Demonstration Speeches

Brief: The demonstration speech is a type of informative speech intended to explain to an audience how to complete a particular task.

Learning Objective: Identify the defining elements of a demonstration speech.

Key Terms:

- Demonstration Speech: A type of informative speech intended to teach an audience how to complete a task.

What is a Demonstration Speech?

The demonstration speech is a type of informative speech intended to teach an audience how to complete a task. Demonstration speeches can vary in length and complexity. The challenge is to break your topic into discrete steps that your audience can follow with relative ease.

Choose an Appropriate Topic

First, you need to pick a specific how-to topic. As with any other type of speech, It's important to choose a topic that isn't too narrow or too broad. When choosing a topic, consider how much time you have been allotted to present the speech, which should help you determine the scope.

For example, to deliver an effective speech about how to use Twitter, you might need an hour or more for your presentation. If you only have 10 or 15 minutes, you might make your topic more specific by focusing on how to set up a Twitter account.

Consider Your Audience

As always, it's important to consider your audience's interests and expertise. For example, if you're giving a speech to web developers, it might not make sense to choose the topic, "How to Build a Basic Website." You'd probably want to make your topic more interesting to them by choosing a more advanced and relevant topic like "How to Leverage Recent Advances in JavaScript ES7."

Build Your Speech Step by Step

Include the step-by-step instruction in the body of the speech. Address the steps sequentially, one at a time. Imagine what it would be like if you were unfamiliar with your topic, following your instruction for the first time. Anticipate any common points of confusion, making an effort to clarify more complicated or nuanced steps to the best of your ability.

Make sure to include enough detail. It might not be enough to say "Pour the batter into a pan and bake the brownies." You might need to be more specific and say "Pour the batter into an 8 inch square nonstick pan and bake the cake at 350 degrees F for about 30 minutes."

Use Visual Aids to Demonstrate

The word "prop" comes from the term "theatrical property," which refers to objects used by actors in a play. During a presentation or demonstration, props can be used to support ideas. The well-timed use of a well-chosen prop can have tremendous impact on a presentation.

When you're using props as part of a demonstration speech, think through every step of your process and be sure to have a corresponding visual. Lay everything out ahead of time and make sure the entire audience can see your work area. Be sure to speak to your audience rather than to your objects, using what's called the "T-T-T" method (touch/turn/talk). Be sure to maintain eye contact, even as you demonstrate your steps.

From Concept to Action

You engage in activities that require step-by-step action every day. Choose one of those "routine" activities—brushing your teeth, making scrambled eggs, backing up your car, etc.—and break the process down into steps. If it helps, say the steps out loud. Is creating a step-by-step record easy or difficult? Are you surprised by how many steps even routine activities require? What can this exercise teach you about developing a demonstration speech?

OER IMAGE SOURCES:

"Chocolate Brownies Brownies Cake Food Dessert." Pixabay. https://pixabay.com/en/chocolate-brownies-brownies-cake-668624. Accessed 15 December 2018. [CC0]

OER TEXT SOURCES:

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