Select an Appropriate Informative Speech Topic

Brief: To be sure that your audience will receive and remember the information you share during your speech, choose a topic that’s relevant to your audience and meaningful to you.

Learning Objective: Understand how to use brainstorming to identify relevant speech topics.

Key Terms:
• Brainstorming: A technique used to stimulate creative thinking and generate ideas.

Choose a Relevant Topic

An informative speech describes knowledge about a particular event, process, object, or concept. With such a wide array of events, processes, objects, and concepts to draw from, how do you choose the best topic for your informative speech?

One of the first things you’ll want to determine is whether your topic is relevant. What was a good speech topic in 1960, for example, might not be a good speech topic today. And even if a topic is timeless, the content of the speech today would—at the very least—need to be updated by incorporating current statistical data or current attitudes about a particular idea.

To make sure the topic of a speech is relevant, you’ll need to consider your audience. Think about which topics the audience will find interesting or useful. Once you’re closing in on a particular topic, ask yourself: “How is this topic relevant to my audience?” If you’re unable to answer this question, you should consider another topic.

A Good Brainstorming Session

Think of a brainstorming session in terms of what happens during a rainstorm. The ideas are like rain. Storms have lots of rain, and a good brainstorming session should generate lots of ideas.

When brainstorming for speech topics, write at the top of a page: "What topic should I choose for my speech?" Then write down whatever comes to your mind.
**Big Picture Topics**

Start with the bigger picture, brainstorming subjects with which you are familiar. For example, write down academic subjects you've excelled at in school or extracurricular activities you've practiced for years. You'll probably spend a great deal of time on your speech, so it makes sense to take the time to come up with a long list so you have more options to choose from.

For instance, if you've been hunting with your family since childhood, you likely have a lot of interesting things to say about it. You might not qualify as an expert, but once you do a little research to flesh out your existing knowledge, you could focus on one of many aspects of hunting, including hunting customs, laws, the kinds of animals you hunt, and the behavior of those animals.

**New Horizon Topics**

As you continue to brainstorm, add subject areas you're unfamiliar with, but would like to learn more about. For example, if you're interested in becoming a movie producer, but you don't know a lot about what the position entails, a great way to learn more about it is to research movie production and then try to explain it to other people.

Set a time limit on your brainstorming session. Hopefully, at some point during your session all that rain will generate a lightning strike— an "ah-ha!" moment when you identify the perfect topic for your speech. If that doesn't happen, end that session and plan another one for the next day. Your creative mind will continue to work in the background, sorting and sifting through your ideas, searching for the best topic. Talk to friends. Go for a walk. Sleep on it. Brainstorm again. Keep at it until you hone in on something worthwhile.

**From Concept to Action**

What's your favorite topic? Not sure? Take a moment to think about the variety of conversations you have in a typical day. What conversations do you enjoy? Conversations about sports, the weather, fashion, politics, a hobby? What can you talk about for hours? How might you use one of these topics to develop a successful informative speech?

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