

# **Eleven easy steps to write a 5 – 7 minute speech in a reasonable amount of your time so that you can get on with other things in your life**

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How long does it take you to get through the process of finding an idea for your speech, writing it, and preparing to present at your club? Do you sit at your keyboard waiting for your mind to give you ideas that never seem to come?

As a new Toastmaster I was often stumped on how to write a speech without investing an inordinate amount of time. Every speech seemed to take days to write and I wondered how I would ever find time for Toastmaster speeches if it took this long to write every speech. Are you in this situation? Well, then you are in the right place. Read on to learn the process that guides you through the practical process to create a club speech.

Step 1. Define what you want your audience to think, do or say three days after your speech. Write it down in a single sentence. (For example: “I want the audience to realize the increase in dog flu cases in my area, and act quickly when they see symptoms in their own pets.”). Don’t over think this step. What are you passionate about **right now**? Is crime up in your neighborhood? Is your dog sick? Did you replace the water heater this week?

Step 2. Create a new Word document for your speech and put your definition from step 1 at the top.

Step 3. With lots of space in between, put in headings in your speech, to start your mind thinking about the topic. Put in headings:

- a. Introduction
- b. Body
  - i. Main point 1
  - ii. Main point 2
  - iii. Main point 3
- c. Conclusion

Step 4. Fill in the content under each main point, as best you can at this time. For example, think about a story or facts that you can use to support your definition from step 1. Why is this topic important to you right now? Relate the story of your dog falling ill and your bills because you did not act quickly enough. Compare it to your neighbor’s story where her cat got better quickly because of a new medicine.

Step 5. After you have filled in as much of the speech as you can, print it out and let it lie on your desk for a few days. Jot down notes as they come to you to include in the speech. Read the speech out loud a few times and more thoughts will come to you,

with better ways to say what you mean.

Step 6. Review and refine the speech until you are 80% satisfied with the content, then start to rehearse it. Read it to yourself out loud a few times and look out for the main points. Revise the speech as you read it and find points or words that don't sound right to you.

Step 7. Then work out a way to remember the main points. If you remember the three main points of your speech, you can probably deliver it without notes. For example, Point 1 – Your dog threw up on the Persian rug. Point 2 – You took him to the vet. Point 3 – You made a pink blanket to keep your dog warm and now he is fine. I usually rehearse a speech 10 times before I am confident that I can deliver it without notes, focusing on learning the main points and flow of the speech.

Step 8. Memorize the first two lines of your speech.

Step 9. Now you are ready to rehearse in front of your family if you want to. Look directly at your audience while you deliver these two lines from your introduction. (I often hold up three fingers at this time and say something like “You will learn the three ways to care for your sick dog”).

Then continue with your first main point. The words will come from memory because of your rehearsal. It is OK if the speech you give is different to the speech you wrote out. Focus on memorizing your opening, closing and your three main points. The other words you speak will get your point across without having to use notes.

Step 10. Go and present your speech to your Toastmaster club.

Step 11. Remember to take the pressure off yourself. This is a Toastmaster speech. You are not addressing the Intergalactic Security Council. Finish writing the speech and practice it, then get up and deliver it, then move on. Your brief 5-7 minute speech will entertain some of your audience, bore some of your audience and some will remember your main point. Many will forget by the time they leave the room. It is more important for you to do your best in your time available and to get the **stage time** preparing the speech and delivering it, than it is to obsess over the wording and pace of each sentence. Aim for completion rather than perfection as you will get better by delivering speeches and learning from the experiences. I am rooting for you so do it now. Write the speech, deliver it, and prepare your next speech as you follow Darren LaCroix's mantra to get “Stage Time, Stage Time, Stage Time”.

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Improve your communication skills when using PowerPoint® at [www.waynebotha.com](http://www.waynebotha.com). Wayne Botha grew up in South Africa, and now lives in Connecticut, USA. Colleagues and audiences frequently tease Wayne about his funny accent. Published July 2007.