

The Basics of Extemporaneous Speaking

1. What is Extemporaneous Speaking?

The Extemporaneous speaking event, often referred to as "Extemp", give students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of current events in the form of a speech that answers a questions dealing with issues or events important in the world today. The speaker traditionally has 30 minutes to use whatever resources he or she has brought with them to do research on the topic before giving the seven-minute speech. During the speech, the competitor is expected to not only form opinions and well-developed arguments but also to draw off of information found in well known sources.

2. What should I be doing in my 30 minutes of preparation?

30 minutes can go by surprisingly quickly when you have to make a speech. Use every minute you can to gather information and create your speech. If you have a choice of topics, spend as little time as possible choosing which one you will be speaking on. Then go through your resources to find information on the subject. If you are using *Extempdex*, you can look in the subject column to find articles in Time, U.S. News, Newsweek, or Economist to support your speech. Your speech team may have added additional sources onto *Extempdex*, giving you more choices to choose from. Find articles that deal with your speech and read or skim through them. You want to leave yourself enough times to create your speech, so balance your time wisely.

3. How do I create an Extemp speech?

A good Extemporaneous speech is well organized, well thought-out, and well supported by evidence from other sources. Remember to answer the question given to you. It is usually best to stand firm on one side, though concessions to the other side may help the credibility of your argument. As a rule of thumb try to come up with at least three points you can analyze in your speech. More or fewer points may be appropriate, but you do not want to appear to have too few points or leave some of your points under-developed. From there, structure your speech much the same way you would an essay:

Introduction
Point 1 and evidence
Point 2 and evidence
Point 3 and evidence
Conclusion

4. What should my introduction look like?

Your introduction should grab your listener's intention. You want them to be thinking "I can't wait to here what this person has to say" by the end of it. The introduction can

take many forms. Perhaps it is an event that would appeal to your listener. It may be a fact you discovered in your research. Whatever it is, make sure it is not too far stretched in relation to your topic and make sure it is of interest to the listener. After you have captivated your audience, explain clearly where you are going in your speech. You should state the question in some form and then answer it by quickly stating your points. Now your listener is interested and knows what to expect. This ensures you will not lose them in the middle of your speech. All together this introduction should take about one minute.