

## Review Your Expertise and Interests

**Brief:** When preparing to deliver a prepared speech, it's unrealistic to expect to speak fluently on a subject that you know little or nothing about; speak about a topic that reflects your expertise and interest.

**Learning Objective:** To identify topics of expertise and interest.

**Key Terms:**

- **Expert:** Someone who has a prolonged or intense experience through practice and education in a particular field.

### What is an Expert?

Historically, Ancient Greeks used the word “expert” to refer to someone who was considered a sage—an individual who was a profound thinker distinguished for wisdom and sound judgment. Today, the term “expert” is applied to anyone who has a thorough knowledge of a particular area.

Rocket scientists are experts, but so too are the analysts who talk about football on television. When selecting a topic for your speech, consider any areas in which you might be considered an expert. What do you have more knowledge about than most people?

When you're preparing to deliver a speech, it's unrealistic to expect to speak fluently on a subject that you know little or nothing about. You will be much more comfortable speaking about a topic with which you are very familiar.

### ***Building on Your Expertise***

Your prior knowledge of your topic will also offer a strong foundation for conducting research. Instead of starting the research process from scratch, you will fill in any gaps in your knowledge and ensure that you are up-to-date on conversations relating to your topic.

Choosing a topic in an area of expertise will also boost your credibility with the audience. Your audience will more readily accept the validity of your speech if it is clear to them that you really know what you're talking about.

## Your Interest Areas

Do you feel you don't know enough about any one topic to qualify as an expert? Or have you written and spoken about your area of expertise so often that you would rather look elsewhere for a speech topic? Consider a topic with which you may not be familiar, but have an keen interest in learning more about.

Maybe you watched a documentary about Banksy, which has made you want to learn more about the relationship between street art and political activism? Or maybe you have a friend who is an excellent paddle boarder, but you haven't had time to thoroughly investigate what the sport entails?

When you deliver your speech, your goal isn't to pretend you're an expert in the topic. Rather, your goal should be to spark interest in the audience, encouraging them learn more about your topic just as you have.



*An example of street art attributed to Banksy, an anonymous English street artist*

## Your Interests and Your Audience

Recall your initial interest in the topic. What about your topic captured your attention? How might you recreate this sense of fresh interest in your speech? Your own journey can provide insight in to how best to draw your audience into caring about your topic.

Then consider how further research will support your speech goal. What do you need to know to help you audience connect with the topic?

## From Concept to Action

When thinking about topics that you already know a lot about, consider your hobbies. Do you have a collection of objects that hold special meaning for you? Perhaps you've amassed a lot of comic books over the years? Or, you've collect memorabilia from your visits to national parks? Or you enjoy cooking new foods and have catalogued hundreds of recipes? Maybe your hobby is more about something you do for recreation, like a sport or video game? Whatever it is that you naturally enjoy doing in your free time is a great place to start when contemplating a speech topic that you'll also enjoy talking about.

**OER IMAGE SOURCES:**

"Banksy-art." Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Banksy-art.jpg>. Accessed 13 April 2019. [Public Domain]

**OER TEXT SOURCES:**

"Expert." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expert>. Accessed 06 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

"Your Interest Areas." Lumen Learning. [https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54175?module\\_item\\_id=5007010](https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54175?module_item_id=5007010). Accessed 06 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]