

GLOBAL
EDITION



Public Speaking

An Audience-Centered Approach

NINTH EDITION

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ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

NINTH EDITION

PUBLIC SPEAKING

AN AUDIENCE-CENTERED APPROACH

Global Edition

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TABLE 5.6 RESPONDING TO NONVERBAL CUES**If your audience seems inattentive or bored . . .**

- Tell a story.
- Use an example to which the audience can relate.
- Use a personal example.
- Remind your listeners why your message should be of interest to them.
- Eliminate some abstract facts and statistics.
- Use appropriate humor. If listeners do not respond to your humor, use more stories or personal illustrations.
- Consider making direct references to listeners, using audience members' names or mentioning something about them.
- Ask the audience to participate by asking questions or asking them for an example.
- Ask for a direct response, such as a show of hands, to see whether they agree or disagree with you.
- Pick up the pace of your delivery.
- Increase your speaking energy.
- Pause for dramatic effect while providing eye contact to gain attention.

If your audience seems confused or doesn't seem to understand your point . . .

- Be more redundant.
- Try phrasing your information in another way.
- Use more concrete examples to illustrate your point.
- Use a visual such as a chalkboard or flip chart to clarify your point.
- If you have been speaking rapidly, slow your speaking rate.
- Clarify the overall organization of your message to your listeners using transitions or internal summaries.
- Ask audience members whether they understand your message.
- Ask for feedback from an audience member to help you discover what is unclear.
- Ask someone in the audience to summarize the key point you are making.

If your audience seems to be disagreeing with your message . . .

- Provide additional data and evidence to support your point.
- Identify issues about which you agree with your listeners.
- Remind your listeners of your credibility, credentials, or background.
- Rely less on anecdotes and more on facts to present your case.
- Write facts and data on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart if one is handy.
- If you don't have the answers and data you need, tell listeners you will provide more information by mail, telephone, email, or social media (and make sure you get back in touch with them).

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responses change. If all else fails, you may need to abandon a formal speaker–listener relationship with your audience and open up your topic for discussion. In your speech class your instructor may expect you to keep going to fulfill the requirements for your assignment. With other audiences, however, you may want to consider switching to a more interactive question-and-answer session to ensure that you are communicating clearly. Later chapters on supporting material, speech organization, and speech delivery will discuss other techniques for adjusting your style while delivering your message.

Strategies for Customizing Your Message to Your Audience

Many people value having something prepared especially for them. Perhaps you've bought a computer that you ordered to your exact specifications. In a restaurant you order food prepared to your specific taste. Audiences, too, prefer messages that are adapted just to them; they don't like hearing a canned message. As a speaker, you may have worked hard to adapt your message to your audience, but your audience won't give you credit for it unless you let them know that you've done so. What are some ways to communicate to your listeners that your message is designed specifically for them? Here are a few suggestions:

- **Appropriately use audience members' names.** Consider using audience members' names in your talk to relate specific information to individual people. Obviously, you don't want to embarrass people by using them in an example that would make them feel uncomfortable. But you can selectively mention people you know who are in the audience. It's become a standard technique in State of the Union speeches for the president to have someone sitting in the balcony who can be mentioned in his talk. That person becomes a living visual aid to provide focus on an idea or a point made in the address. If you are uncertain whether you should mention someone by name, before you speak, ask the person for permission to use his or her name in your talk.

- **Refer to the town, city, or community.** Make a specific reference to the place where you are speaking. If you are speaking to a college audience, relate your message and illustrations to the school where you are speaking. Many politicians use this technique: They have a standard stump speech to tout their credentials but adapt the opening part of their message to the specific city or community in which they are speaking.

- **Refer to a significant event that happened on the date of your speech.** An easy way to find out what happened on any given day in history is to go to www.history.com and click on the link called "This Day in History." Or just type "This Day in History" in most any search engine, and you'll find out what happened on the day of your speech. For example, on the day this paragraph was written, Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C.E. It's also known as the Ides of March—a day Caesar was warned about in Shakespeare's famous play. If you were giving a speech on this day, a reference to the Ides of March might be especially apropos if your goal was to encourage your audience to beware of whatever issue or topic you were discussing.

Many newspapers keep records of local historical events and list what happened 10, 25, or 50 years ago on a certain date. Relating your talk to a historical event that occurred on the same date as your talk and took place in the immediate geographical area can give your message a feeling of immediacy. It tells your audience that you have thought about this specific speaking event.

- **Refer to a recent news event.** Always read the local paper to see whether there is a news story that you can connect to the central idea of your talk. Or perhaps you can use a headline from your university newspaper or a recent story that appeared on your university Web site. If there is a newspaper headline that connects with your talk, consider holding up the paper as you refer to it—not so that people will be able to read the headline, but to emphasize the immediacy of your message.

- **Refer to a group or organization.** If you're speaking to an audience of service, religious, political, or work group members, by all means make specific positive references to the group. But be honest—don't offer false praise; audiences can sniff out phony flattery. A sincere compliment about the group will be appreciated, especially if you can link the goals of the group to the goal of your talk.

- **Relate information directly to your listeners.** Find ways to apply facts, statistics, and examples to the people in your audience. If, for example, you know that four out of ten women are likely to experience gender discrimination, customize

that statistic by saying, “Forty percent of women listening to me now are likely to experience gender discrimination. That means that of the twenty women in this audience, eight of you are likely to be discriminated against.” Or, if you live in a city of 50,000 people, you can cite the statistic that 50,000 people on our nation’s highways become victims of drunk driving each year—and then point out that that number is equivalent to killing every man, woman, and child in your city. Relating abstract statistics and examples to your listeners communicates that you have them in mind as you develop your message.

Analyzing Your Audience after You Speak

5.6

Identify methods of assessing audience reactions after you have concluded your speech.

After you have given your speech, you’re not finished analyzing your audience. It is important to evaluate your audience’s positive or negative response to your message. Why? Because this evaluation can help you prepare your next speech. Postspeech analysis helps you polish your speaking skill, regardless of whether you will face the same audience again. From that analysis you can learn whether your examples were clear and your message was accepted by your listeners. Let’s look at specific methods for assessing your audience’s response to your speech.

Nonverbal Responses

The most obvious nonverbal response is applause. Is the audience simply clapping politely, or is the applause robust and enthusiastic, indicating pleasure and acceptance? Responsive facial expressions, smiles, and nods are other nonverbal signs that the speech has been well received.

Realize, however, that audience members from different cultures respond to speeches in different ways. Japanese audience members, for example, are likely to be restrained in their response to a speech and to show little expression. Some Eastern European listeners may not maintain eye contact with you; they may look down at the floor when listening. In some contexts, African American listeners may enthusiastically voice their agreement or disagreement with something you say during your presentation.²³

Nonverbal responses at the end of the speech may convey some general feeling of the audience, but they are not much help in identifying which strategies were the most effective. Also consider what the members of the audience say, both to you and to others, after your speech.

Verbal Responses

What might members of the audience say to you about your speech? General comments, such as “I enjoyed your talk” and “Great speech,” are good for the ego—which is important—but are not of much analytic help. Specific comments can indicate where you succeeded and where you failed. If you have the chance, ask audience members how they responded to the speech in general as well as to points you are particularly interested in.

Survey Responses

You are already aware of the value of conducting audience surveys before speaking publicly. You may also want to survey your audience after you speak. You can then assess how well you accomplished your objective. Use the same survey techniques

discussed earlier. Develop survey questions that will help you determine the general reactions to you and your speech, as well as specific responses to your ideas and supporting materials. Professional speakers and public officials often conduct such surveys. Postspeech surveys are especially useful when you are trying to persuade an audience. Comparing prespeech and postspeech attitudes can give you a clear idea of your effectiveness. A significant portion of most political campaign budgets goes toward evaluating how a candidate is received by his or her constituents. Politicians want to know what portions of their messages are acceptable to their audiences so they can use this information in the future.

If your objective was to teach your audience about some new idea, a posttest can assess whether you expressed your ideas clearly. In fact, classroom exams are posttests that determine whether your instructor presented information clearly.

RECAP

WAYS TO ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE AFTER SPEAKING

- Quality and volume of applause and other nonverbal responses
- Content and tone of specific verbal responses
- Formal survey or posttest responses
- Behavioral responses: Did they do what you asked them to do?

Behavioral Responses

If the purpose of your speech was to persuade your listeners to do something, you will want to learn whether they ultimately behave as you intended. If you wanted them to vote in an upcoming election, you might survey your listeners to find out how many did vote. If you wanted to win support for a particular cause or organization, you might ask them to sign a petition after your speech. The number of signatures would be a clear measure of your speech's success. Some religious speakers judge the success of their ministry by the amount of contributions they receive. Your listeners' actions are the best indicators of your speaking success.

GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

5.1

Describe informal and formal methods of gathering information about your audience.

You can gather information about your audience by informally observing their demographics. Formal surveys, with either open-ended or closed-ended questions, can add more specific information about their opinions.

Key Terms

Demographics	105
Open-ended questions	106
Closed-ended questions	106

Thinking Ethically

Tynisha wants to convince her audience to ban alcohol in all city parks. Her survey results suggest that 85 percent of her audience wants to continue the current policy of permitting alcohol in city parks. Should she change her purpose to fit the existing attitudes of her audience?

Assessing Your Audience-Centered Speaking Skill

Phil Owens is running for a seat on the school board. He has agreed to speak to the chamber of commerce about his views, but he wants to know what his audience believes about a number of issues. How can he gather this information?

ANALYZING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

5.2

Explain how to analyze information about your audience.

Your audience analysis involves looking at the information you've gathered to find (1) similarities among audience members, (2) differences among audience members, and (3) ways to establish a relationship, or common ground, with listeners.

Key Terms

Audience analysis.	108
Common ground.	108
Relationship	109

Thinking Ethically

Do most politicians place too much emphasis on the results of political-opinion polls to shape their stands on political issues? Explain your position.

Assessing Your Audience-Centered Speaking Skill

Brendon wants to convince his audience of homeowners that the zoning laws should be changed so that he and his company can build a new apartment complex next to their quiet, residential neighborhood. What strategies could Brendon use to establish common ground with his listeners?

ADAPTING TO YOUR AUDIENCE

5.3

Identify and use strategies for adapting to your audience.

Ethical speakers use their audience analysis to adapt their message so that audience members will listen. They first consider their audience; then they adapt their speech goal, speech content, and speech delivery to connect to the audience.

Key Term

Audience adaptation	109
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Thinking Ethically

On page 110, President Harry Truman was quoted as saying, "I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he'd taken a poll in Egypt?" What are the implications of President Truman's quotation for an ethical, audience-centered speaker?

Assessing Your Audience-Centered Public Speaking Skill

Answer the questions on page 126 about a speech you have already presented. Describe how your knowledge of your audience influenced the choices you made in designing your speech.

ANALYZING YOUR AUDIENCE BEFORE YOU SPEAK

5.4

Develop methods of analyzing your audience before you speak by seeking demographic, psychological, and situational information about your audience and the speaking occasion.

Before your speech, you can perform three kinds of analysis: demographic, psychological, and situational. Demographic analysis assesses audience diversity. Psychological audience analysis helps you gauge the interests, attitudes, beliefs, and values of listeners. Situational audience analysis includes examining the time and place of your speech, the size of your audience, and the speaking occasion.

Strategies for adapting to a diverse audience include (1) focusing on a target audience, (2) using diverse strategies, (3) using common audience perspectives, and (4) relying on visual materials that transcend language differences.

Key Terms

Demographic audience analysis. .	111
Gender.	112
Sex	112
Culture.	113
Ethnicity	113
Race	113
Ethnocentrism	114
Socioeconomic status	118
Target audience	119
Psychological audience analysis. .	121
Attitude	122
Belief	122
Value	122
Situational audience analysis	124

Thinking Ethically

Maria strongly believes the drinking age in her state should be increased to 22. Yet when she surveyed her classmates, the overwhelming majority thought the drinking age should be lowered to 18. Should Maria change her speech topic and her purpose to avoid facing a hostile audience? Why or why not?

Dan knows that most of the women in his audience will be startled and probably offended if he begins his speech by saying, “Most of you broads are too sensitive about sexist language.” But this is how Dan really feels. Should he alter his language just to appease his audience? Explain.

Assessing Your Audience-Centered Speaking Skill

Dr. Ruiz thought the audience for her speech on birth control would be women of child-bearing age. After writing her speech, however, she found out that all the women to whom she will be speaking are at least 20 years older than she expected. What changes, if any, should she make?

ANALYZING YOUR AUDIENCE AS YOU SPEAK

5.5

Identify methods of assessing and adapting to your audience’s reactions while your speech is in progress.

While speaking, you should look for feedback from your listeners. Audience eye contact, facial expression, movement, and general verbal and nonverbal responsiveness provide clues to how well you are doing. Listeners’ nonverbal reactions may indicate that you need to change or adjust your message to maintain interest and achieve your speaking objective.

Thinking Ethically

Kale realized that his listeners were not responding favorably to his message about the hazards of texting while driving. He recalled reading an article online that included statistics that would help support his point, but he couldn’t remember the precise statistics or the source of the article. Would it be ethical for Kale to use approximate versions of the statistics to convince his audience, knowing that the numbers are not quite accurate?

Assessing Your Audience-Centered Speaking Skill

How would you adapt your message if, while you were speaking, you realized that you were not holding your listeners’ attention?