking about it—even if very briefly—is that you bond with your audience. The disadvantage is that you alert your audience to look for signs of nervousness; and you may even help to convince yourself that you are and will be forever fearful of public speaking.
3. **Stay within the time limits.** These have been established so that everyone can give speeches within a certain amount of time.
4. **Focus on topics you have in common with other students**—for example, your major or intended major, your academic interests, your outside interests, your job, your professional goals, and perhaps what you hope to get out of this public speaking course.
5. **Tell your audience what you want them to know.** You do not have to reveal your inner self and should not feel pressure to do so. Reveal only what you want to reveal.

1.5.2 A Sample Speech of Self-Introduction

Figure 1.4 is a sample speech of self-introduction written to illustrate some of the essential guidelines. It's written to represent what a student might say in introducing himself or herself to the class. It would naturally be very different if it were an introduction to your webinar where you'd want to perhaps emphasize your credibility. This speech is 368 words and would take approximately 2 minutes to deliver.

JOURNAL 1.5
Public Speaking Choice Point
INTRODUCING YOURSELF
Karla is planning her speech of introduction and wonders if she should mention that she was born a male and is in the process of transitioning to female. *What are some of Karla's choices for dealing with this question? What would you advise Karla to do if she were giving this speech in your class?*

Figure 1.4 A Sample Speech of Self-introduction

INTRODUCTION

A simple opener with some "essential" information about you is one way to introduce the speech. Don't spend time needlessly on elaborate introductions. In longer speeches, the introduction will naturally also be longer.

Hello, my name is Pat Smith. Not a very distinctive name; in fact, Smith is the most popular surname in the United States with over two and a half million Smiths.

I thought I'd tell you a little something about where I came from, why I'm here, and what I hope to do.

In such a short speech, this orientation may not be essential but it does tell the listener how you've developed your speech.

(Continued)

Figure 1.4 A Sample Speech of Self-introduction (*Continued*)

BODY

Here the speaker displays a positivity about these new experiences, probably shared and appreciated by many listeners. The speaker also reveals a little-known fact—about hip hop—that the audience is likely to find interesting.

I come from the Bronx, New York—where, by the way, in 1973 at a birthday party on Sedgwick Avenue—not far from where I grew up, hip-hop was born. Of course, it's also the home of Yankee Stadium. So, being out here in a small town–this is my first semester at Blake—is really very new to me. No skyscrapers, no Starbucks on every corner, no subways, no delivery trucks waking up the neighborhood in the middle of the night. But, so far, I'm liking the change. Everyone has been very friendly and my classes all seem interesting—a lot different from high school.

I'm taking this course because I want to lessen my stage fright and become more comfortable in front of an audience. My dream is to become a defense lawyer and I'll need to be able to speak comfortably and confidently to persuade a jury. Of course, that's a long way off. But, I'm planning nevertheless. I hope to declare a joint major in communication and political science and then, hopefully, get into a good law school.

Talking a bit about why you're taking public speaking is often interesting to include. Hearing the reasons from different students is sure to illustrate the broad range of applications there are to public speaking; and could probably benefit other students to see these different perspectives.

Again, the speaker is extremely positive and talks briefly about his future plans.

Right now, I want to get to know everyone and to join the photography club. I hear it's excellent and I'm looking forward to going on the annual photography safari. This year it's in Iceland.

Outside of school, you can find me at Mickey's Burger Joint, flipping burgers and sometimes waiting on tables. Some of the customers are really difficult. Some customers ask for things we don't have and then get annoyed because we don't have them. Some are in a hurry and want their burger right away and some are undecided and take forever to decide. But most of the customers are really nice and I actually enjoy going to work—at least most days.

Since many students also have jobs, you may want to mention your employment.

In such a short speech, the conclusion must also be short but crisp and definite. Let the audience know that you're finished. If you wish you can add a simple "thank you" or "I appreciate your attention." But, in any case, be brief.

CONCLUSION

So, I'm new, I'm anxious, and I'm looking forward to a great time at Blake.

SUMMARY: INTRODUCING PUBLIC SPEAKING

This first chapter looked at the benefits of public speaking, its essential elements, and probably the most important obstacle to public speaking—namely, communication apprehension. In addition, the 10 steps for preparing and presenting a public speech were identified and discussed briefly. A discussion of the speech of self-introduction is presented as an initial application of the 10 steps of public speaking.

The Benefits of Studying Public Speaking

1.1 Identify three benefits of studying public speaking.

1. Among the benefits of studying public speaking are: (1) improved public speaking abilities—as speaker, as listener, and as critic—which result in personal benefits as well as benefits to society; (2) increased personal and social abilities; and (3) improved academic and career skills in organization, research, style, and the like.

Essential Elements of Public Speaking

1.2 Define *public speaking* and its essential elements.

2. Public speaking is a process in which (1) a speaker (2) addresses (3) a relatively large audience with (4) a relatively continuous message.

> The essential elements of public speaking are: (1) the speaker, the one who presents the speech; (2) audiences, the intended receivers of the speech who may be immediate or remote; (3) messages, the verbal and nonverbal signals; (4) noise, the interference that distorts messages; (5) contexts, the physical space, the socio-psychological atmosphere, the time, and the culture of the audience to whom the speech is being presented; (6) channels, the medium through which the signals pass from speaker to listener; and (7) ethics, the moral dimension of communication.

Managing Communication Apprehension

1.3 Explain the nature of communication apprehension and suggest ways of managing your fear of public speaking.

3. Communication apprehension, the fear of speaking, is often especially high in public speaking. In managing your fear of public speaking, try to: (1) reverse the factors that contribute to apprehension by reducing newness, self-focus, perceived differentness with the audience, and fear of failure by thoroughly preparing and practicing, and move about to eliminate some excess energy; (2) restructure your thinking; (3) practice performance visualization; and (4) desensitize yourself.

Preparing and Presenting a Speech: 10 Steps in Brief

1.4 Identify the 10 steps necessary for preparing and presenting a public speech.

4. An effective speech generally entails these 10 steps: Step 1, select your topic, general and specific purposes, and thesis; Step 2, analyze your audience: seek to discover what is unique about your listeners and how you might adapt your speech to them; Step 3, research your topic so you know as much as you possibly can, within your time limit; Step 4, collect your supporting materials; Step 5, develop your main points; Step 6, organize your main points into an easily comprehended pattern; Step 7, construct your introduction (to gain attention, establish a speaker–audience–topic connection, and orient the audience), conclusion (to summarize, motivate, and close), and transitions (to hold the parts together and make going from one part to another clear to your audience); Step 8, word your speech, focusing on being as clear as possible; Step 9, rehearse your speech until you feel confident and comfortable with the material and with your audience interaction; and Step 10, present your speech to your intended audience.

The Speech of Self-Introduction

1.5 Explain the general guidelines for a speech of self-introduction.

5. The speech of self-introduction is brief and only as revealing as you want it to be.

KEY TERMS: INTRODUCING PUBLIC SPEAKING

asynchronous public speaking, p. 7
audience, p. 5
audience analysis, p. 17
channel, p. 6
cognitive restructuring, p. 14
communication apprehension, p. 9
context, p. 7
cultural context, p. 7
ethics, p. 8
general purpose, p. 17
immediate audience, p. 5
main points, p. 18
message, p. 6

noise, p. 7
oral citation, p. 18
organization, p. 19
performance visualization, p. 14
physical context, p. 7
plagiarism, p. 18
power priming, p. 15
proof, p. 18
public speaking, p. 2
public speaking apprehension, p. 9
rehearsal, p. 20
remote audience, p. 5
research, p. 18

self-affirmation, p. 14
socio-psychological context, p. 7
speaker, p. 5
specific purpose, p. 17
state apprehension, p. 12
supporting materials, p. 18
synchronous public speaking, p. 7
systematic desensitization, p. 15
temporal context, p. 7
thesis, p. 17
topic, p. 17
trait apprehension, p. 12
transitions, p. 19

PUBLIC SPEAKING EXERCISES

These exercises, presented at the end of each chapter, are designed to stimulate you to think more actively about the key concepts and skills covered in the chapter and to help you practice your developing public speaking skills.

1.1 A Model of Public Speaking

Construct your own model of public speaking and indicate how it differs from various other forms of communication, such as face-to-face conversation, e-mail, blogging, interviewing, and small group communication.

1.2 Cultural Beliefs and Your Audience

Evaluate each of the cultural beliefs listed below in terms of how effective each would be if used as a basic assumption by a speaker addressing your public speaking class. Use the following scale: *A* = the audience would accept this assumption and welcome a speaker with this point of view; *B* = some members would listen open-mindedly, and others wouldn't; or *C* = the audience would reject this assumption and would not welcome a speaker with this point of view. What guidelines for speeches to be given to this class audience does this analysis suggest?

1. _____ A return to religious values is the best hope for the world.

2. _____ Embryonic stem cell research should be encouraged.

3. _____ The invasion of Iraq was morally unjustified.

4. _____ Winning is all-important; it's not how you play the game, it's whether you win that matters.

5. _____ Keeping the United States militarily superior is the best way to preserve world peace.

6. _____ Immigration to the United States should be significantly reduced.

7. _____ Same-sex relationships are equal in all ways to opposite-sex relationships.

8. _____ The strong and the rich are responsible for taking care of the weak and the poor.

9. _____ Getting to heaven should be life's major goal.

10. _____ Money is a positive good; the quest for financial success is a perfectly respectable (even a noble) goal.

How would you describe members of your class in terms of their knowledge, interests, attitudes, and beliefs about religion, politics, finance, technology, or culture? Select any one of these topics for your analysis. How might this analysis figure into your adapting your speeches to them?

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Whether communicating face to face or online, listening will prove crucial; it's a skill worth improving.

LISTENING AND CRITICISM

CHAPTER TOPICS

Listening in Public Speaking

Guidelines for Listening

Critical Evaluation in Public Speaking

Listening, Criticism, and Culture

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2.1 Define *listening,* explain its five stages, and identify the suggestions for improvement at each stage.

2.2 Identify the guidelines for improving your own listening.

2.3 Define *criticism* and identify the guidelines for giving and receiving critical evaluations.

2.4 Identify some of the ways in which culture influences listening and criticism.

LISTENING IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

2.1 Define *listening*, explain its five stages, and identify the suggestions for improvement at each stage.

In light of Facebook, Twitter, wikis, and blogs, we need to expand the traditional definition of listening as the receiving and processing of *auditory* signals. If posting messages on social media sites is part of human communication (which it surely is), then reading these messages must also be part of human communication and most logically a part of listening. **Listening**, then, may be defined as *the process of receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding to verbal and/or nonverbal messages.*

Effective listening will help you increase the amount of information you learn and will decrease the time you need to learn it. It will help you distinguish logical from illogical appeals and thus decrease your chances of being misled. Effective listening will also help you become a better public speaker. When you listen effectively to other speakers, you'll see more clearly what works and what doesn't work (and why); and this will help you identify the public speaking principles to follow and the pitfalls to avoid.

Speakers also have a responsibility to help the audience listen, to make it as easy and as comfortable for them to do so. As you'll see throughout this text, the best way for speakers to help listeners is to follow the principles of public speaking. For example, giving audience members a preview of what you're going to talk about will help them focus more clearly. Using a logical and clear organization will help your listeners follow your train of thought. Wording your speech in clear and simple language and with appropriate repetition and restatement will help listeners understand your message more easily.

According to our contemporary definition, then, listening is a collection of skills involving attention and concentration *(receiving)*, learning *(understanding)*, memory *(remembering)*, critical thinking *(evaluation)*, and feedback *(responding)*. You can enhance your listening ability by strengthening these skills, which make up the five steps of the listening process, previewed in Figure 2.1.

JOURNAL 2.1
Public Speaking Choice Point
SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Claire is planning to give a speech in favor of same-sex marriage. Claire herself is heterosexual, and she wonders if she should identify her affectional orientation in the speech. *If Claire were giving her speech to your class, what would you see as the advantages and disadvantages of mentioning her own affectional orientation? Would the advantages and disadvantages you identified be different if Claire were a lesbian? What would you advise Claire to do to help her keep her audience listening openly and fairly?*

Figure 2.1   The Process of Listening

This five-step model draws on a variety of models that listening researchers have developed (Alessandra, 1986; Barker, 1990; Brownell, 2018).

2.1.1   Receiving

Hearing and listening are two distinctly different processes. Hearing begins and ends with the first stage of **receiving**, and it is something that just happens when you get within earshot of some auditory stimulus. Listening, on the other hand, is quite different; it begins (but does not end) with receiving a speaker's messages. The messages a listener receives are both verbal and nonverbal; they consist of words as well as gestures, facial expressions, variations in volume and rate, and lots more, as we will see throughout this book.

At this stage of listening, you are receiving not only what is said but also what is not said. For example, you receive both the politician's summary of accomplishments in education as well as his or her omission of failed promises to improve health-care programs. You hear a friend's verbal expression of happiness over the upcoming wedding but don't see any smile or hear any enthusiasm.

Receiving messages is a highly selective process. You don't listen to all the available auditory and/or visual stimuli. Rather, you selectively tune in to certain messages and tune out others. Generally, you listen most carefully to messages that you feel will prove of value to you or that you find particularly interesting. At the same time, you give less attention to messages that have less value or are less interesting. Thus, you may listen carefully when your instructor tells you what will appear on the examination, but you may listen less carefully to an extended story or to routine announcements. To improve your receiving skills:

- **Keep your eyes on the speaker.** Make your mind follow your body and focus attention on the person speaking.

- **Be mindful of verbal and nonverbal messages.** Listen to the speaker's verbal and nonverbal messages, on what is said and on what isn't said.

- **Focus your attention on the information.** Consider what the speaker is saying rather than on any questions or objections you may have to what the speaker is saying.

- **Ignore distractions.** Avoid attending to light or noise distractions in the environment.

2.1.2   Understanding

Understanding a speaker means grasping not only the thoughts that are expressed but also the emotional tone that accompanies these thoughts; for example, the urgency or the joy or sorrow expressed in the message. To enhance understanding:

- **Relate the new information to the old.** Connect the information the speaker is giving to what you already know.

- **See the speaker's messages from the speaker's point of view.** Avoid judging the message until you fully understand it as the speaker intended.

- **Rephrase the information.** As you listen, paraphrase the speaker's ideas into your own words.

2.1.3   Remembering

Messages that you receive and understand need to be retained for at least some period of time. In public speaking situations you can enhance the process of *remembering* by taking notes or by recording the messages.

What you remember is actually not what was said but what you think (or remember) was said. Memory for speech isn't reproductive; you don't simply reproduce in your memory what the speaker said. Rather, **remembering** is reconstructive; you

actually reconstruct the messages you hear into a system that makes sense to you. Exercise 2.1 is designed to illustrate this important principle. To improve your chance of remembering, consider these suggestions:

- **Identify the thesis and the main points.** Knowing the central idea and main points will help you reconstruct the rest of the speech.

- **Repeat names and key concepts to yourself.** Fill in the crucial details or important qualifications that support the thesis and main points.

- **Identify the organizational pattern.** Knowing the organizational pattern will help you visualize and follow what the speaker is saying.

- **Summarize the message in note form.** Take notes in a retainable form that makes sense to you.

2.1.4 Evaluating

Evaluating consists of judging the message and the speaker's credibility, truthfulness, or usefulness in some way. At this stage, your own biases and prejudices become especially influential. They will affect what you single out for evaluation and what you'll just let pass. They will influence what you judge to be good and what you judge to be bad. In some situations, evaluation is more in the nature of critical analysis—a topic explored in detail later in this chapter. To make your evaluations more productive, try these suggestions:

- **Resist evaluating the speech until you understand the message.** Wait until you feel you understand (at least reasonably well) the speaker's point of view.

- **Distinguish facts from inferences.** Make sure you can tell the facts from the opinions or personal interpretations that you're making as well as those made by the speaker.

- **Identify any speaker biases.** Note any possible self-interests or prejudices that may lead the speaker to unfairly slant what he or she is presenting.

- **Identify any of your own biases.** Be aware that your own biases may lead you to remember what supports your attitudes and beliefs and to forget what contradicts them.

2.1.5 Responding

Responding occurs in two phases: (1) nonverbal (and occasionally verbal) responses you make while the speaker is talking and (2) responses you make after the speaker has stopped talking. Responses made while the speaker is talking should support the speaker and show that you're listening (reciprocity between speaker and listeners is missing from much online public speaking because the speaker doesn't see the listeners). These responses include what nonverbal researchers call **backchanneling cues**—gestures that let the speaker know that you're listening, such as nodding your head, smiling, and leaning forward (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2010).

Responses you make to the speaker after he or she has stopped talking are generally more elaborate and might include questions of clarification ("I wasn't sure what you meant by reclassification"), expressions of agreement ("You're absolutely right on this, and I'll support your proposal when it comes up for a vote"), and expressions of disagreement ("I disagree that Japanese products are superior to those produced in the United States"). To improve appropriate responding, consider these suggestions:

- **Backchannel.** Use a variety of supportive backchanneling cues. Using only one cue—for example, nodding constantly—will make it appear that you're not listening but are on automatic pilot.

- **Support the speaker.** Say something positive in your final responses.

- **Own your own responses.** State your thoughts and feelings as your own, and use I-messages. For example, say, "I think the new proposal will entail greater expense than you outlined" rather than "Everyone will object to the plan because it will cost too much."

GUIDELINES FOR LISTENING

2.2   Identify the guidelines for improving your own listening.

The skills of listening in public speaking are important for at least two reasons. First, listening (to your teacher or friends or public figures in real life or on television and the internet) occupies a good part of your communication day, every day. It's therefore logical to use that time effectively and efficiently. A second reason is that you need to listen carefully and critically to avoid being persuaded to adopt ideas that are not beneficial or productive. These same listening skills will also prove applicable in your personal and professional life. Listening is consistently ranked among the most important skills that both relationship partners and employers look for (Brownell, 2018; Worthington & Fitch-Hauser, 2018). To make your listening more effective, consider using these guidelines.

2.2.1   Listen Actively

The first step in improving your listening is to recognize that it isn't a passive activity. You cannot listen without effort. Listening is a difficult process. In many ways it's more demanding than speaking. In speaking, you control the situation; you can talk about what you like in the way you like. In listening, however, you have to follow the pace, the content, and the language of the speaker.

    Active listening is focusing your complete attention on the speaker (Perkins & Fogarty, 2006). Recall, for example, how your body almost automatically reacts to important news. You sit up straighter, incline your head toward the speaker, and remain

relatively still and quiet. You do this almost reflexively because this is how you listen most effectively. This isn't to say that you should be tense and uncomfortable, but your body should reflect your active mind.

- **Use your listening time wisely.** Think about what the speaker is saying, summarize the speaker's thoughts, formulate questions, and draw connections between what the speaker says and what you already know. At the same time, avoid focusing on external issues—with what you did last Saturday or your plans for this evening.

- **Work at listening.** Listening is hard, so be prepared to participate actively. Avoid "the entertainment syndrome," the expectation that you'll be amused and entertained by a speaker (Floyd, 1985). Set aside distractions (cell phones, laptops, and headphones) so that your listening task will have less competition.

- **Assume there's value in what the speaker is saying.** Resist assuming that what you have to say is more valuable than the speaker's remarks.

- **Take notes if appropriate.** Taking notes may be helpful if you want to ask a question about a specific item of information or if you want to include a specific statement in your critical evaluation.

2.2.2   Listen Politely

Politeness is often thought of as the exclusive function of the speaker, as solely an encoding or sending function. But politeness (or impoliteness) may also be signaled through listening. Here are a few suggestions for demonstrating that you are in fact listening politely.

- **Give supportive listening cues.** These might include nodding your head, smiling, or positioning yourself to listen more closely. Listen in a way that reflects your belief that what the speaker is saying is important. In some cultures, polite listening cues are gestures of agreement (Japanese culture is often used as an example); in other cultures, polite listening cues are attentiveness and support rather than gestures of agreement (as in the United States, for example).

- **Maintain eye contact.** In much of the United States, this is perhaps the single most important rule. If you don't maintain eye contact when someone is giving a speech, then you'll appear not to be listening—and definitely not listening politely.

- **Give positive feedback.** Throughout the listening encounter, though perhaps especially after the speaker has finished, positive feedback will be seen as polite and negative feedback as impolite. If you must give negative feedback, then do so in a way that does not attack the person. For example, first mention areas of agreement and what you liked about what the person said and stress your good intentions.

2.2.3   Listen for Total Meaning

The meaning of a message isn't only in what the speaker says; it's also in what the speaker doesn't say. The speaker on contemporary social problems who omits references to homeless people or to drug abuse communicates important messages by these very omissions. For example, listeners may infer that the speaker is poorly prepared, that the speaker's research was inadequate, or that the speaker is trying to fool the audience by not mentioning these issues. As a listener, therefore, be particularly sensitive to the meanings that significant omissions may communicate. As a speaker, recognize that most inferences that audiences draw from omissions are negative and will reflect negatively on your credibility and on the total impact of your speech.

JOURNAL 2.2
PUBLIC SPEAKING CHOICE POINT
ACTIVE LISTENING

Alex is taking a public speaking class that meets at four o'clock; and he realizes that it will take some extra effort to encourage the class to listen to his speech, since for most of them it's the end of a long day. *What are some of the things Alex can do to encourage the class to listen?*

Meaning is also communicated by the speaker's nonverbal movements and gestures, by facial expressions, and by vocal volume and rate.

- **Focus on both verbal and nonverbal messages.** Recognize both consistent and inconsistent "packages" of verbal and nonverbal messages; and take these cues as guides for drawing inferences about the message the speaker is trying to communicate. Ask questions when in doubt.

- **See the forest, then the trees.** Connect the specifics to the speaker's general theme rather than merely remembering isolated facts and figures.

- **Balance your attention between the surface and the underlying meanings.** Don't disregard the literal (surface) meaning of the speech in your attempt to uncover the more hidden (deeper) meanings.

- **Resist the temptation to filter out difficult or unpleasant messages.** You don't want to hear that something you believe is untrue or be told that people you respect are behaving unethically; yet these are the very messages you need to listen to with great care. If you filter out this kind of information, you risk failing to correct misinformation. You risk losing new and important insights.

2.2.4   Listen with Empathy

The word **empathy** refers to the process by which you are able to feel what others are feeling, to see the world as they see it, to walk in their shoes (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Of course, you can never feel exactly what the speaker is feeling, but you can attempt to feel something of what he or she is feeling, to "listen to" the feelings as well as the thoughts.

Empathic listening is best viewed in two stages. First, there is the empathy that you feel for the speaker, which enables you to better understand the speaker's thoughts and feelings. Second, there are the empathic responses that you give the speaker to let him or her know you do indeed understand what he or she means and feels. Let's start with a few suggestions for feeling empathy for the speaker.

- **See the speaker's point of view.** Before you can understand what the speaker is saying, you have to see the message from the speaker's vantage point. Try putting yourself in the role of the speaker and looking at the topic from his or her perspective.

- **Understand the speaker's thoughts and feelings.** Don't consider your listening task complete until you've understood what the speaker is feeling as well as thinking.

- **Avoid "offensive listening."** Be aware of the tendency to listen to bits and pieces of information that will enable you to attack the speaker or to find fault with something the speaker has said.

- **Don't distort messages because of the "friend-or-foe" factor.** In other words, avoid listening for positive statements about friends and negative statements about enemies. For example, if you dislike Fred, make the added effort to listen objectively to Fred's speeches or to make comments that might reflect positively on Fred.

The second part of empathy—expressing your empathy back to the speaker—can best be accomplished in two steps corresponding to the two parts in true empathy: thinking empathy and feeling empathy (Bellafiore, 2005).

1. In *thinking empathy,* you express an understanding of what the person means. For example, when you paraphrase someone's comment—as part of your criticism, for example—showing that you understand the meaning the person is trying to

communicate, you're communicating *thinking empathy.* When you nod your head in approval of a speaker's argument, you're communicating *thinking empathy.*

2. In *feeling empathy,* you express your feeling of what the other person is feeling. When your facial expressions are appropriate to the tone of the speaker's talk, you're communicating *feeling empathy*. Often you'll respond with both thinking and feeling empathy in the same brief response; for example, *I can understand what it must be like living with a partner who is always depressed [thinking empathy]; you must get depressed yourself [feeling empathy].*

2.2.5 Listen with an Open Mind

Listening with an open mind is difficult. It isn't easy to listen to arguments attacking your cherished beliefs. Listening often stops when such remarks are made. Yet in these situations it's particularly important to continue listening openly and fairly. To listen with an open mind, try to avoid prejudging, filtering, and *assimilation* and recognize your own *biases* and *prejudices*.

- **Avoid prejudging.** Delay both positive and negative evaluation until you've fully understood the intention and the content of the message being communicated. Also avoid prejudging the speech as irrelevant or uninteresting. Give the speaker a chance.

- **Avoid filtering out difficult, unpleasant, or undesirable messages.** Avoid distorting messages through oversimplification or leveling—the tendency to eliminate details and to simplify complex messages to make them easier to remember.

- **Avoid assimilation.** The tendency to reconstruct messages so they reflect your own attitudes, prejudices, needs, and values is known as **assimilation**. It is the tendency to hear relatively neutral messages ("Management plans to institute drastic changes in scheduling") as supporting your own attitudes and beliefs ("Management is going to screw up our schedules again").

- **Recognize your own biases.** A **bias** or **prejudice** is a preconceived belief that may interfere with accurate listening and cause you to distort messages to support your own opinions. Biases may also lead to sharpening—an effect in which an item of information takes on increased importance because it seems to confirm your stereotypes or point of view.

2.2.6 Listen Critically

In many public speaking situations, you'll need to exercise critical evaluation or judgment. In **critical listening**, you think logically and dispassionately about what the speaker is saying. Listening with an open mind will help you understand the messages better; listening with a critical mind will help you analyze and evaluate the messages. In listening critically, focus on the following guidelines:

- **Avoid filtering out or oversimplifying complex messages.** Similarly, avoid filtering out undesirable messages. Clearly, you don't want to hear that something you believe is untrue, that people you care for are unkind, or that ideals you hold are self-destructive. Yet it's important that you reexamine your beliefs by listening to these messages.

- **Combat the tendency to sharpen.** Be aware of the inclination to highlight, emphasize, and perhaps embellish one or two aspects of a message. Often the concepts that we tend to *sharpen* are incidental remarks that somehow stand out from the rest of the message. Be careful, therefore, about sharpening your blind date's "Thank you, I had a nice time" and assuming that the date was a big

success—while ignoring the signs that it was just so-so, such as the lack of eye contact, the awkward silences, and the cell phone interruptions.

- **Watch out for language fallacies.** Recognize language that is used to serve less-than-noble purposes, to convince or persuade you without giving you any reasons, and sometimes to fool you.

2.2.7 Listen Ethically

As a listener you share not only in the success or failure of any communication but also in the moral implications of the communication exchange. Consequently, bear ethical issues in mind when listening as well as when speaking. Two major principles govern ethical listening:

- **Give the speaker an honest hearing.** You don't have to agree with the speaker, but try to understand emotionally as well as intellectually what he or she means. Then accept or reject the speaker's ideas on the basis of the information offered—not on the basis of some bias or prejudice or incomplete understanding.

- **Give the speaker honest responses and feedback.** In a learning environment such as a public speaking class, listening ethically means giving frank and constructive criticism to help the speaker improve. It also means reflecting honestly on the questions speakers raise. Much as the listener has a right to expect an active speaker, the speaker has the right to expect a listener who will actively deal with, rather than just passively hear, the message of a speech.

In addition to these guidelines, consider the specific situation of listening in the classroom. After all, if you're going to spend the time, you might as well spend it efficiently and effectively.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "It is the privilege of wisdom to listen." That is especially true in the classroom, where a large part of your listening takes place. As you read these suggestions in Table 2.1—which also apply to listening to a webinar or podcast lecture—consider any additional ones that you might offer.

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VIEWPOINTS

Speaker Influences

Are there certain characteristics of a speaker that will influence your listening willingness and open-mindedness?

Table 2.1 Listening in the Classroom

General Guides	Specific Strategies
Prepare yourself to listen.	• In a physical classroom (as opposed to a virtual one), sit up front where you can see your instructor and any visual aids clearly and comfortably. • Remember that you listen with your eyes as well as your ears. Keep your eyes on the speaker, whether face to face or on the computer screen.
Avoid distractions.	• Avoid mental daydreaming as well as physical distractions like your laptop, smartphone, or newspaper. This is especially true when you're in an online class.
Pay special attention to the introduction; this will often contain a preview and will help you outline the lecture.	• Listen for orienting remarks and for key words and phrases such as *another reason, three major causes*, and *first*. • Use these cues to help you outline the lecture.
Take notes in outline form.	• Listen for headings and then use these as major headings in your outline. When the instructor says, for example, "there are four kinds of noise," you have your heading and you will have a numbered list of four items.
Assume that what is said is relevant.	• It may eventually prove irrelevant (unfortunately), but if you listen with the assumption of irrelevancy, you'll never hear anything relevant.
Listen for understanding.	• Avoid taking issue with what is said until you understand fully; and then, of course, take issue if you wish. When you take issue before understanding, you run the risk of missing additional explanation or qualification.

CRITICAL EVALUATION IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

2.3 Define *criticism* and identify the guidelines for giving and receiving critical evaluations.

Critics and criticism are essential parts of any art. The word **criticism** comes into English from the Latin *criticus,* which means "able to discern," "able to judge." Speech criticism, therefore, is the process of evaluating a speech, of judging its value. Note that there is nothing inherently negative about criticism; criticism may be negative, but it also may be positive.

Perhaps the major value of criticism in the classroom is that it helps you improve your public speaking skills. Through the constructive criticism of others, you'll learn the principles of public speaking more effectively. You'll be shown what you do well, what you could improve, and, ideally, how to improve. As a listener–critic, you'll also learn the principles of public speaking through assessing the speeches of others. Just as you learn when you teach, you also learn when you criticize.

When you give criticism—as you do in a public speaking class—you're telling the speaker that you've listened carefully and that you care enough about the speech and the speaker to offer suggestions for improvement.

Of course, criticism can be difficult—for the critic (whether student or instructor) as well as for the person being criticized. As a critic, you may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about offering evaluation. After all, you may think, "Who am I to criticize another person's speech? My own speech won't be any better." Or you may be reluctant to offend, fearing that your criticism may make the speaker feel uncomfortable. Or you may view criticism as a confrontation that will do more harm than good.

But consider this alternative view: By offering criticism you're helping the speaker; you're giving the speaker another perspective that should prove useful in future speeches. When you offer criticism, you're not claiming to be a better speaker;

you're simply offering another point of view. It's true that by offering criticism you're stating a position with which others may disagree. That's one of the things that will make this class and the study of public speaking exciting and challenging.

Criticism is also difficult to receive. After working on a speech for a week or two and dealing with the normal anxiety that comes with giving a speech, the last thing you want is to stand in front of the class and hear others say what you did wrong. Public speaking is ego-involving, and it's normal to take criticism personally. But if you learn how to give and how to receive criticism, it will help you improve your public speaking skills.

A useful standard to use in evaluating a classroom speech is the speech's degree of conformity to the principles of the art. Using this standard, you'll evaluate a speech positively when it follows the principles of public speaking established by the critics, theorists, and practitioners of public speaking (as described throughout this text) and evaluate it negatively if it deviates from these principles. These principles include speaking on a subject that is worthwhile, relevant, and interesting to listeners; designing a speech for a specific audience; and constructing a speech that is based on sound research. A critical checklist for analyzing public speeches that is based on these principles is presented on the inside front cover of this book.

Before reading the specific suggestions for making critical evaluations a more effective part of the total learning process and avoiding some of the potentially negative aspects of criticism, consider the following critical statements and try to identify what's wrong with each of them (assume, for the purposes of this exercise, that each of the following 10 comments represents the critic's complete criticism):

1. The speech didn't do anything for me.
2. I loved the speech. It was great. Really great.
3. The speech was weak.
4. Your position was unfair to those of us on athletic scholarships; we earned those scholarships.
5. I liked the speech; we need more police on campus.
6. The introduction didn't gain my attention.
7. I found four things wrong with your speech. First, …
8. You needed better research.
9. Nobody was able to understand you.
10. We couldn't hear you clearly.

2.3.1 Giving Criticism

Criticism in the public speaking classroom can be viewed as a three-part process: (1) You say something positive; (2) You identify something that was not effective to you; and (3) You suggest some way to improve what you suggested was not effective.

Figure 2.2 presents an example of a brief critical comment that follows the suggestions noted in this section.

In offering criticism, keep the following principles in mind. These principles, previewed in Figure 2.3, explain why the 10 critical comments above are not effective and identify ways in which you can more effectively phrase your critical comments.

Stress the Positive

Egos are fragile, and public speaking is extremely personal. Part of your function as a critic is to strengthen the already-positive aspects of someone's public speaking performance. Positive criticism is particularly important in itself, but it's almost essential as a preface to negative comments. There are always positive characteristics about any speech, and it's more productive to concentrate on these first. Thus, instead of saying (as in the above example), "The speech didn't do anything for me," tell the speaker what you liked first, then bring up a weak point and suggest how it might be improved.

JOURNAL 2.3
Public Speaking Choice Point
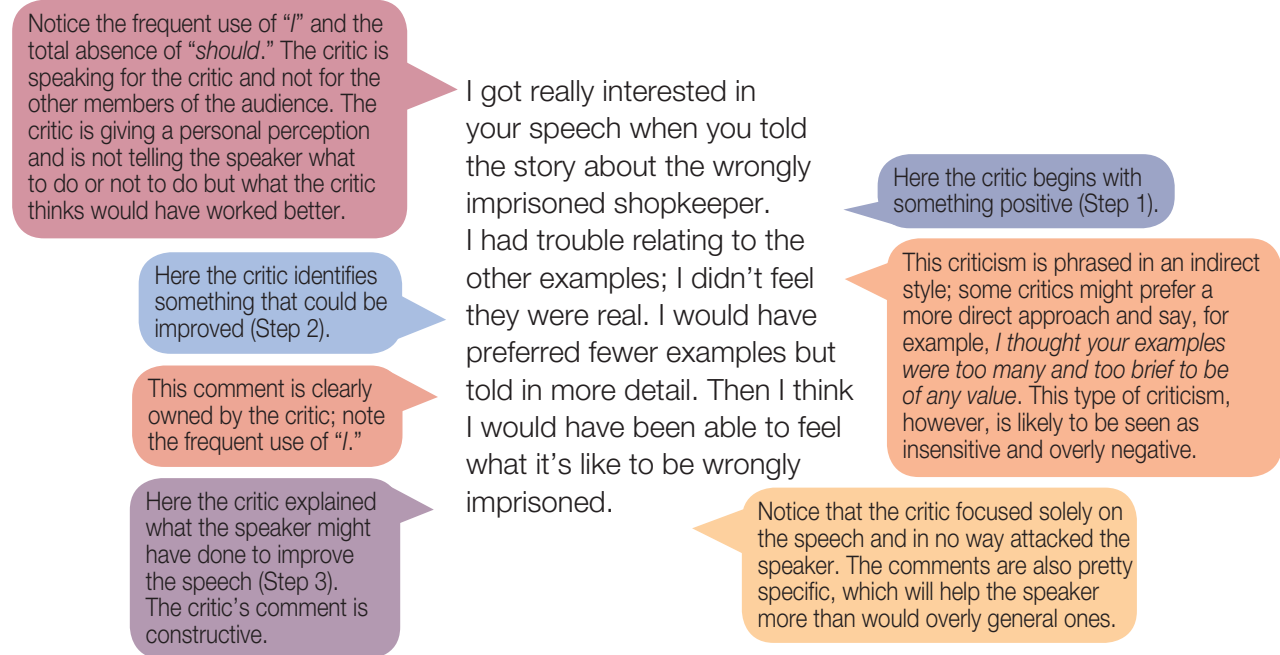ETHICAL LISTENING
Simone is teaching a class in public speaking, and one of her students, a sincere and devout young woman, gives a speech on "Why Women Should Be Subservient to Men." After the first two minutes of the speech, half the class walks out, returning 10 minutes later, after the speech is over. Simone decides to address this incident. *What would you advise Simone to say?*

Figure 2.2 A Sample Criticism

Notice the frequent use of "*I*" and the total absence of "*should*." The critic is speaking for the critic and not for the other members of the audience. The critic is giving a personal perception and is not telling the speaker what to do or not to do but what the critic thinks would have worked better.

Here the critic identifies something that could be improved (Step 2).

This comment is clearly owned by the critic; note the frequent use of "*I*."

Here the critic explained what the speaker might have done to improve the speech (Step 3). The critic's comment is constructive.

I got really interested in your speech when you told the story about the wrongly imprisoned shopkeeper. I had trouble relating to the other examples; I didn't feel they were real. I would have preferred fewer examples but told in more detail. Then I think I would have been able to feel what it's like to be wrongly imprisoned.

Here the critic begins with something positive (Step 1).

This criticism is phrased in an indirect style; some critics might prefer a more direct approach and say, for example, *I thought your examples were too many and too brief to be of any value*. This type of criticism, however, is likely to be seen as insensitive and overly negative.

Notice that the critic focused solely on the speech and in no way attacked the speaker. The comments are also pretty specific, which will help the speaker more than would overly general ones.

When criticizing a person's second or third speech, it's especially helpful if you can point out specific improvements ("You really held my attention in this speech," "I felt you were much more in control of the topic today than in your first speech").

Remember, too, that communication is irreversible. Once you say something, you can't take it back. Remember this when offering criticism—especially criticism that may be negative. If in doubt, err on the side of gentleness.

Be Specific

Criticism is most effective when it's specific. General statements such as "I thought your delivery was bad," "I thought your examples were good," or, as in the above list, "I loved the speech…Really great" and "The speech was weak" are poorly expressed

Figure 2.3 The Characteristics of Effective Speech Criticism

Can you identify additional characteristics that might be added to these seven?