

## Tips for Delivering an Impromptu Speech

**Brief:** Though by definition impromptu speeches don't allow much time to plan, there are ways to prepare for impromptu speeches.

**Learning Objective:** Learn how to prepare for and deliver an impromptu speech.

**Key Terms:**

- **Elevator pitch:** A short summary used to quickly identify what you do or what project is important to you in about 30 seconds, or the length of an elevator ride.

### Impromptu Speech Tips

By definition impromptu speeches don't allow for much time to plan, but that doesn't mean that preparation goes out the window. When you're asked to speak at the last minute, you'll need to quickly organize your thoughts in your head or to quickly jot them down on a piece of paper. To do this more effectively, it's helpful to be familiar with common organizational patterns.

Are you presenting your opinion? If so, state your opinion and the reasons why you support that opinion. Are you recounting something that happened? Retell the event from beginning to end (first, next, then, etc.). Are you demonstrating how to do something? Explain each step in the process from first to last.

Organize your ideas into an introduction, body, and conclusion. If possible, take a few moments to think ahead about what you want to say to introduce the topic and have some way of concluding. Be sure to stop speaking when you have made your points.

### ***Anticipate Impromptu Speech Prompts***

In certain situations you can anticipate the types of questions or requests that will require a seemingly impromptu response. For example, you might be asked about your line of work at a social event. Because you know your occupation, you can have a response prepared. You might have a special project or interest that you want to pitch to others. Be ready!

### ***Elevator Pitch***

An elevator pitch is a short summary used to quickly identify what you do or what project is important to you in about 30 seconds, or the length of an elevator ride. So, when someone asks you what you do for a living, you can quickly



and seemingly without preparation give an impromptu pitch or description.

### ***Anticipate and Plan***

If you think you will be called on to speak, it is a good idea to take a few minutes and make notes on the important points you want to cover before you speak.

Make sure to make your notes as one line phrases in outline form. You can put your notes on paper or any device that allows you to quickly glance down and back up at the audience.

### ***Delivery***

When you deliver an impromptu speech, pay attention to the following elements of speech delivery:

**Maintain eye contact:** It is important to look directly at the person you are speaking to so that you have each other's attention.

**Eliminate noise:** You want to make sure that you can actually hear each other easily in a noisy room. If you are experiencing noise, you might suggest stepping aside to a less noisy corner to deliver your short message.

**Be prepared to answer questions:** Impromptu speeches are usually used in short informal meetings where the audience can interrupt and ask questions to help guide the speech and retrieve the information they need from the speaker. It is important in this situation to stay focused by repeating the question and answering it without going off on a tangent.

### **From Concept to Action**

Think about something that you care a lot about. It might be something you're doing at a job or in a volunteer capacity. Or, it might be a political or charitable cause that you have strong feelings about. Create a 30-second elevator pitch to share your feelings with someone who has the power to offer support.

**OER IMAGE SOURCES:**

"Elevator." Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/imuttoo/2168651517/in/photolist-4iCUxp-4tNfuB-7SbMpo-4HJJ5n-9mwHzw-dRJ7mX-Y7fpv-cHXNQ-74yGGx-5n5y6p-8NHqxS-7zrJrG-SPUNcL-dUS6R1-7ERwmG-7iSE2g-MoHw-JuvFW-7FBqz8-52cje7-fraMso-7fMjwH-8uFVJq-63axrT-8S8ttj-8MoTJQ-bFDAox-fasYr4-aYJWik-fofVyE-5zy466-Pf4QL-nfhwaH-9139hr-kggro-jmX4Lt-47Dn2g-b6P29K-4P9uBw-61BxBE-6UmFt-54BbcN-9jiFcy-cMMjah-8LWDSp-8qRfso-dMTtoYB-5XVTv1-7RNNGu-snBRk>. Accessed 21 March 2019. [CC BY-SA 2.0]

**OER TEXT SOURCES:**

"Key Differences Between Prepared and Impromptu Speeches." Lumen Learning. [https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54269?module\\_item\\_id=5007137](https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54269?module_item_id=5007137). Accessed 21 March 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]