

Selecting a Speech Topic

Over half the club has finished their icebreaker speeches. The remaining speeches in the Communication & Leadership Manual don't have specific topics, but rather focus on a specific aspect of communication. So how do you select a topic? Here are some strategies:

There's More to You Than Six Minutes

While developing your Icebreaker speech, there was probably a lot of things that left on the cutting room floor to get the speech within the time limits. Those "leftovers" would make excellent starting places for speeches.

Learn More About an Unfamiliar Topic

All of us have read or heard of something and said I wonder why... This is a great opportunity to dust off some of those curiosities you have and develop them into researched speeches.

Table Topics Redux

Table Topics can be a great starting point for a speech. Was there a question that you really wished you had gotten? A great story that a response reminded you of? A topic that you wished you'd had more time to really develop?

More than a Sound Bite

We are all bombarded with news and current events, though it is typically only provided in 30 second sound-bites. Many of these items would make a great speech – and an opportunity to delve into the details and multiple points of view.

Passion = Enthusiasm

What are the subjects and issues that you feel strongly about? These make great subjects for speeches, especially those that have a persuasive component. What are your hobbies, interests, passions? These make great informative speeches.

Keep a List, Make a Note

Speech ideas tend to crop up at the most unexpected times. Review the objectives for the next few speeches you will give, and as ideas pop up, jot them down on a list of possible ideas. Sometimes you find new ideas appearing as you research and prepare a speech. Add these to your list. Then, when you are starting preparation for your next speech, you'll have a ready-made list of possible topics.

Two Birds with One Stone

Have a special occasion coming up? An important presentation for work? Running for office? Teaching a scout troop a new skill? Your Toastmasters club is a great venue to practice your presentation or speech with a supportive, helpful audience. Let the Toastmaster know in advance who you'd like your audience to "be" for the day -- and tell your evaluator a bit about the purpose of your speech.