

Tips On Writing Your American Revolution Famous Person Speech



Mr. Lynch's Class

Speech Tips

At this point you've been assigned your character and hopefully you have gobs and gobs of research to draw from. If you're lucky, the biggest problem you have right now is having too much information! So now it's on to writing your actual speech.

Preparing for your American Revolution Famous Person Speech by creating an outline will help clarify what you want to say *as well as* help organize your material.

Once done, your outline will form the skeleton of your speech guiding you logically and sequentially through all the aspects you need to consider *before* you write the speech itself.

Completing one is a critical step in preparing a successful speech and often overlooked. Why? Not enough time, is the usual reason given.

But truly, you will *save time* through doing one *and* avoid any anxiety caused by lousy preparation. It might look like a waste of time, but if you do it, it will save you time later. What you learn about structure, matching content to your speech purpose and your audience's needs will pay you back over and over again. I promise you, this will make your speech giving easier!

Here's an old saying for giving a speech:

First: tell them what you're going to tell them.

Second: tell them.

Third: tell them what you told them.

A simple sample speech outline uses all 3 parts.

1. *'Tell them what you're going to tell them'* becomes your **introduction**
2. *'Tell them'* forms the **body**
3. *'Tell them what you told them'* is your **conclusion**

The process of outlining a speech is broken down into 4 essential steps.

1. **Preparation:-**
 - deciding on your topic
 - considering the audience and refining your topic to suit them
 - deciding on the purpose of the speech
 - choosing an organizational method to support your speech purpose
2. **Introduction:-**
 - opening greeting and attention getter
 - telling the audience who you are and why you were important
3. **Body:-**
 - transition or link between introduction and body
 - main ideas with supporting ideas
 - examples and details
4. **Conclusion:-**
 - summary of main points
 - catchy closer

Sample Speech Outline - Step One - Preparation

Topic - decide what you are going to talk about

For example: the life of John Adams

Audience - consider who will be listening to you. In your case, your classmates are the audience.

Define Purpose - Why are you giving this speech? Is it to persuade, inform, demonstrate, entertain, or welcome? Or is it a combination of these?

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Choosing An Organizational Method

There are **many organizational methods** for giving your speech. However, I have chosen two that make the most sense for a speech about a person's life. You are welcome to use your own strategy as long as you check with me first.

Logical

This method suits a broad topic which is broken down into smaller sub-topics. This is similar to an expository essay where you speak about three main topics. For a speech, it is probably more than three topics, though.

Time or Chronological

This method leads the audience through the person's life from start to finish.

Sample Speech Outline - Step Two - Introduction

- **Greeting - Attention Getter**

How are you going to greet your audience, grab their attention and make them want to listen? It could be a rhetorical question, a startling statistic, a quotation or a humorous one-liner. The only considerations are that it must be related to your topic and suitable for your audience.

- **Summative overview**

Brief summary of what you are talking about.

Sample Speech Outline - Step Three - Body

- **Transition**

This is the link between your introduction and the main body of your speech. How will you tie them together?

- **Main Idea 1** - Supporting ideas - Details and examples - Visuals or props - Transition to...
- **Main Idea 2** - Supporting ideas - Details and examples - Visuals or props - Transition to...
- **Main Idea 3** - Supporting ideas - Details and examples - Visuals or props - Transition to...

Sample Speech Outline - Step Four - Conclusion

- **Catchy Closer**
This is your final sentence. Make sure your speech ends with a bang rather than a whimper.

How to End a Speech Memorably

Are you aware that knowing **how to end a speech** is just as important as knowing how to begin?

Research tells us that people most commonly remember the *first and last things* they've been told. Therefore if you want your speech to create an impression finishing with: *'Well, that's all I've got say. Thank you for listening'*, isn't going to do it!

So what will?

Here are **three effective alternatives**. Each ensures your speech ends powerfully rather than a fading away.

1. Summary of your most important points **ending with a powerful quotation**
2. Summary of your most important points **ending with a challenge**
3. Summary of your most important points **ending with a call back**

Now that you're aware of *how to end a speech* you are less likely to fall prey to any of the traps below.

Speech Conclusion Traps to Avoid

- Failing to plan a conclusion
- Failing to time your speech
- Making the ending too long in comparison to the rest of your speech
- Using a different style or tone that doesn't fit with what went before it
- Launching into the conclusion without preparing the audience for the end. That's what transitions are for.

How to Write a Speech

Learning *how to write a speech* needn't be a nail biting experience!

Unsure? Don't be. You may have lived with the idea you were *never good with words* for a long time. Or perhaps writing speeches at school brought you out in cold sweats *but this is different*.

Learning to write a speech is straightforward when you *learn to write out loud*. And that's what you are going to do now; step by step.

If you've done your preparation you're set to go.

Before you go *any* further you need to know:

- **WHO** you are writing your speech for (the audience)
- **WHAT** your speech is going to be about (its topic)
 - the main points ranked in order of importance with supporting research
- **HOW** long it needs to be.... In your case, 3-5 minutes.

Having an overview or outline will reduce the time and possible stress involved in writing and preparing your speech. Believe me, they work!

How to Write a Speech : Construction

The basic *how to write a speech* format is simple. It consists of *three parts*:

1. an opening or introduction
2. the body where the bulk of the information is given
3. and an ending (or summary).



Think of it as a sandwich. The opening and ending are the slices of bread holding the filling (body) together. You can build yourself a simple sandwich with one filling or you can go gourmet and add up to three or even five. The choice is yours. But whatever you choose to serve, as a good cook, *you need to consider* who is going to eat it! And that's *your audience*.

So with them in mind, *let's prepare the filling first*.

How to Write a Speech: Step One

Begin with the most important idea or early on in the person's life.

Consider **HOW** you can explain (show, tell) that to your audience in *the most effective way for them* to easily understand it.

How to Write a Speech: Step Two

Write down what you'd say as if you were *talking directly to them*.

If it helps, say everything *out loud* before you write and/or record it on your computer, mp3 player, iPad, etc.

After you've finished, take notes.

You do not have to write absolutely everything you're going to say down* but you *do* need to write the *sequence of ideas* to ensure they are *logical and easily followed*.

Remember too, to explain or illustrate your point with examples from your research.

(***Tip:** If this is your first speech the safety net of having everything written down could be just what you need. It's easier to recover from a patch of jitters when you have a full set of notes than if you have either none or a bare outline.)

How to Write a Speech: Step Three

Rework *Step Two* (your first main point) until you've made yourself clear.

- **Check the 'tone' of your language.**
Is it right for the occasion, subject matter and your audience?
- **Check the length of your sentences.**
If they're too long or complicated you risk losing your listeners.
- **Have you chosen words everybody will understand?**
'There are 5 cent words and \$5.00 words. Why use a \$5.00 one when a 5 cent one tells it better?'
Example: *He 'spat' = 5 cents. He 'expectorated' = \$5.00*
- **Read what you've written out loud.**
If it flows naturally continue the process with your next main idea. If it doesn't, rework.
- **Remember you are writing 'oral language'.**
You are writing as if you were explaining, telling or showing something to someone. It doesn't have to be *perfect* sentences. We don't talk like that. We use whole sentences and part ones and we mix them up with asides or appeals e.g. *'Did you get that? Of course you did. Right...Let's move it along. I was saying ...'*

Repeat How to Write a Speech Steps One, Two & Three for the remainder of your main ideas. Because you've done the first block carefully, the rest should come fairly easily.

How to Write a Speech: Step Four: Linking or Transitions

Between each of your main ideas you need to provide a pathway. This *links* them for your listeners. The clearer the path, the easier it is to make the transition from one idea to the next. If your speech contains more than three main ideas and each is building on the last, then consider using a *'catch-up'* or *summary* as part of your transitions.

A **link** can be as simple as:

'Well, that's where I ended up after the French & Indian War. It wasn't until seven years later that I got more involved in the protests against taxes...' What follows is the introduction of Main Idea Two.

How to Write a Speech: Step Five: The Ending

The ideal ending is *highly memorable*. You want it to live on in the minds of your listeners.

Ask yourself *what you want people to know about you as a result of having listened to your speech.*

Write your ending and test it out loud.

How to Write a Speech: Step Six: The Introduction

Once you've got the filling (main ideas) the linking and the ending in place, it's time to focus on the introduction.

The *introduction comes last as it's the most important part* of your speech. This is the bit that either has people sitting up alert or slumped and waiting for you to end.

What makes a great opening?

You want one that makes listening to you the *only* thing the audience wants to do. You want them to forget they're hungry or that their chair is hard or that it's snowing outside.

The answer is to capture their interest straight away. You do this with a '*hook*'.

Hooks come in as many forms as there are speeches and audiences. Your task is work out what the specific hook is to catch your audience.

Go back to the purpose. Why are you giving this speech? Once you have your answer, consider your call to action. What do you want the audience to do as a result of listening to you? Next think about the imaginary or real person you wrote for when you were focusing on your main ideas.

Ask yourself, if I were him/her what would appeal?

- Is it humor?
- Would shock tactics work?
- Is it formality or informality?
- Is it an outline of what you're going to cover, including the call to action?
- Or is it a mix of all these elements?

Experiment with several openings until you've found the one that serves your audience, subject matter and purpose best.

Writing your speech is *very nearly* done. There's just one more step to go!

How to Write a Speech: Step Seven: Checking

This 'how to write a speech' step pulls everything together.
Go through your speech several times carefully.

On the **first** read through check you've got your main points in their correct order with supporting material plus an effective introduction and ending.

On the **second** read through check the linking passages or transitions making sure they are clear and easily followed.

On the **third** reading check your sentence structure, language use and tone.

Now go through *once more*.

This time read it aloud *slowly* and *time yourself*. If it's too long make the necessary cuts. Start by looking at your examples rather than the main ideas themselves. If you've used several to illustrate one, cut the *least important* out. Also, look to see if you've repeated yourself unnecessarily or gone off track. If it's not relevant, *cut it*.

Repeat the process, condensing until your speech fits *just under* the time allowance.

And NOW you are finished with 'how to write a speech', and are ready for Practice, Practice, and more Practice.

Please don't be tempted to skip this step. The 'not-so-secret' secret of successful speeches combines good writing with practice, practice and then practicing some more.