



# EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

*Engaging with Current Events*

Jessica Bailey



# EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

*Engaging with Current Events*

Jessica Bailey



***EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING: Engaging with Current Events***

Copyright © 2013 by the National Speech & Debate Association. Updated 2022. All rights reserved.

Published by  
National Speech & Debate Association  
6600 Westown Parkway Suite 270 | West Des Moines, IA 50266 USA  
Phone: (920) 748-6206  
[info@speechanddebate.org](mailto:info@speechanddebate.org)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, now known or hereafter invented, including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, information storage and retrieval, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher.

The National Speech & Debate Association does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, gender identity, gender expression, affectional or sexual orientation, or disability in any of its policies, programs, and services.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>01</b>
<b>Chapter 1: The Purpose of an Extemporaneous Speech</b> . . . . .	<b>05</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Developing Your Speech.</b> . . . . .	<b>15</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Research and Evidence</b> . . . . .	<b>49</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Presenting Your Speech</b> . . . . .	<b>68</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> . . . . .	<b>76</b>
<b>Appendix A: Sample Extemporaneous Speaking Questions</b> . . . . .	<b>78</b>
<b>Appendix B: Resource List</b> . . . . .	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix C: Tournament Logistics</b> . . . . .	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix D: Writing Quality Extemporaneous Speaking Questions</b> . . . . .	<b>92</b>
<b>References.</b> . . . . .	<b>94</b>





# Introduction

Imagine yourself at dinner with a couple of friends and many others that you have never met before. In the midst of a conversation, one of your friends turns to you and says, “Hey, you know a lot about politics. Alice wants to know how the Electoral College works. I can’t remember.” Suddenly twelve heads swivel towards you, waiting to hear what you have to say. All eyes are on you, who has just been crowned an expert by your friend. Will you mumble something about not being able to remember either and return to your dinner red with embarrassment at being put on the spot? Or will you answer confidently and explain to these strangers the basics of the Electoral College?

At some point in your life, you will find yourself in a situation where you must speak intelligently and confidently in front of other people. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld has joked that our fear

of public speaking is so great that if we were attending a funeral, most of us would rather be in the casket than giving the eulogy. Studies of fear anxiety consistently rank public speaking



at the top of the list of things we would do pretty much anything to avoid.<sup>1</sup> Yet research also indicates that the more we engage in public speaking, the more adept we become at it and the less anxiety it provokes.

Whether you find yourself at a job interview, giving a presentation at college, or even simply asking another person out on a date, the ability to communicate effectively will be crucial to your success. Studying and practicing the art of public speaking will give you the skills and confidence necessary to rise to any occasion and communicate your message to any audience.

Within the world of competitive public speaking, there is a category of speeches that demands the ability to think on one's feet and tap into a wealth of knowledge to synthesize and explain complicated real-world issues. This category is extemporaneous speaking, and as its name implies, it is performed without the benefit of a script or memorization. In extemporaneous speaking, the speaker is tasked with answering a question about current events that incorporates research and evidence in an engaging and compelling way – all with only thirty minutes to prepare the speech.

If you are still reading this text, congratulations. You have overcome the first hurdle of extemporaneous speaking – the feeling that there is no way you could ever do something like that. At this point it is worth acknowledging something that you have probably already realized – extemporaneous speaking is difficult. To excel at it takes significant practice and a deliberate approach to research and speech writing. Once you have learned the essential skills involved in extemporaneous speaking, however, you will be prepared to handle almost any public speaking situation you may encounter later in life.

Extemporaneous speaking is the art of giving speeches on the spot – without notes or memorization – relying only on the speaker’s depth of knowledge and their ability to explain what they know in a coherent, engaging manner. As a category of forensics competition, extemporaneous speaking (or “extemp” as it is commonly known) is the manifestation of public speaking skills in their purest form – without the support of notes or memorization, the speaker is on her own when she is in front of an audience, with only her memory, knowledge, and command of language to aid her.

Extemporaneous speaking is the most natural form of public speaking in that it most closely mirrors everyday conversations. For the most part, we do not script out our conversations with other people, but we may plan in advance what we wish to say. For example, when you go to the doctor, you may have in

mind a set of questions you want to bring up, or on a job interview, you will plan some talking points about your skills in advance, but you would not write them out word for word and memorize them.

As the category name implies, extemporaneous speakers come up with their speeches just prior to delivering them. This is not to say that they pull their speeches out of the ether – most of the work of extemp speaking is preparation completed long before the tournament. The best extempers have cultivated a wealth of knowledge about current events and world affairs, economic theory and international relations, and even pop-culture and social trends to prepare an intelligent and interesting answer to a question they selected just thirty minutes before their speech.

Extemp speaking may be difficult, but with practice and dedication, nearly anyone can succeed at it. When you master the art of extemp speaking, you have gained a myriad of communication skills that will serve you in every aspect of your life and the confidence to use them whenever a challenge arises. For those who find public speaking in general to be very frightening, the thought of giving a speech after only half an hour of preparation without the benefit of notes on issues in current affairs can be inconceivable. For those who undertake this category, however, the skills and knowledge they gain serve them in many ways throughout their lives, with one of the biggest advantages

they gain being personal confidence and poise under pressure.

The specific rules that govern extemporaneous speaking will vary from state to state and tournament to tournament. In some instances you may be given 45 minutes of preparation time, whereas other times you will be given 30 minutes, which is the standard length of prep time used by the National Speech & Debate Association. Some tournaments will permit the use of laptops, while others will forbid technology. Despite these variations, every extemporaneous speaker will select their topic from three randomly drawn questions about current events and present their answer to

their selected question after a period of preparation time, during which they will outline and practice their speech.

In this text, we will explore the category of extemporaneous speaking in three phases: research, practice, and performance. We will discuss how to craft a thesis statement in answer to a question, how to develop introductions and transitions that engage and entertain, and how to draw on a wealth of resources and knowledge to construct a persuasive and intelligent speech. Along the way we will also uncover ways of developing the confidence and natural public speaking skills that set great extempers apart.

# Chapter 1

## *The Purpose of an Extemporaneous Speech*

Every speech has an ultimate purpose. Whether it is a politician conceding defeat in an election, an actor accepting an award, a lawyer presenting a closing argument, a late night talk show host delivering a monologue, a coach giving a pep talk at half time, or an employee presenting quarterly earnings figures at a company meeting, every public address seeks to accomplish some goal. The degree to which the speaker is successful in accomplishing that goal depends on having a clear understanding of her objective before she even begins delivering her speech.

The purpose for the different types of speeches mentioned above is clear. It could be to thank someone, to persuade a jury, to make an audience laugh, or to inspire a team. The purpose of an extemporaneous speech is less

straightforward. In extemp, we speak about current events. But just what are we supposed to do with that speech about current events? Is the purpose to inform the audience about the current event you are speaking about? Or is

it to persuade them to take a particular stance on the issues surrounding the topic? Or perhaps it's simply to present the information in as entertaining a way as possible. Different judges place different emphasis on these goals, and

extempers are often more adept at accomplishing certain objectives than others. Ultimately, a good extemp speech accomplishes all three objectives in pursuit of the overarching goal of simply answering the question.

## Inform

Every extemp speech requires an element of exposition, during which you explain the context of the question and provide the necessary background information for your audience to understand your arguments. Determining how much background information is required can be difficult. You will often draw questions about topics that are widely covered in the news, and you may be inclined to think that every thinking person should know at least the very basics about the issues. Social Security is one such issue.\*\* This entitlement program makes up a huge portion of the government's budget, which explains why it is frequently the focus of political disagreements. As the source of income for millions of retired Americans, nearly everyone at some point in their lives will have direct experience with Social Security, so one might assume that most Americans have at least a working understanding of the program. It can be difficult to gauge how much background

information is really necessary; how one can provide it without hitting the audience over the head with facts they already know?

Take a look back at the preceding paragraph. You will notice that in bringing up the topic of Social Security and explaining why you might assume that it is unnecessary to provide background information, we have woven in an explanation of some of the important aspects of Social Security that provide a context for a discussion about it. We said:

*This entitlement program makes up a huge portion of the government's budget, which explains why it is frequently the focus of political disagreements. As the source of income for millions of retired Americans, nearly everyone at some point in their lives will have direct experience with Social Security, so one might assume that most Americans have at least a working understanding of the program*

The italicized text is the background information that helps frame the discussion of Social Security. Rather than explicitly saying "Social Security is defined as an entitlement

\* Examples used in this text are meant to illustrate and inform the reader on the nature of extemporaneous speaking and should not be taken as an endorsement of any particular perspective or opinion on current events issues.





program that provides a source of income to retired Americans. It is an expensive government program,” we have peppered our analysis with information that helps the audience understand the topic in a way that seamlessly fits within the substance of our discussion.

The key to introducing this background knowledge in an elegant and seamless way is to weave it in to your analysis. Some extempers prefer to dedicate an entire section of their speech to background information, but such an approach has many drawbacks. First, this tactic can seem forced. Whereas it might make sense

in a research paper to begin with a section on background information, a good speech does not follow the same structure as an essay. A speech should be conversational and relatively easy for a judge to follow, even if he or she is not taking notes. Second, this approach makes it easy to unintentionally focus on a part of the speech that does not directly answer the question. This is because extempers who include a separate section for background information typically place it at the beginning of their speech (indeed, it would be rather illogical to put a lengthy section of background anywhere else). This is hazardous

because unless your time allocation skills are very well developed, it is easy to spend more time on the exposition than on the analysis.

Remember, your ultimate goal in an extemp speech is to answer your question – it isn't necessary to enlighten your judge on everything related to your topic. They only need

the information that is necessary to understand or believe your arguments. Integrating background and factual information with your analysis allows you to accomplish both the goal of answering the question and the goal of providing the necessary information for your answer to make sense.

## HOW MUCH BACKGROUND SHOULD I GIVE?

Given the many different types of audiences and the vast range of questions you may be asked, it can be difficult to determine just how much background information you need to provide. While there are no hard and fast rules for determining the extent of exposition necessary, there are a few rules of thumb that can help.

1. **Give your judge the benefit of the doubt:** Assume that your judge knows no more and no less than the average person. What constitutes an “average” level of familiarity will, of course, depend upon a number of factors, including the timeliness of the event, its relative importance to the audience, the amount of news coverage it receives, and how complex it is. This is why we need the second guideline.
2. **Determine the magnitude of the topic.** In general, the more of a “big deal” the topic is, the more your judge will have heard about it. For example, in October of Presidential election year, you can take for granted that your judge knows that the country will be having elections the following month, who is running for President, and which party they belong to.
3. **Understand the proximity of the topic to your judge's life.** The “closer” the topic is to your judge's life, the more he or she is likely to know about it. This means that your judge is likely to be more familiar with recent events than ones that took place months or years ago, with United States affairs more than international affairs, and with straightforward topics more than obscure or complex ones. For example, it would be unwise to expect your judge to know the specifics of the Kyoto Protocol, a set of environmental standards that were established in the late 1990s. While the Kyoto Protocol is certainly significant as it relates to a number of environmental topics, it is too distant from most audiences – both temporally and in relation to their lives – to assume that they have a high degree of knowledge about it.

Some extempers may balk at the idea that their speeches should be entertaining. “My analysis is strong enough to carry the speech on its own!” they say. Or as we often hear, “If I were good at being entertaining, I’d do Humorous Interpretation.” Such statements reflect a misunderstanding about what it means to be an entertaining extemporaneous speaker. Being an entertaining speaker has much less to do with being funny than it does with using elements of rhetoric and delivery that enhance the audience’s experience.

When we talk about an entertaining extemp speech, you may think of satirical news shows and the way they often mix humor with political analysis. Humor is certainly one form of entertainment, but when we talk about entertaining your audience we are really talking about making your speech pleasant to listen to from beginning to end. A speech might be entirely devoid of humor but still be entertaining because the speaker makes it interesting by, for example, drawing parallels between a political issue and Norse mythology. Perhaps you are the kind of person who loves numbers and empirical evidence. By embracing your own interests, you can make your speech more entertaining for your audience by using data to draw important conclusions that may not be obvious to them. Content aside, talented extemporaneous speakers use word choice, vocal inflection, pacing, volume and gestures to add interest to their speech. We will cover

these techniques in more detail in the section on delivery and presentation.

The key to being an entertaining speaker is to let your personality shine through. If you are very serious and don’t often crack jokes, trying to force humor into your speech will be painful for both you and your audience. In that case, let your seriousness drive your speech – your passion for the topic will lend gravity to your analysis. If you are cheerful and bubbly, allow your delivery to be conversational and easy going. If you tend to be cynical and sarcastic, well, you have chosen a category that provides ample opportunity to showcase this aspect of your personality.

We will talk about humor and the speaker’s personality in more detail later on. At this point, we want to emphasize a few important caveats. First, there are some topics for which it is simply inappropriate to joke around or be lighthearted (famine, natural disasters, AIDS, and ethnic violence to name just a few). Any successful public speaker knows how to match her delivery and inflection to the seriousness of what she is talking about. Second, be tactful and tasteful. Even if you know your judge and think that she would appreciate your edgy sense of humor, resist the temptation to use any humor or language that you would not use in a classroom presentation. A judge who might find a joke funny in a social context may penalize you for poor judgment if you make the same joke in a speech.





## Persuade

When we think of persuasive public speaking, we tend to think of an orator trying to convince her audience that they ought to adopt a certain value, policy or course of action. Indeed, in the world of competitive public speaking, the category of Original Oratory is devoted to just this kind of persuasive speaking. It is less obvious how an extemporaneous speech should be persuasive. After all, an extemporaneous speech about who will win a Presidential

election is not trying to persuade the audience to *vote* for a particular candidate. The person delivering such a speech is, however, trying to persuade the audience that her answer to the question “Who will win the Presidential election?” is the correct answer.

In order to understand persuasion in extemporaneous speaking, we need to take a step back and examine the basic principles of persuasion. Scholars of rhetoric – people who study the

art of using language and speech – typically divide the elements of persuasion into three categories: pathos, ethos, and logos. These categories were first formally established by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who observed famous rhetoricians as they appealed to audiences in both the courts and the streets.

## Pathos

To understand these three forms of persuasion, it helps to examine the etymology of the words. “*Pathos*” refers to an emotional appeal. In its literal meaning, “pathos” is ancient Greek for the sensation of suffering and is the root of words such as “sympathetic” and “empathy.” When using *pathos* as a means of persuasion, the speaker is attempting to elicit a feeling in his audience – to make them angry, guilty, fearful, joyful, excited, and so on. The speaker uses emotion to pull his audience towards a particular conclusion. There are a number of ways a speaker can use pathos to persuade, such as telling a particularly sad story or arousing the anger of an audience by making them feel the injustice of an issue.

There are many situations in which pathos is an appropriate rhetorical device; for the most part, extemporaneous speaking is not one of them. In general, you will attempt to persuade your audience that the conclusions drawn based on your analysis of the facts are correct. There is no action to convince the audience to take. With very few exceptions, you will never be asked to take a moral stand on an issue (and

## “CSI – ROME”

Have you ever wondered why the world of speech and debate is often referred to as “forensics?” For the ancient Romans as well as the ancient Greeks, the primary venue for public speaking was in the courts. In prosecuting or defending a person, orators would give passionate speeches advocating for a particular verdict, relying on their rhetoric to persuade the audience. The word “forensics” is derived from the Latin word *for ns*, meaning “of or pertaining to the public forum.” When the term first came to use in the 1600s, it referred to matters related to the court of law or the court of public opinion that could be argued based on logic and fact. One of Rome’s most successful legal orators, Cicero, became the first philosopher of the art of public speaking, laying down his “Five Cannons of Rhetoric,” which are still widely taught today.<sup>2</sup> (Reference: Jasinski, James. *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001.)

if you are, we urge you to choose one of the other questions instead, as we will discuss in greater detail in another section).

This is not to suggest, however, that you will never be required to speak on a controversial

issue that people feel personally passionate about. There are value judgments that underlie the various positions on many issues. For example, if you are asked a question about reforming entitlement programs, how you answer will be based on certain assumptions about the appropriate role of government in providing for people and the degree to which individuals are personally responsible for their own well-being. Even when dealing with this type of question, we urge you to rely primarily on logical analysis and evidence to make your case. Because you will not be able to predict the presuppositions and personal beliefs of the judge, relying too heavily on pathos can backfire by eliciting the opposite emotions in a person who disagrees with you. Moreover, making emotional appeals in an extemporaneous speaking context can undermine your credibility, as most judges expect speakers to make well-reasoned arguments supported by data and expert opinion.

## Ethos

“*Ethos*” is the root word of *ethics*, which we generally understand to be the study of right and wrong. Thus in rhetoric, *ethos* can be understood as the audience’s perception of the speaker’s ethical character. It should be noted, however, that *ethos* doesn’t really refer to whether a person is moral or immoral, rather whether they come across as a credible, believable speaker. Depending on the context, some speakers may be more credible than others. For example, an astrophysicist is

probably more qualified to speak about current technological barriers to modern space exploration than you are. Thus one way to establish greater credibility with your audience is to use the testimony of qualified experts to support your arguments. Presenting quality evidence is one important way extemporaneous speakers can use *ethos* to persuade their audience.

Your *ethos* as a speaker can also be enhanced or diminished by more subtle factors. Having a confident demeanor when you enter the room and prepare to speak, dressing professionally, and speaking clearly without the use of filler phrases such as “like” or “um” all enhance your credibility as a person who knows what they are talking about. There is also an important connection between a person’s *ethos* and the depth and breadth of their knowledge on a topic. As you practice the art of extemporaneous speaking you will learn more about current events and their context and develop skills that make it easier to think and speak on your feet. Your *ethos* will improve.

## Logos

Finally, we turn to the most important persuasive device an extemporaneous speaker can use: *logos*. *Logos* is the root word of (and is often translated as) logic. As a persuasive tool, *logos* refers to the use of reasoned arguments to convince an audience. For Aristotle, *logos* meant formal logic – conclu-

sions derived from premises in the form of a syllogism. While an extemporaneous speaker may not be explicit about her use of logic, her analysis will often follow the form of a syllogism. Here are the most common types of syllogisms used in an extemporaneous speech:

- **Conditional/causal reasoning:** If A, then B. A, therefore B.

“If the United States alienates the people of Pakistan, relations with the Pakistani government will suffer. The use of drone strikes to target terrorist leaders has resulted in civilian deaths, which has sparked anti-American sentiment. As a result, the Pakistani government will refuse to cooperate with the United States to avoid the perception that it is under American control.”

- **Categorical reasoning:** All A's are C's. B is an A, therefore B is a C.

“Republicans in the House of Representatives are moving farther to the right in order to appeal to their base during hotly contested primary elections, in which they compete against other Republicans. Republican Congressman John Smith is likely to face strong opposition from a Tea Party-backed challenger in the GOP primary. In order to keep his seat, Smith is unlikely to join

Democrats in voting for comprehensive immigration reform.”

- **Disjunctive reasoning:** Either A, or B. Not A, therefore B.

“The newly elected government in Tunisia must implement reforms that spur economic growth, or lack of economic opportunities for average Tunisian will undermine the revolution. The government has been too focused on silencing political opposition to institute genuine economic reforms, causing discontented Tunisians to once again take to the streets, accusing their new government of corruption.”

No matter what form it takes, a solid logical argument in an extemporaneous speech will clearly state a claim (what the speaker is trying to prove), offer analysis to explain the truth of the claim, and support the analysis with evidence.

The majority of your speech will consist of analysis supporting the answer to your question – or, to put it another way, analysis supporting your thesis. Think of your answer and thesis as the overarching argument you are trying to make and the analysis and evidence within your speech as the proof for that argument.



## The Ultimate Goal: Answer the Question

We have identified three “goals” of an extemporaneous speech – to inform, entertain and persuade. These three attributes of a successful speech are only important to the extent that they contribute to the real purpose of an extemporaneous speech: *to answer the question*.

As you are outlining your speech, ask yourself how each point within your speech supports your answer. The connection should be clear to you, and you should make it clear to your judge by concluding every point with an explanation of how it supports your thesis. If you cannot easily connect your analysis to the answer you give, then the analysis may not have a place in your speech.

It can be tempting to include analysis that is tangentially related to your topic, especially if it is very interesting, if you have recently prepared a speech on a related but different question, if you don't have a lot of information or evidence about your topic, or if you are unsure about your analysis. We urge you to avoid this filler analysis as much as possible. Just like extraneous background information, tangential analysis detracts from your main goal of answering the question. For this reason, it is important to keep in mind that you are speaking about a specific question, not a general topic. For example, there are a dozen different questions to ask

about the Israeli/Palestinian peace process, and analysis that answers one of those questions is not necessarily applicable to another. Analysis answering a question about whether the President is spending too much political capital focusing on peace in the Middle East is not interchangeable with analysis about whether a new Israeli Prime Minister is likely to be willing to compromise in the peace process.

# Chapter 2

## *Developing Your Speech*

In extemporaneous speaking, you will never deliver the same speech twice. You may speak on a similar question – or even the exact same topic. But because your speech will be outlined and learned rather than written out and memorized, each speech you give will be unique. In this chapter, we will examine the process of developing your speech, from selecting a question to outlining your speech and finding quality evidence to support your points.

An extemporaneous speech can be broken down into three basic stages: the draw, preparation time, and the speech itself. During the draw, you will select three questions at random and choose one to speak on. Depending on tournament policy, you may return the other two questions or there may have a unique set of questions for each speaker position. During preparation time – or “prep time” as it is more commonly known – you will outline your speech, using

your research to identify evidence to support your analysis. You will also use your prep time to commit your outline and evidence to memory and practice delivering your speech. The speech itself is the final product of all this work, where you deliver the answer to your question in front of your judge. We will address the first two stages of an extemporaneous speech – the draw and prep time – in this chapter.



## Part 1: Selecting a Question

An extemporaneous speech is an answer to a question about current events. Questions for each round typically have a theme, such as economic issues or Latin and South America. In some states, students can select questions from a pool of domestic topics or international topics, whereas in other regions all students select from the same stockpile of questions, which will sometimes be domestic and sometimes in-

ternational. At District-level tournaments, the National Forensic League tournament, and in some regions, domestic and international extemp are separated into different categories; in other tournaments students who choose domestic questions may speak against students who choose international questions. There are several ways of classifying extemp questions.

**The type of question.** Questions can ask you to:

- **Predict** the outcome of a situation.
- **Prescribe** the best course of action in a given scenario.
- **Evaluate** the actions some person or group has taken.

**The subject of the question.** Questions can be about:

- **Facts** – which ones and how to interpret them.
- **Actions** – weighing and evaluating policies or approaches to situations.
- **Priorities** – what the most important factors in a situation are.

**The wording of the question.** The scope can be:

- **Narrow** – the question asks about a specific issue, event, person, policy, etc.
- **Broad** – the question is more open-ended, asking a more general question about a subject.

## TYPES OF QUESTIONS

---

The questions sometimes ask for a **prediction**, as in “Who will be the Republican nominee for President?” Some ask for a **prescription**, such as “What should the federal government do to address systemic inequities?” And some questions ask for an **evaluation** of a government official or policy proposal, as in “Are austerity

measures working to reduce the economic crisis in the EU?”

### Predictive Questions

As the name implies, predictive questions ask you to anticipate the likely outcome of a situation. Predictive questions often focus on issues such as who will win an election, whether a piece of legislation or a policy proposal will be adopted, or which side will emerge victorious in a conflict. Predictive questions require you to take a side, arguing that a single outcome is the most likely.

In predicting an outcome, it is necessary to include comparative analysis. By this we mean that in addition to explaining why the outcome you select is the most likely, you should explain why the alternative outcomes are less likely. For example, consider the question “Will the Republicans retain control of the House of Representatives in the upcoming midterm elections?” Let us assume that you wish to answer yes – the Republicans will keep control of the House. Your speech should include analysis explaining why the Republicans will keep control as well as analysis about why the Democrats will not win a majority of seats in the House.

## Prescriptive Questions

Prescriptive questions ask you to identify the best course of action in a situation. They often focus on a particular issue but ask an open-ended question about what should be done in the situation, such as “What should Congress do to ensure the long term viability of Social Security?” or “How should the international community respond to the civil conflict in Syria?”

Prescriptive questions tend to be open ended in that they do not specify the options you must choose from. Consider these two questions about immigration reform:

- “Should Congress secure the country’s borders before extending citizenship to undocumented immigrants?”
- “How should Congress reform immigration policy?”

The first question (which is an evaluative question, by the way) asks the speaker to assess two particular aspects of immigration policy, border security and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. While the speaker may bring in alternatives, the bulk of his speech will be about these two aspects. The second question is open-ended, leaving the speaker the leeway to talk about a number of different possible reforms, identifying one or more as the best course of action.

## Evaluative Questions

As the above example (“Should Congress secure the country’s borders before extending citizenship to undocumented immigrants?”) illustrates, evaluative questions ask you to assess policies, alternative actions, and approaches to a particular situation. They can be specific, like the previous example, or more open-ended. An open-ended evaluative question could look like this: “Is China doing enough to reduce economic inequalities among its citizens?” We will address ways to handle open-ended and specific questions in the next section.

It is important to note that there is an element of evaluation in every question. Asking you to predict the outcome of an election requires you to evaluate the potential candidates’ chances of winning, and asking for a prescription to a problem requires you to judge the best course of action among many options. When we talk of *evaluative questions* as a classification, we are referring to those questions that don’t also fit into one of the other two categories.

## Broad and Narrow Questions

There are many ways to word a question about the same basic topic. For the most part, the wording of questions will be either narrow or broad. Narrow questions are about very specific aspects of a policy or situation, which necessarily limit most of your analysis to talking about that specific aspect. Broad questions are more open, often asking what should be done



about a general issue or how to approach a problem. They do not specify the aspects of the topic that the speaker must talk about.

In this sense, it may seem that broad questions are preferable because they provide more leeway for the speaker, allowing for greater choice in exactly what to talk about. The flexibility of broad questions comes with a trade-off, however. The broader the question, the more difficult it can be to come up with a cohesive thesis that answers it. While narrow questions limit the speaker in how they can approach the question, they tend to lead the speaker to a simple and straightforward answer.

## Open Ended and Yes/No Questions

There is a difference between a broad question and an open-ended question. As we explained, a broad question is general and leaves the speaker with a lot of latitude to determine what kind of analysis to include in her speech. An open-ended question is simply one that allows the speaker to answer in any manner she chooses, as opposed to a yes/no question, which can only be answered one way.

## Providing Context for an Open-Ended Question: Uncovering the Assumptions

Every question makes certain implicit assumptions about what is important, what constitutes a “good” policy, and so forth. For open-ended questions, you need to identify the assumptions of the question. Consider the question, “Should

all states adopt common K-12 education standards?” The question is asking whether a certain education reform is a good idea. But how do we determine what makes an education reform “good” or not? Must it improve student achievement? Decrease dropout rates? Raise the United States’ education system’s global ranking? Better prepare students for life in the workforce or college? While each of these are legitimate goals of an education system, it is neither possible nor wise to try to tackle all of them in a seven minute extemporaneous speech. A well-crafted thesis statement – discussed in detail later on – will help narrow the question and provide context for your answer.

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A QUESTION

---

Sometimes you will intuitively know which question to select; other times the decision will not be so obvious. When there is more than one question you like – or when there are none that you are enthusiastic about – considering certain factors will help you make the wisest choice. With the exception of the first consideration, these factors are not necessarily in order of importance – sometimes what you know about a topic will outweigh a poorly written question, whereas other times an empty evidence file will outweigh your own personal knowledge of a topic.

**1. Avoid deeply controversial topics.** There are certain subjects that are very difficult to

speak on, no matter how benign the question may seem. Questions about abortion or the death penalty, for example, deal with topics about which people have deeply personal opinions. It is easiest to persuade audiences that are either on the fence or not particularly passionate about a subject; it is much more difficult to change someone's mind about something they believe deeply. Some subjects are borderline controversial, and the wording of the question can tilt it one direction or another. Even a few words can make a difference. For example, the question "Should the Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*?" is potentially much more divisive than the question "Is the Supreme Court likely to overturn *Roe v. Wade*?" The first question requires a value judgment that your audience may disagree with, whereas the second question, while still touchy, allows the speaker to make arguments about what the likely outcome *will* be given the realities of the Court, regardless of what anyone may *want* the outcome to be.

**2. Consider your familiarity with the topic.**

The more you know about a subject, the easier it will be to speak intelligently on it. A tournament is not the ideal place to try out a speech on a topic you have never tackled before.

**3. Know what you have research on – and what you don't.** Even if you have a significant

amount of knowledge about a topic, not having evidence to support your analysis will hinder your performance. If you are concerned that you might not have much research on a question, consider selecting a different one.

**4. Assess the wording of the question.** If it is an open-ended question, do you think you can craft a specific thesis? Or is the question simply too broad and unwieldy to constrain effectively? Also ask yourself if you are confident that you can answer the question *as it is asked*. Just because you have spoken on a similar question recently does not mean that you can transplant that speech to fit the question you have drawn.

**5. Determine if your question will help you stand out in the round.** Many tournaments divide questions up thematically – for domestic extemp, rounds are often divided into economic, political, and social issues, and in international extemp rounds are typically divided up by region of the world. When an issue is particularly significant, it is common for there to be more than one question about it. Thus if you feel confident that you can deliver a quality speech about a less common topic, it may be strategically advantageous to avoid questions about the mainstream issues.



## Part 2: Answering the Question

### CRAFTING A THESIS STATEMENT

The answer to your question should be phrased like a thesis statement. Your speech will consist of arguments supporting your thesis – or, to put it another way – proving your answer. Your goal is to persuade the judge that your thesis statement is true based on the analysis and evidence provided. Every speech should have a thesis statement.

A thesis statement is not the same thing as a topic sentence. A topic sentence of a paragraph or an expository essay may generally describe the topic you are writing about. A thesis statement goes beyond identifying the topic to taking a stand on it and express a single main idea. Do not be troubled if you are having a hard time coming up with a short thesis statement that accomplishes these goals – often a well-crafted thesis statement is lengthy.

A thesis statement for any persuasive speech or paper is generally made up of two parts: a claim statement and a justification statement. In extemporaneous speaking, the claim is how you are answering your question, and the justification statement explains why the claim is true. Of course, the justification statement itself needs proving – on its own it is not enough to establish the truth of the claim, i.e. the correctness of your answer. The purpose of the thesis statement is to provide a preview of the arguments you will be making in greater detail in the body of the speech.

### *State Your Question*

In your introduction when stating your question, follow these guidelines:

Memorize your question and state it exactly as it is written; do not alter the wording.

Introduce the question in a way that makes sense. Avoid “thus we must ask ourselves the question,” because generally “we”—your audience – aren’t likely to be asking ourselves questions about current events. There are a variety of grammatically appropriate ways to introduce a question, such as:

- This gives rise to the question...
- This has analysts wondering...
- Congress/the President/the Press/the Court/some other person or party is considering the question...

Immediately after stating the question, give your answer and thesis statement.

Refer back to the question throughout your speech to make it clear to your judge that your analysis answers the question.

Restate your question in the conclusion of your speech. It is less crucial to use the exact wording at the end of the speech, but do not alter the meaning of the question.

## Developing a Thesis for the Yes/No Question

Some questions are phrased in a way to elicit a yes or no answer. In these circumstances it might seem like a thesis statement is unnecessary, and that your analysis would simply consist of examples proving your yes or no answer. A thesis statement explaining *why* you are answering yes or no will tie your analysis together, and it will also guide you as you

decide what to include in your outline. A thesis statement limits what can be included to only those arguments and sources that prove the thesis true, helping you steer clear of extraneous analysis that doesn't answer the question.

Let's examine a few sample yes/no questions and potential thesis statements:

Question	Answer & Thesis
Is the Tea Party still an influential force in American Politics?	Yes, the Tea Party is still influential because its support of state and local candidates has pushed the Republican Party further to the right.
Will the Republicans retain control of the House of Representatives in the Midterm Elections?	No. The Republicans will lose control of the House because the party is moving more to the right as the American public moves more to the center.
Should the International Olympic Committee move the Winter Olympics out of Russia in response to that country's strict anti-gay laws?	Yes, the IOC should move the Olympics to protect athletes and observers from potential arrest and detention.

## Developing a Thesis for the Open Ended Question

A coherent thesis statement is especially important when dealing with an open-ended question. Without it, there is nothing to unify your analysis and your speech can seem like a laundry list of independent arguments. In some ways, crafting a thesis statement for an openended question can be easier than

developing one for a yes/no question. With yes/no questions, you may have several "reasons" in mind for your answer that don't seem to fit together under a single thesis statement. In these cases you may have to leave out analysis that you would have liked to talk about in order to preserve the cohesion of your speech.

With open-ended questions, the topics are usually broad enough that you can develop a thesis statement that encompasses many of the thoughts you have on the topic.

In other ways, however, writing a thesis statement for an open-ended question can be more difficult, especially if your knowledge about the subject of the question is lacking.

In such circumstances we suggest focusing in on one part of the topic. For example, if a piece of legislation is likely to have political and economic consequences, one way to narrow your thesis is to focus on one of those types of consequences.

Here are some sample open-ended questions and potential thesis statements:

Question	Answer & Thesis
What effect will recent revelations about the NSA's surveillance programs have on intelligence gathering?	These revelations will lead to greater oversight of the surveillance programs but will not have an impact on the amount of useful intelligence gathered.
How should we reform Social Security?	While there are a number of helpful reforms that could improve Social Security's viability, the most important changes we can make involve modernizing the program.
What can the European Union do to stop the economic crisis in the Eurozone?	The best way to stop the crisis in the Eurozone is to end the harsh austerity programs that have made the problem worse.
How can countries in Latin America better fight organized crime?	The first step Latin American countries need to take is to fight corruption among government officials.

Let's take a closer look at the second question, "How should we reform Social Security?" This is about as open-ended of a question as you can draw. The debate about how to reform Social Security is wide ranging, and there are many potential ways to address the issue. Notice that the thesis acknowledges as much

by beginning with "While there are a number of helpful reforms...." This statement is something of a caveat that lets the judge know that the speaker realizes she cannot speak about every possible reform and is intentionally honing in on one set of reforms.

The phrase “modernizing the program” is how the speaker ties together the reforms she wishes to speak about. For example, her speech may deal with raising the retirement age to reflect the fact that Americans are working longer. She may also suggest adjusting the way the Social Security Administration calculates the annual cost of living increases. The speaker could have used a different phrase, such as “reducing the government’s role in Social Security,” if she wanted to argue that the program should be privatized or phased out.

Notice that all but the first thesis statement in the table above implicitly acknowledge that there are many aspects of the topic that won’t be covered in the speech. Statements including phrases like “While there are a number of helpful reforms...” “The best way...” and “The first step...” all serve to let the judge know that not every solution to a problem will be explored. Such statements are helpful because knowledgeable judges will often take into consideration what you *don’t* say as much as what you do say.

## Non-Answers

Many extempers will try to pass off a non-answer as a thesis statement. They may conflate the thesis statement with a division of analysis, listing off the points they will cover without tying them together. Some extempers are taught that they should have one area of analysis that deals with the economic aspects of the question, one that deals with the political aspects, and one that deals with the social aspects, or that they should divide their speech into long-term and short-term consequences. This categorization of analysis simply groups arguments together by type, however – it does not in itself answer the question. Another non-answer is the broad and weak thesis statement that doesn’t really answer the question. In these cases, the statement is so general that it enables the speaker to address any aspect of the question he wants, but it also leaves the question without a unified answer.

Here are some examples of non-answer thesis statements:

Question	Non-Answer	Improved Thesis
How far will Iraq backslide into violence?	There will be a great deal of violence in Iraq.	In the absence of a strong central authority to impose peace, Iraq could become even more violent than it was after the U.S. Invasion.
What must Detroit do to recover after its declaration of bankruptcy?	Detroit needs to strengthen its economy after declaring bankruptcy.	Detroit needs to attract investment in order to bring its economy back after bankruptcy.
Should the “gun show loophole” be closed?	No, the gun show loophole isn’t the real problem.	No. Most gun-related crime is done with illegally obtained guns. We should instead focus on preventing the illegal transfer of guns.
What will be President Obama’s legacy?	We will look at the impact President Obama has had on politics, the economy, and society.	President Obama’s legacy will largely feature The Affordable Care Act, as it was a major political feat and unmatched elsewhere throughout Obama’s presidency..

Often a poorly worded question will lead to a weak thesis statement. Since you cannot control the wording of the questions, it is up to you to use your thesis statement to clarify, narrow, and define the scope of the question. Questions that ask you to quantify the abstract, such as the one in the first example

above, need to have carefully constructed thesis statements in order to make sense of the topic.

In the first example, there are two problems with the non-answer thesis statement. First, it doesn’t give an answer to the question that helps the listener understand the issue. The

non-answer thesis answers the question “how much” with the unhelpful reply “a lot.” This is a difficult question to answer because the speaker must establish some sort of scale to measure violence against. The question doesn’t ask if violence will increase or decrease, it presupposes that it will increase and asks by how much. The improved thesis attempts to provide clarity and context for the question by specifying the degree of violence – greater than the days after the U.S. Invasion.

The second problem with the non-answer is that it leaves off the justification part of the two-part thesis statement. Remember that each thesis statement needs a claim and a justification, the “because” or “why” part of the sentence. The improved thesis statement explains that the violence will increase *because* there is no central authority to stop it.

Take a look at the second example, “What must Detroit do to recover after its declaration of bankruptcy?” The non-answer thesis is a perfect illustration of how unhelpful a poorly worded thesis statement can be. The non-answer is “Detroit needs to strengthen its economy after declaring bankruptcy.” *Of course* Detroit needs to strengthen its economy. It declared bankruptcy precisely because its economy was in such trouble! What the question is really asking is *how* should Detroit strengthen its economy. The improved thesis identifies a way that Detroit can grow its

economy – by attracting investment. The speaker’s analysis would then focus on how investment will help the economy and how Detroit can secure it.

The non-answer to the third example question, “Should the ‘gun show loophole’ (referring to the fact that background checks are not required to buy a firearm at a gun show) be closed?” is more of an *almost*-answer. The flaw in the statement “No, the gun show loophole isn’t the real problem,” is that it begs the question: what *is* the real problem? The improved thesis statement rephrases the non-answer in a way that gives it more substance, by (1) stating why the gun show loophole isn’t the problem, and (2) identifying what the problem actually is.

## PART 2 SUMMARY

---

- Every speech should have a thesis statement that answers the question.
- The thesis statement has two parts: a claim that states the answer, and a justification statement that summarizes the reason why the claim is true.
- Yes/no questions need a thesis that includes a justification statement explaining why the answer is yes or no.
- Open-ended questions need a specific thesis that makes an argument, not just an umbrella statement that categorizes the points to be made.

## Part 3: Structuring Your Extemporaneous Speech

An extemporaneous speech can be broken down into three parts: the introduction, the areas of analysis, and the conclusion. Within each of these parts, the speaker will try to accomplish different goals. The introduction serves to capture the audience's attention, present the topic (i.e. question), and preview the speaker's answer in the form of a thesis statement. The areas of analysis explain why the speaker's answer is true, supporting it with evidence. The ar-

reas of analysis make up the bulk of the speech. The conclusion reviews what has been said, restates the speaker's thesis, and provides closure for the audience, avoiding an abrupt ending. In between these parts of the speech the extemporer will use transitions to move the audience's attention from one part of the speech to the next. Each part has its own structure, and we will examine them in turn.

Part of the Speech	Length of Time in Minutes
Introduction	1:00 (ideal) 1:30 (max)
Body of the Speech	About 5:00 – 5:30
Each Area of Analysis (3-point speech)	1:30 – 2:00
Each Area of Analysis (2-point speech)	2:00 – 2:30
Conclusion	0:30 – 1:00



## THE INTRODUCTION

---

Your introduction is one of the most important parts of your speech. There is a lot to accomplish in a short amount of time, so a well-crafted introduction is crucial to setting the tone for a speech that provides a solid answer to the question. If successful, your introduction will:

1. Capture the audience's interest and draw their focus to your speech.
2. Establish a positive first impression of you as a credible, intelligent speaker.
3. Introduce the topic of your speech (the question), your thesis statement, and preview the body of your speech.

### Structure of an Introduction

All successful speeches begin with an attention-getting device that draws the audience in and compels them to listen to the speaker. Having captured the audience's attention, the

next step is to transition out of the attention getter into the topic of your speech. In one or two sentences, you will link your attention getter to your question. Having established a connection between your attention getter to the topic of your speech, explain the significance of the issue. The significance statement essentially explains why the question is being asked. If possible, include a brief reference to a source – a statistic, study, or statement by someone familiar with the topic. Evidence at this point is not necessary, but it is helpful in establishing the credibility of your significance statement.

Now that you have your audience's attention and have them convinced that your speech is worth listening to because it is about a significant issue, state the question as it is written (except as necessary to be grammatically correct). This is the one part of your speech that you should absolutely commit to memory

## THE INTRODUCTION STRUCTURE TEMPLATE

---

**Attention getter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Link to topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Significance statement/evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer/thesis:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preview:** \_\_\_\_\_

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

word-for-word. Immediately after posing the question, state your answer *as a thesis statement*. After your thesis statement, give a brief preview of the main areas of analysis you will address. Finally, wrap up your introduction with a transition statement that flows into the first area of analysis.

Your attention getter will often be related to a broad concept or to a broader aspect of your topic. As you link the attention getter to the topic, explain its significance, and so on, you will be moving the audience from these general ideas to more specific points.

### *Introduction Structure Quick Guide:*

#### *General Ideas*

1. **Attention getting device:** a statement, story, fact, quotation, metaphor, proverb, etc., that captures your audience's interest and compels them to listen to the rest of your speech.
2. **Link to the topic:** a sentence or two that connects your attention getter to the question you will speak on.
3. **Significance statement:** explain to the audience why the topic of your speech matters: why the question is being asked.
4. **Identify the topic:** state your question.
5. **Answer the question:** state your thesis.
6. **Preview your analysis:** identify your division of thesis and the main points you are going to cover.

#### *Specific Points*

## **Developing an Attention Getter**

Without an attention getter, the audience has no incentive to pay attention to your speech or care about your analysis. The attention getter should be thought provoking and interesting and should “hook” your audience. At the same time, the attention getter must relate to your question in a clear way. There are many types of attention getters, and the best one for your speech will depend on the question and your answer.

1. **An interesting fact:** an unusual, startling, or amazing fact can intrigue your audience and make them want to hear more. The fact does not need to be specifically about the topic of your question, but there should be a clear link.
2. **An important or interesting development in your topic, or an important historical event related to the question:** especially useful for topics your judge may already be familiar with, telling your audience about something that has recently changed or happened regarding the topic of your question has the double advantage of a self-contained link to the question.
3. **A reference to popular culture:** movies, songs, television shows, works of art, books, magazines – even products, video games, and toys – can all be related to your question. Be creative in

developing attention getters based on pop culture references. The attention getter doesn't need to be explicitly related to your question, as long as you can metaphorically draw a connection. For example, an introduction based on the classic toy Silly Putty could be related to a politician who changes his position when it is convenient, morphing into whatever shape his constituency wants at the time.

4. **A quotation:** a statement from a famous – or infamous – person can be witty, poignant, funny, sad, or just plain stupid. Invest in a good book of quotations with an index of subjects for easy reference.
5. **Political cartoons:** political cartoons convey their message through images. Describing the cartoon with vivid language can help your audience picture what is happening in the cartoon and draw them in as they imagine the scene you are describing.
6. **Retell a classic story, fairy tale, myth or proverb:** many of the stories we were told as children have an implicit lesson that can be related to current events. The same is true for myths and legends – the story from Greek mythology of Icarus, who flew too close to the sun and suffered the consequences, can easily be linked to a current event

in which someone's overreach had a negative outcome.

7. **Personal anecdotes:** for the most part, we advise against using personal stories as an attention getting device. Being personal in nature, such stories are often incongruous with the professional, analytic nature of extemp and current events. Extemp is not a category that lends itself to sentimentality or emotion, and personal stories can make you seem less credible. There are exceptions to this guideline, however. If something has happened to you that is not too personal and is related to your question, it might be possible to develop an attention getter out of it. For example, we know of an instance when the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) sent a membership card (automatically given to people when they reach age 50) to someone who had just turned 15, not 50. This kind of humorous anecdote could be used in a speech specifically about the AARP.

As a rhetorical device, attention getters can do more than introduce your question to the audience. They can also establish *ethos* by enhancing your credibility. Interesting facts and startling statistics, relaying recent developments in the issue, explaining historical context as an introduction, or relaying a classic story, proverb or piece of mythology can show the

judge and the audience that you have a firm grasp on the topic and a wide range of knowledge. Introductions based on pop culture references and stories that we all know also create camaraderie between you and the audience based on shared experiences and culture.

## The “Canned” Intro

A canned introduction is an attention getter that is written well in advance of the tournament. It is often generic and meant to apply to many different questions. While a pre-written introduction can start your speech off with polish, it can also backfire when it becomes clear to the audience that your attention getter is the most well thought out part of your performance. We urge you to avoid introductions that are overly broad or generic. In general, if an introduction can be molded to fit almost any speech, then the link to any question will probably be too weak.

While “canned” introductions are ill-advised, it is important to think about your introductions in advance of the tournament. You will often encounter the same or similar questions throughout the year, and once you have developed a quality introduction for one question, it is appropriate and efficient to use it again when speaking on the same topic. Just be sure that (1) the introduction really does connect to the question being asked, and (2) your judge hasn’t heard you deliver the exact same introduction before.

## *Baby You Can Drive My Car*

A vehicle is a rhetorical tool that can help make your speech truly memorable. In public speaking, a vehicle is the theme that drives your speech. It ties the introduction, conclusion, and transition statements together by referencing the same attention-getting device throughout your speech. For this purpose pop culture references are particularly helpful because they provide memorable material that your audience is likely already familiar with. For example, if you use a superhero reference as your introduction, your transition statements and conclusion would all be tied to that reference. The vehicle of the superhero story would drive your speech when you use the superhero’s famous catch phrases, reference his or her sidekick or arch nemesis, or mention the cool weapons and tools the superhero has at his or her disposal. Be careful not to get carried away, however. The vehicle is just a tool to enhance the speech – your primary focus should still be on the analysis that answers the question.

## Linking to the Topic

The link to the topic is a transition statement that connects your attention-getting device to the question you will be speaking on. It explains the relationship between whatever story, quotation, reference, fact, or anecdote you used to open the speech and the question. The phrasing of the link will depend on the attention getter as well as the question.

## Establishing Significance

Once you grab your audience's attention, you need to keep it. They've paid attention to you for the first thirty seconds or so of your speech, now you need to convince them to listen to the remaining six and a half minutes. The significance statement is intended to do just that. It explains why the question you are going to be speaking on is worth asking. To establish the significance of the topic, your statement should have two parts: one part that identifies who or what is affected by the issue, and another part that identifies how they are affected. For example, in a speech on Social Security, a significance statement might sound like this:

“Given that millions of Baby Boomers will be retiring in the next few years, without significant reforms to Social Security it is possible that the program may not be around to support today's working adults when they reach retirement age.”

The statement explains who is affected (today's working adults) and how they are affected (the program might not support them when they retire).

It is not always necessary nor possible to develop significance statements that pinpoint everything that will be affected and all of the impacts of the issue. The rest of your speech will establish those aspects of the issue; as part of the introduction, the significance statement only needs to *introduce* the audience to the importance of the topic.

If possible, include a source in your significance statement to quantify or support your claims about the topic's importance. To illustrate:

“US drone strikes threaten to dismantle the fragile relationship between the US and Pakistan. As NPR's program *All Things Considered* from February 13, 2013 points out, the strikes recently prompted Pakistan's ambassador to the US, Sherry Rehman, to denounce them as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.”

In this example, the first sentence identifies who or what is affected (the US – Pakistani relationship) and what is at stake (the relationship could fall apart). The second sentence (1) introduces the source and (2) summarizes the supporting evidence.

## Stating the Question

Many extempers use the phrase “thus we must ask ourselves the question...” to introduce

their question. Not only is this transition statement grossly overused, it makes little sense. Regardless of the topic's significance, there is not much reason to believe that your judge or fellow competitors really *must* ask themselves about international relations or fiscal policy. At best, the policy makers who can actually influence the outcome of the issue are the ones who must ask themselves the question.

To segue from the significance statement into the question, begin by identifying who would actually be grappling with the question in the real world. Is it Congress? The media? A particular politician? The private sector? The European Union member nations? Once you have pinpointed who is concerned with the issue, there are a few ways to introduce the question.

Let's take the above example related to US drone strikes in Pakistan. Following the significance statement, a transition into stating the question could sound like this:

"In light of Ambassador Rehman's comments, it is important for the Obama administration to assess whether US drone strikes in Pakistan are effective in combating terrorism."

In this case, the wording of the question must be changed slightly in order to be grammatically correct. The wording of the question "Are US drone strikes in Pakistan effective in combating terrorism?" was altered slightly to fit the sentence. No new words were added, however, and the meaning of the question was unchanged.

There will be times when you forget the exact wording of your question. In these moments, do your best to capture the meaning of the question and state it as closely as possible to the original. Your judge will understand that sometimes speakers forget the phrasing of the question, and as long as you don't change the question substantively they will not penalize you.

## Stating Your Answer

After stating the question, giving your answer is fairly straightforward. In most instances, it is effective to start your statement with "The answer is...". If you are speaking on a yes or no question, give a clear yes or no answer. Follow up your yes or no answer with your thesis statement, explaining why the answer is yes or no.

## Previewing Your Analysis

The final part of the introduction consists of a preview of your areas of analysis. There is an old adage that when giving a speech, you should "Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them." This is simply another way of saying that a speaker should preview their main points, provide their analysis, and review what has been said. The preview portion of the introduction is where you "tell them what you're going to tell them." It is also your division of thesis. Most extemporaneous speeches have two or three main areas of analysis. Your





preview simply identifies the headings of these areas of analysis.

## Transitions

Internal transitions consist of phrases like “moreover,” “additionally,” “further,” “in contrast,” “however,” and so forth. We refer to the major and internal transitions as a template because once you develop a set of transitional phrases that you are comfortable with and can remember, you can use them in every speech. It is important to think about these phrases in advance because transitions are a part of the speech that invite repetitiveness. Many extempers develop a crutch word, usually one of the phrases mentioned above. Your audience will begin to notice if you are overusing a single transition phrase, just as they will notice if you have only one kind of gesture. As you practice

using a diversity of transition phrases, you will find that they come to you second nature when giving a speech.

In addition to transitional phrases, your language template should include phrases that link your analysis back to the question. At the end of each area of analysis, give your audience a sentence that explains why what you’ve just said answers the question. Think of these phrases as the “what’s the point” part of your speech. They include phrases like, “the bottom line is,” “ultimately,” “in the end,” and so forth. Just as it is important to use a variety of transition phrases, it is important to use a variety of “what’s the point” phrases. Using “the bottom line” after each area of analysis will be memorable, but not in the way you want.

## BODY OF THE SPEECH

---

### Making Arguments

Unlike an expository speech that seeks to inform the audience about a topic, an extemporaneous speech seeks to persuade the judge that the speaker's answer to the question is correct. In order to persuade the judge, an extemper must master the art of argumentation. In order to be persuasive, an argument must be supported with evidence and analysis. It must also be clear exactly what is being argued and why the argument matters. The most successful arguments also take into consideration contrary viewpoints, acknowledging and refuting them.

### The Toulmin Model

These elements of an effective argument were identified by British rhetorician and logician Stephen Toulmin.<sup>3</sup> Toulmin's model of argumentation has been instrumental in shaping the development of persuasive speaking and writing. Toulmin breaks down an argument into its components. The elements of an effective argument are:

1. **Claim:** The claim is what you are trying to prove. Logicians often use the term "conclusion" in the same way. An extemporaneous speech will have multiple claims. The first and most important claim is the answer to the question.

Thus the thesis statement functions as the primary claim in an extemp speech.

2. **Data:** Sometimes called "grounds," the term "data" refers to the facts and evidence that support the claim.
3. **Warrant:** The warrant is the analysis that shows why the data prove the claim.
4. **Backing:** Additional support for the warrant. Backing anticipates questions that may arise about the claim and attempts to preemptively answer them.
5. **Qualifier:** The qualifier places limitations on the strength of the claim. Qualifiers are especially helpful in extemporaneous speaking. For example, when dealing with predictive questions, it is difficult to say with absolute certainty what is going to happen in a particular situation. A qualifier statement might identify things that could change the outcome of the situation – events that may be unlikely but still possible.
6. **Rebuttal:** A rebuttal statement anticipates arguments against the claim and attempts to refute them. Rebuttals might seem out of place in an extemporaneous speech, but they are actually very helpful. Remember that many judges will evaluate you based on what you do *not* say in answering a question as well as what you do say. Rebuttal statements give you the opportunity to address any counter arguments that your judge may have in mind. To introduce a

counter argument, an extemper may say, “now, you might think that...” or “some may question whether [the claim] is true because...” The rebuttal statement would consist of explaining why those counter arguments do not prove the claim false.

Not every extemporaneous speech will contain all the elements of the Toulmin model. Backing, qualifier, and rebuttal statements all strengthen an argument but are not crucial to proving your answer to the question. Any argument must include the claim, data, and warrant parts of the Toulmin model, however. Without these basic parts of an argument, your analysis will consist of assertions rather than logically proven points.

### The Toulmin Model in Action

Let’s examine a sample argument based on the Toulmin model. This argument is in answer to the question “Can renewed Middle East peace talks end the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians?” The speaker is answering the question no, with the thesis that the atmosphere of mutual mistrust between the Israelis and Palestinians will keep both sides from honoring any agreement reached in the talks. To illustrate the Toulmin model in action we have written out the argument in more detail than you would when outlining a speech.

- **Claim:** The continued building of Israeli settlements in lands claimed by Palestine

is seen by Palestinians as an indication that the Israelis are not serious about peace talks.

- **Data:** Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat says that newly approved settlements are intended to drive the Palestinians away from the negotiating table. (Reuters, Aug. 11, 2013)<sup>4</sup>
- **Warrant:** The Palestinian negotiators have made it clear that the cessation of settlement building is a deal breaker, thus Israel’s decision to continue building them is seen as disregarding the Palestinian requirement.
- **Backing:** Israel has said that it won’t accept preconditions (like stopping settlements) for peace talks.
- **Qualifier:** It is possible Palestinians may accept Israeli settlements as long as they don’t extend past the borders established in the 1967 Six Day War.
- **Rebuttal:** Palestinian negotiator Erekat has expressed optimism that the peace talks will go ahead as planned, which might suggest that the continued building of Israeli settlements won’t derail the process after all. But to the Palestinians, the problem isn’t just the settlements themselves; it is what they signify. Because the Palestinians have made it clear that they cannot begin to negotiate peace with Israel unless Israel is willing to stop settlements in lands Palestine claims, backing down

and going ahead with peace talks would make the Palestinians appear to be the weaker party in the negotiations, something they are unwilling to accept.

In an extemporaneous speech, the claim-data-warrant structure of an argument appears at multiple levels. The primary claim is the thesis statement, or answer to the question. The body of the speech serves as the data and warrants for the primary claim. Each area of analysis is also a claim, with the sub-points providing the data and warrants. Even the sub-points consist of a claim, data, and warrants.

## Identifying and Avoiding Logical Fallacies

A logical fallacy happens when a claim is asserted to be true and warrants are offered to support it, but closer examination reveals that the warrants do not actually prove the claim. You will frequently encounter logical fallacies in extemporaneous speaking – after all, a good portion of the activity involves paying attention to what political figures do and say. All kidding aside, it is important to learn how to identify logical fallacies and to avoid making them yourself. You may find logical fallacies in the research you conduct, expressed by pundits or even experts who are attempting to manipulate opinion. Other times a logical fallacy is committed unintentionally. In either case, being able to spot a logical fallacy can make your own arguments stronger.

If the logical fallacy is committed by someone advocating a position different from the answer you give to an extemporaneous speaking question, the “rebuttal” part of the Toulmin model is easy to make. Understanding the most common forms of logical fallacies will also help you avoid them when constructing your own arguments. We present here a list of the most commonly committed logical fallacies – there are dozens more that have been identified by philosophers and logicians.

1. **Ad hominem attacks (attacking the person):** this fallacy consists of attacking someone’s personal character rather than the substance of what they are saying. It is a way of simultaneously dismissing the person’s position while arousing anger and resentment toward the person. Radio talk show host and political commentator Rush Limbaugh was accused of committing the ad hominem fallacy in 2012, when he called a female law student testifying before Congress about her school’s policy on contraception a “prostitute” and other unflattering names.<sup>5</sup> Rather than refuting the student’s arguments, Limbaugh sought to undermine her credibility by attacking her character.
2. **Appeals to ignorance:** this fallacy involves arguing that something must be true if it hasn’t been proven false. An example of an argument from ignorance

would be claiming that anti-terrorism measures since September 11, 2001, are working because we haven't experienced a terrorist attack since then.

3. **Naturalistic fallacy:** this common fallacy occurs in an argument that because something *is* the case, it *ought to be* the case. In extemporaneous speaking, naturalistic fallacies often take the form of unstated assumptions. For example, the question "How should we reform Social Security?" presupposes that Social Security is worth reforming in the first place. The fallacy lies in assuming that because we have Social Security now, we ought to keep it around for the future. Uncovering this kind of fallacy can help you develop your answer by understanding what the question takes for granted.
4. **Sequential fallacy:** a sequential fallacy makes the classic mistake of conflating correlation with causation. When a person commits a sequential fallacy, she makes the assumption that events that happened prior to an outcome caused that outcome. When explaining why an alternative account of a situation is less persuasive than your own, it may be helpful to identify a sequential fallacy. For example, an extemper could point out that just because student test scores went up when a state adopted new curriculum standards does not necessarily

mean that the new standards caused the scores to improve.

5. **Slippery slope fallacy:** A slippery slope argument holds that one action will lead to another action, which will lead to another action, and so on until something really terrible happens. Slippery slope fallacies are very common in everyday discourse and in extemporaneous speaking. For example, you may hear pundits make claims like "If the US intervenes in X country, before you know it we will be entangled in conflicts all over the world," or "If we allow the government to place restrictions on high capacity ammunition magazines, eventually they will prohibit owning guns."
6. **Straw man arguments:** These fallacies take their name from the idea that it doesn't make sense to claim victory from knocking over something so flimsy as a straw man. It involves refuting the weakest version of an opposing viewpoint. When developing the rebuttal part of an argument under the Toulmin model, avoid the temptation to cast the opposing argument in the weakest light.

## Structuring Your Speech

You are probably familiar with the old song about anatomy that goes:

- The leg bone's connected to the knee bone



- The knee bone's connected to the thigh bone
- The thigh bone's connected to the hip bone...

Questionable anatomical accuracy aside, the song is a helpful device for understanding the connections between the different parts of an extemp speech. Now that you have the tune stuck in your head, replace the lyrics with this:

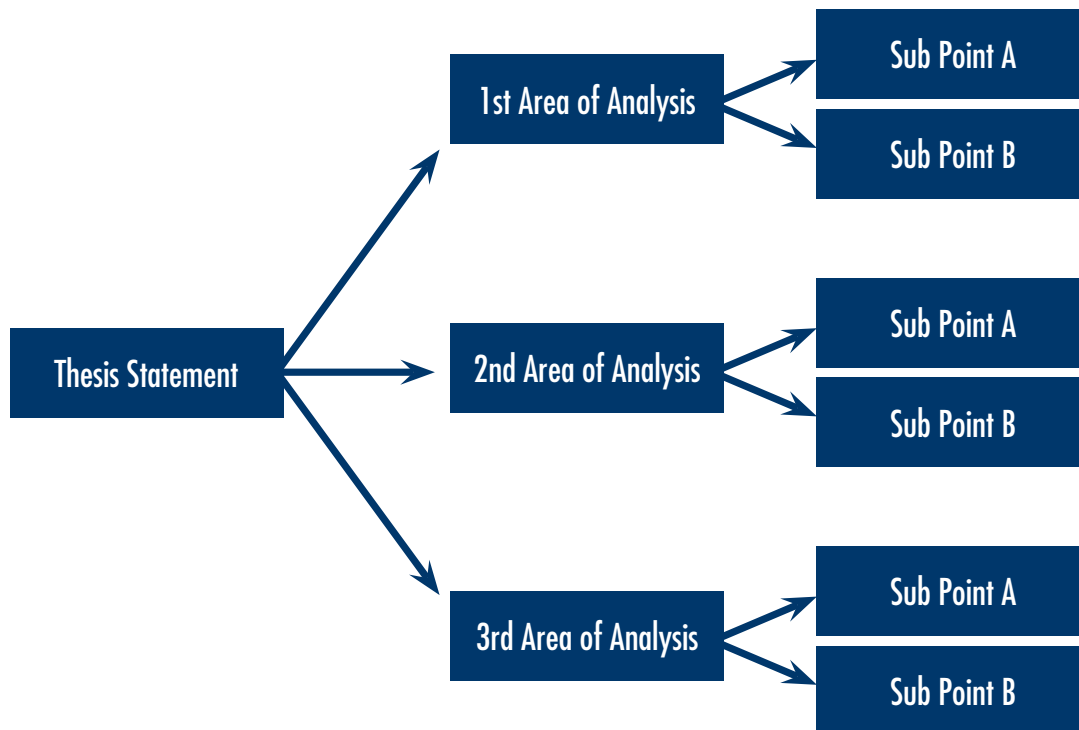
- The question is answered by the thesis
- The thesis is proven by the main points

- The main points are backed up by the sub points
- The sub points are the data and the warrants...

This is an oversimplification of the structure of an extemp speech, but it illustrates how the pieces of a speech fit together. As we move down the outline, the parts of the speech move from more general (the thesis statement) to more specific (the sub-points).

There are no rules regarding the structure of your speech. You are free to arrange your analysis however you wish. For the most part, extempers will follow one of two outline patterns:

## THE 3-POINT SPEECH



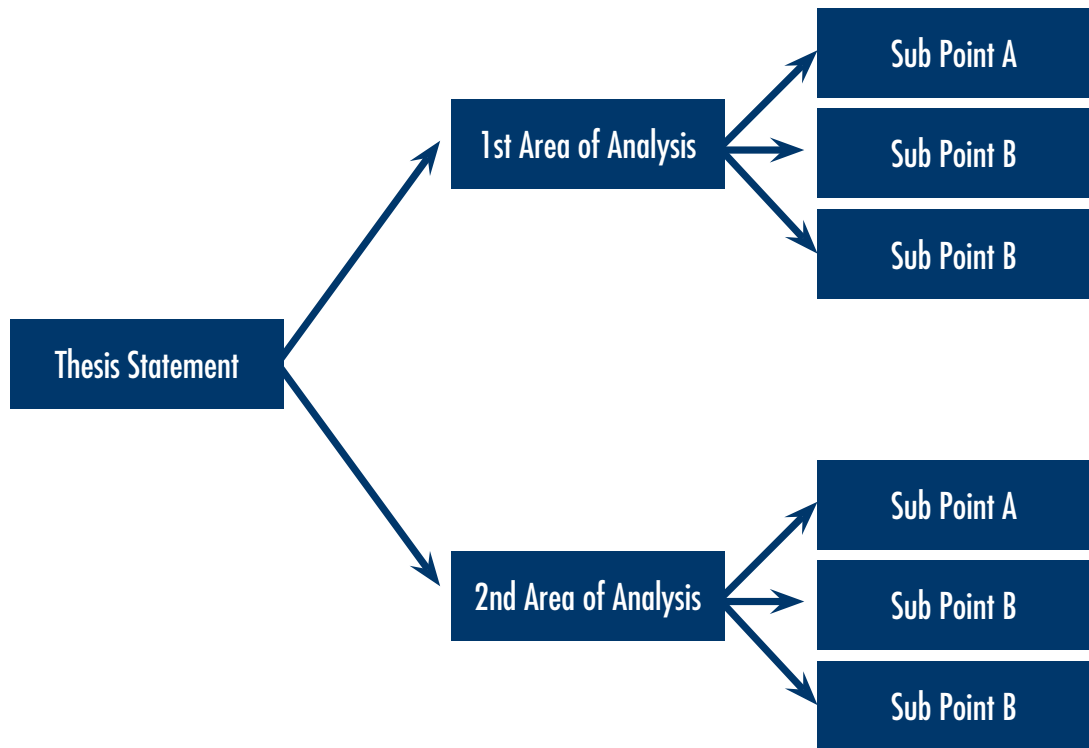


In a three-point speech, the thesis statement is supported by three areas of analysis, a.k.a. three main arguments. Each area of analysis (or argument) is supported by two sub-points. While it is possible to have more

than two sub-points, to keep your speech from becoming cluttered and overly complicated, most of the time it is wise to stick with two sub-points when giving a speech with three areas of analysis.

## THE 2-POINT SPEECH

---



In a two-point speech, each area of analysis can be supported by two or three sub-points. Because you are only providing two main “reasons” for your answer, you can spend more time establishing those reasons in your sub-points. Three sub-points are not required, but we recommend having at least two sub-points per area of analysis.

## THE CONCLUSION

---

The conclusion mirrors the format of the introduction, but is typically much less involved. There is no need to state the significance of the topic, for example – you just spent the last six minutes talking about why it matters. After transitioning to your conclusion, review the

main areas of analysis and restate the question, followed by your thesis statement. The review and restate format of the conclusion could look like this:

“Thus we can see that because it will first, bring more people into the insurance marketplace, second, compensate providers for quality, not quantity of care, and third, promote preventative care, the answer to the question ‘Will the Affordable Care Act be good for the economy’ is a resounding yes.”

Finally, end the speech with a concluding statement that provides closure and makes it clear to the judge that your speech is over. Some speakers are taught to end their speech by saying “thank you” to the judge and audience. If this is the norm in your region, it may make the most sense to follow it. If possible, however, we urge you to end your speech

## Outlining a Speech

Now that we have explored the main parts of a speech, it is time to put everything together into an outline. When outlining your speech, remember that you have limited prep time. In the thirty minutes you have to prepare your speech, aim to spend about half of the time researching and writing the speech, and

### *Callout: Avoiding Jargon*

Many extempers participate in other forensic activities in addition to extemporaneous speaking. Extempers who participate in debate may recognize that the outline structure of an extemp speech is very similar to the structure of a debate case. Debaters refer to their areas of analysis as “contentions” or “justifications,” and students who participate in both debate and extemp may sometimes find themselves referring to their areas of analysis with these terms. To avoid confusing your judge, try to avoid using debate terminology as much as possible.

with a closing statement that reflects your analysis. Ideally, your introduction and conclusion should be thematically tied together.

about half of the time practicing your delivery and learning your outline. To make the most of your prep time, avoid writing out full sentences – but make sure that you do write enough down to get the gist of your point at a glance. Use abbreviations and symbols to save time and space.

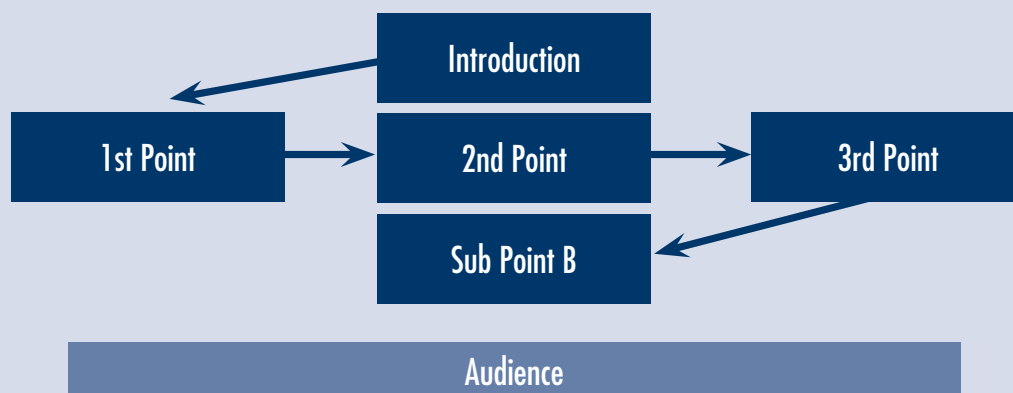
Transition statements help move your audience's attention from one part of your speech to the next. Use phrases that indicate a change in message, such as:

- The second reason...
- In addition to [first point], [second point] shows us why the answer to this question is a definite yes.
- As if that weren't enough...
- Let's examine a third reason...

Along with these transition statements, your gestures and body language can help indicate that you are moving to a new part of the speech.

In the world of competitive public speaking, most speakers adopt the practice of physically moving to another spot to make it clear they are moving to another point in their speech. Known as the “transition walk,” this practice can seem very awkward at first, but once you get used to it, it will become second nature to you.

To execute a transition walk, begin your speech in the center of the room, as you would in any speaking situation. After your introduction, when you are ready to transition to the first area of analysis, walk a few steps forward and to *your* right, putting you a little on the left of the room from the audience's perspective (since we read and process information from left to right, a transition walk that goes from left to right from the audience's point of view will make the most sense to them). If you have a three-point speech, your next move will be back to the center, but remaining a few steps forward. If you have a two-point speech, your next move will put you on the other side of the center – where you will also end up for your third point in a three-point speech. For the conclusion you will return to center, again moving slightly forward. From the perspective of the audience, a diagram of the transition walk would look like this:



Note that if you are delivering a speech with only two main points, you would skip the middle position and move directly to the other side of the space.

When performing a transition walk, it is important to modify how far you move based on the size of the audience and the room. If you are speaking in a large room with many people, your transition walk should take you to both sides of the room; however, you never want to end up *completely* to the side of the room. Imagine an invisible stage in the front of the room – it wouldn't extend from wall to wall, but would rather leave a buffer of a few feet on either side.

If you are speaking in a large room with a small audience, base your walk on where the audience members are sitting. If they are concentrated to one side of the room, center your walk in front of them. It would be awkward to transition to a side of the room where no one is sitting.

Particularly in preliminary rounds, you may find yourself speaking in a rather small space. Because most of the time extemp rounds consist of just the speaker and the judge, tournaments will use larger rooms for categories with larger audiences. In these cases, keep your walk short and be sure to give your judge enough space to observe you comfortably. This may mean taking only one or two steps to a side and not moving forward so as to avoid hovering over your judge.



# SPEECH OUTLINE TEMPLATE

---

## Introduction

1. Attention getter
2. Link to the topic
3. Significance statement
4. Evidence for the significance statement
5. The question
6. Your answer/thesis
7. Preview of analysis

## Transition

## Body of the Speech

### I. First Area of Analysis

#### A. Sub-point A

- i. Claim
- ii. Data (evidence)
- iii. Warrant

#### B. Sub-point B

- i. Claim
- ii. Data (evidence)
- iii. Warrant

## Transition

### II. Second Area of Analysis

#### A. Sub-point A

- i. Claim
- ii. Data (evidence)
- iii. Warrant

#### B. Sub-point B

- i. Claim
- ii. Data (evidence)
- iii. Warrant

## Transition

### III. Third Area of Analysis

#### A. Sub-point A

- i. Claim
- ii. Data (evidence)
- iii. Warrant

#### B. Sub-point B

- i. Claim
- ii. Data (evidence)
- iii. Warrant

## Transition

## Conclusion

1. Review of main areas of analysis
2. Restatement of the question
3. Restatement of the answer/thesis
4. Closing statement

## EXAMPLE EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECH OUTLINE

---

### *“Is Russia facing a return to authoritarianism?”*

#### Introduction

1. Attention getter: Quote – “Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” –Winston Churchill
2. Link to the topic: Ex-KGB officer Putin’s motives are not clear – he is a mystery to the West
3. Significance statement: Russia hosting 2014 Winter Olympics. Fans/athletes may face persecution under harsh laws.
4. Evidence for the significance statement: BBC 8/10/2013 – Russian legislator calls for anti-gay legislation to be enforced during games.
5. The question: Is Russia facing a return to authoritarianism?
6. Your answer/thesis: Yes – Putin consolidated power over the years, → undermine democracy
7. Preview of analysis: A) Manipulating electoral process, B) Not enforcing civil liberties, C) Silencing opposition

#### Transition

#### Body of the Speech

- I. First Area of Analysis: Manipulating electoral process
  - A. Sub-point A: Exploited constitutional loopholes to maintain power
    - i. Claim: Putin used a loophole in the Constitution to run for a third term as President
    - ii. Data (evidence):
      - a. Brookings 3/9/12: Russia’s authoritarian constitution designed to empower the President. NYT 9/24/11:
      - b. President Medvedev was a placeholder for Putin, did Putin’s bidding
    - iii. Warrant:
      - a. Constitution more authoritarian than Western democracies, prohibits more than two *consecutive* terms, no limit on number of times can be president.
      - b. Medvedev was Putin’s chosen successor, could have run for a second term but stepped down so Putin could retake Presidency. Even when he wasn’t President, Putin still controlled government as PM with Medvedev as his pawn.
  - B. Sub-point B: Allegations of vote rigging in 2012 Presidential election
    - i. Claim: Evidence suggests 2012 elections were illegitimate



- ii. Data (evidence): Huff Post 3/4/2012: Citizens report voter manipulation – one man received a call promising 2000 rubles if he voted for Putin
- iii. Warrant: Official results show Putin winning by a landslide, even though independent polls before the election were much closer. Landslide likely indicates fraud.

Transition

## II. Second Area of Analysis: Not enforcing civil liberties

- A. Sub-point A: Eliminating freedom of speech/expression
  - i. Claim: Expressing non-approved views leads to imprisonment
  - ii. Data (evidence): CNN 8/7/12: Harsh treatment of musicians who used protest songs to oppose Putin, leaders imprisoned for “offending churchgoers”
  - iii. Warrant: Eliminating freedom of speech is a sign of authoritarianism and consolidation of power.
- B. Sub-point B: Harsh anti-gay laws
  - i. Claim: laws aimed at preventing “gay propaganda” are really meant to punish people for being gay.
  - ii. Data (evidence): Wash Post 8/9/13: Holding hands, rainbow flag, anti-discrimination statements fall under “gay propaganda” ban.
  - iii. Warrant: law goes beyond preventing propaganda to criminalizing harmless behavior.

Transition

## III. Third Area of Analysis: Silencing opposition

- A. Sub-point A: Eliminating activists and nonprofits
  - i. Claim: Crackdowns on foreign nonprofit groups are an attempt to eliminate Putin’s critics.
  - ii. Data (evidence): Human Rts Watch 1/31/13: new laws define groups that accept foreign funding as “foreign agents.” Suspends orgs that accept United States money and engage in political activities.
  - iii. Warrant: crackdowns on nonprofits meant to harass and intimidate activists, eliminate foreign presence.
- B. Sub-point B: Jailing opposition leaders
  - iv. Claim: Putin used trumped up charges against primary opponent Aleski Navalny to put him in jail.
  - v. Data (evidence): NYT 8/1/12: Embezzlement charges against Navalny are weak, Navalny outspoken critic of Putin with influential blog, led protests



- vi. Warrant: The weak charges against Nevalny are an attempt to silence one of Putin's most powerful critics.

Transition

Conclusion

1. Review of main areas of analysis: A) Manipulating electoral process, B) Not enforcing civil liberties, C) Silencing opposition
2. Restatement of the question: Is Russia facing a return to authoritarianism?
3. Restatement of the answer/thesis: Yes, consolidation of power shows return to authoritarianism.
4. Closing statement: Whether growing opposition forces in Russia can successfully challenge Putin remains a mystery for the time being.



# Chapter 3

## *Research and Evidence*

**E**vidence plays a critical role in extemporaneous speaking. Analysis, data, and information from respected sources enhances the credibility of a speaker and makes her arguments more persuasive. Extemporaneous speaking covers such a vast range of issues that the prospect of conducting research and finding evidence for a speech can be daunting. As you will see, the majority of research is conducted outside of the tournament setting. At the tournament, you will use the research you have compiled to find evidence to support a specific speech.

In this chapter, we will cover the types of evidence that can be used in an extemporaneous speech, methods for incorporating evidence to support your analysis, sources of evidence,

building your knowledge base, and creating files for use at tournaments.



## DESCRIPTIVE AND ANALYTICAL EVIDENCE

---

Evidence used in speeches typically falls into one of two categories, descriptive or analytical. Descriptive evidence is about facts. It explains what is happening in a specific situation. Descriptive evidence is often presented as objective, but it is important to remember that even facts are subject to interpretation and dispute. Some examples of descriptive evidence you might use in an extemporaneous speech include:

- “Recent surveys indicate the number of young adults living with their parents is on the rise.” (Pew Center for Research, Social and Demographic Trends, August 2012)
- “The typhoon which left 9 people missing in the Philippines is the strongest storm of the year.” (*Reuters*, “Philippines battered by year’s strongest typhoon; nine missing,” August 12, 2013)

Analytical evidence, on the other hand, offers explanations for why events happen and attempts to draw conclusions about the causes and effects from the data and facts available. For example, analytical evidence about the same two subjects listed above could look like this:

- “The growing number of young adults forced to move back in with their parents indicates that the cost of housing is excessively exceeding the wages of

non-managerial positions.” (asserts that young adults are living with their parents *because* they are unemployed.)

- “The intensity of the storm is part of a pattern of strong weather phenomena that suggest climate change is having a significant impact on the environment” (asserts that the strength of the storm proves climate change is having a big impact.)

## SUPPORTING YOUR ANALYSIS WITH EVIDENCE

---

Evidence can be used in different ways and for different purposes in an extemporaneous speech. When selecting sources, keep in mind that specific evidence provides more insight into an issue than general evidence. Specific evidence also demonstrates the depth of your grasp of the issue. Evidence that your audience may not have heard before will be more memorable. When using evidence, do not rely on your audience to draw their own conclusions. Make it explicit what the point of the evidence is – what it proves – and how it relates to your question. Finally, aim for credible sources. The more sophisticated or qualified your source is, the more believable it will be. With these guidelines in mind, what are the purposes you might use evidence to accomplish?

1. **Providing background or a theoretical basis:** for complex topics or issues with



a long history, it may be necessary to provide background information for your audience. While it is often not necessary to include evidence when providing strictly background information, it can sometimes be helpful in explaining a difficult idea.

- 2. Establishing facts:** sometimes you can assume that your audience will accept a fact as true without evidence. For example, it is unnecessary to provide evidence when you list the candidates in a political election. Such information

is usually either already known by your judge, or so easily verifiable that your credibility is not at stake. For interesting, unusual, or controversial facts, however, a source is helpful to lend believability to your claims.

- 3. Supporting your argument with analysis:** analytical evidence from an expert or trusted source enhances your argument. As knowledgeable as you may be about a topic, your own analysis will not carry as much weight as the insights of a qualified third party. Using analytical



evidence to provide the “data” part of your argument lends credibility to your claims.

4. Setting up a point to refute: Sometimes you may use evidence to present an alternative viewpoint that you wish to refute. A successful rebuttal of the counter point will be more impressive if it involves refuting expert analysis.

## TYPES OF SOURCES

---

Quality extemporaneous speaking evidence can come from a variety of sources. From the traditional magazines and newspapers to blogs and even social media, there are many options for finding analysis to support your speech. For a listing of extemporaneous speaking resources, see Appendix C.

### Newspapers and Magazines

The most traditional extemp sources are newspapers and magazines, and they remain a great source of evidence. Many tournaments draw their questions from weekly magazines and newspapers, and being familiar with their content can also help you predict what you may be asked at an upcoming tournament. Local newspapers and magazines can be excellent resources for questions related to a specific state or city. Some tournaments also devote questions to local issues – if you compete in an area where this is common practice,

having access to your state’s primary newspaper(s) will be crucial. National newspapers and magazines are good sources for broader issues that affect the country as a whole. Specialized publications, such as magazines focused on technology, business, education, or industry specific journals can be sophisticated sources for evidence related to such subjects.

International newspapers are wonderful for their alternative perspectives on issues. Their most obvious use is for questions related to their country or region of origin, but do not feel limited in using them just for questions about the country they are published in. The American media have a distinct point of view, just like the Chinese media, the European media, the Arab media, and so on. These publications can provide excellent insight into how different countries or people interpret and react to different events, and are especially helpful when analyzing the United States’ image and policies abroad.

Many international sources are also highly respected sources of news on a wide range of topics. News organizations like the BBC, Al Jazeera, and the Agance France Presse are major sources of information for citizens around the world.

Newspapers and magazines have suffered in recent years, however, as digital media make subscription based periodicals less popular. As a consequence, it is more difficult to find free newspaper and magazine articles online. Many newspapers and magazines have begun charging

for access to their content. These so-called “paywalls” can be an obstacle for teams with limited resources or for the solo extemper. While declining circulation has caused many newspapers and magazines to begin charging for what was once free content, it has also led to the consolidation of publications. Thus magazines and newspapers increasingly get their stories from the same pool of authors, and if you encounter a paywall for one publication it may still be possible to find the article from another publication. In general, if your team is large enough and can afford the cost, it may be worth paying the subscription fee for access to some of the major publications.

At a minimum, we encourage you to purchase a newspaper the morning of a tournament. Not only will you have the most current information on your topics, but the ability to quote a publication from the *day of* the tournament will be impressive and memorable to your judge.

## Scholarly Journals

Scholarly journals are peer-reviewed or discipline-specific publications. They include law journal articles, articles from associations such as the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the *American Psychological Association*, and others. Scholarly journals are wonderful sources for specific topics and provide a much greater depth of analysis than a newspaper or magazine can. They are also authored by experts in the field, and can thus

carry more credibility than an article authored by a journalist who must dissect and disseminate information about a number of subjects she might otherwise not know much about.

The drawback of scholarly articles is that they can be difficult and expensive to obtain. If you have access to databases such as JSTOR through your school or library, finding these publications can be a worthwhile endeavor.

## Books

Like scholarly journals and articles, books provide in-depth information and analysis about issues in greater detail than they might receive in the mainstream media. Books are especially valuable for providing analysis about underlying concepts or principles about a topic. For example, a book on international relations can be useful for providing analysis and evidence about different schools of thought such as realism and idealism, or about general concepts with broad application such as globalization. These books are useful not just because they may apply to a specific subject that you could be asked about, but because their analysis can apply to many different kinds of questions. A book that analyzes American politics can be used in a vast array of speeches, for example.

## Think Tanks

Think tanks are organizations dedicated to studying and analyzing certain subjects. Some think tanks are broad in their scope, analyzing

many different kinds of issues, whereas others are focused on a narrower set of topics, such as immigration policy or one region of the world. Whatever their focus, the best think tanks offer in-depth analysis, often supported with rigorous research and data. The publications of think tanks, usually available for free on their websites, can be some of the best sources of evidence – both descriptive and analytical – available to extempers. Many of the most renowned think tanks publish their papers and research with the goal of influencing, or at least informing, actual policy. They are not merely academic assessments of a situation, but are real-world, practical suggestions and criticisms of important policy issues. Many think tank employees are former or future government officials. Think tanks can be especially useful for providing current analysis about big issues, like Social Security, health care reform, US foreign policy towards a particular region of the world, military policy, etc.

This is not to suggest that think tanks are the perfect extemp sources, however. Many, if not most think tanks tend to be at least a little conservative or a little liberal. Some have an outright agenda to advance, and these organizations in particular need to be approached with caution. As we will discuss in the next section, the fact that a source leans to one end of the political spectrum or the other does not necessarily disqualify it for use in an extemp speech. It does mean that the speaker has an

obligation to acknowledge such biases, however slight they may be.

## Broadcast Media

Broadcast media include television and radio programs. These programs can be invaluable resources in enhancing your knowledge base, and we recommend that you make it a practice to tune in to a variety of news programs on at least a weekly basis. It is important to note that we say a *variety* of sources because, perhaps even more than print media, broadcast media can have a distinct slant or agenda. The topics covered and the way they are reported will differ substantially from one news outlet to another, and this in itself can give you important insights into the way that different parties or groups of people understand the facts and issues.

Using broadcast media as sources in an extemporaneous speech can be tricky. Some judges are disinclined to accept evidence from non-published sources, and some tournaments explicitly state that only material from published sources is considered “evidence.” Fortunately, most transcripts for radio and television stories can be found on the Internet a few days after they air. Those that are not available in printed form are still valuable, as broadcast news often features panels of experts on different subjects, or politicians, pundits, and analysts. One of the most valuable uses of broadcast media is that they can provide candid quotations and analysis from such people.

To avoid accusations of source invention when using broadcast media in your speech, take scrupulous notes on the shows as you watch or listen. Be sure to make note of the date that the program originally aired, the name of the show, the news organization that produced it, who was speaking, and what their qualifications are. The more detail you can give when citing such evidence the more believable it will sound. One word of caution: some tournaments do not allow notes in the prep room. For these tournaments, you will need to leave your notes at home and instead rely on transcripts of the program or other sources of evidence.

## Social Media

A relatively new phenomenon in the world of journalism is the growing use and importance of social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and blogs. There is widespread disagreement about the appropriateness of using such sources in an extemp speech, so tread carefully should you choose to do so. Because of their increasing prominence in American society, such media are being used more and more by politicians and journalists to convey messages. The importance of these media in conflict zones where access by reporters is limited cannot be overstated. Average citizens throughout the world use websites like YouTube and Twitter to relay events to the outside world that might otherwise be covered up or go unverified.

If you use social media as evidence in your extemp speech, keep in mind that not everyone will accept them as legitimate sources. Statements made on social media are *not* considered published, even though they appear in writing. Because of this, and because of the limitations of bandwidth, words, length, etc., placed on such media, you should rely on them more for descriptive evidence than analytical evidence. If citing a social media outlet, be sure to acknowledge the source and where you found the information. For example, if you are quoting something that a political candidate said on her Twitter feed, make sure that you explain that she made the statement on Twitter. If you are citing a video from YouTube about events happening in another part of the world, do what respected journalists do and acknowledge that the footage appeared on YouTube and was not independently verified.

By being careful with the way you cite evidence from social media and the purposes you use it for, this emerging and significant source of information can not only support your speech – it can enhance your *ethos* by indicating your technological savvy.

## Infotainment News Sources

In the 1990s, Homer Simpson (the infamous patriarch of *The Simpsons*) referred to a cable news program as “infotainment.” Since then the term, used to describe something that may be informative but is primarily entertaining, has been taken up by the common vernacular.

Infotainment may apply to nightly comedy shows that focus on current events, or to satirical newspapers and magazines. Such programs can provide valuable inspiration for introductions or other pop culture references, but they are not valid sources of genuine evidence for a speech.

## ASSESSING SOURCE QUALITY AND BIAS

---

Not all sources are created equally. Some sources are basic but offer good information about what is going on in the country and in the world. Some sources provide excellent insight and analysis, but lean a little to the left or the right. Some sources are fundamentally designed to advance an agenda and must be approached with caution. And some sources are excellent, providing analysis from all sides of an issue in as unbiased a way as possible.

It should be noted that sources that tend to be more conservative or more liberal – or even those with an outright bias – are not necessarily off limits for an extemp speech. If your goal with a particular piece of evidence is to present one side of an issue or a specific viewpoint, then turning to a source that embodies the relevant slant may be the best way to give voice to that opinion. The key is to always make it explicit to your judge that you are citing a source that has a tendency. Let's consider a few examples. There are times that you may also want to make it obvious that the source you are citing is known for their neutrality. If you

were citing evidence from one of the sources below, you might say...

- “According to John Doe of the Huffington Post, a left-leaning publication...”
- “Conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation argues...”
- “The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that...”

It is equally important to be upfront when citing an individual such as an author or commentator, or someone quoted within an article, whose perspective falls on the left or the right, or who might have a special interest in a situation. People who were once involved in policy making at the highest levels, or who are important executives of major companies, are often sought out for their opinions on different issues, and while their insights can be valuable, it will enhance your credibility to acknowledge their former roles. In order to do so, you could introduce analysis from a person like this:

- “Republican commentator and former Chief of Staff for George W. Bush Karl Rove argues...”
- “Democratic strategist Doug Sosnik, political director for Bill Clinton’s White House, explains...”

Keep in mind that just because a person, publication or organization has a particular slant does not necessarily mean the source is illegitimate or that the analysis it makes is

unwarranted. Even if the source has a clear bias, it may still be making a reasonable and supported argument.

To determine whether an organization or author has a potential bias, look for answers to these questions:

- What is the mission statement of the organization or publication? Some publications make no illusions about their agenda, and many organizations, especially think tanks, have a mission statement that indicates the issues they focus on and even the position they may take on them.
- Who owns the source (publication, show, program, etc)?
- What other groups, causes or organizations is the author of the article or the owner of the source affiliated with?
- What jobs has the author/owner held in the past? Did they work for an organization with an agenda, or for a political campaign?
- Who advertises in the publication or on the show? Advertisers might not have an influence on the content of the publication, but you can glean information about the target audience based on who is advertising in it.
- What issues does the source focus on? Are there certain stories or issues that get more attention than others? What

have they chosen not to cover that other publications do?

- Who does the source turn to for analysis on different issues? Do they seem to present all sides of an issue with equally credible expert opinion?
- What kind of language does the source use to describe events? Is the language neutral, or is it loaded? Does the word choice seem to make one side of an issue seem more appealing than another? If the source is on a television or radio show, what is the tone of voice and body language the person uses when describing the issue?
- What country is the source or publication based in? Does it represent the mainstream view of that country? Is it under the control of the government or does it enjoy genuine freedom of the press?

Asking these questions can also help you determine what kind of information you need to disclose to your judge about the source.

Acknowledging the bias or political slant of a source is important because it helps your judge better understand the evidence and how it fits in your speech. It also greatly enhances your *ethos* as a speaker because it indicates a willingness to be straightforward about the nature of your sources as well as an impressive depth of knowledge.



## BUILDING & MAINTAINING YOUR FILES

---

Now that you have a clearer picture of what kind of evidence is used in an extemporaneous speech, it is time to begin gathering it. Building and maintaining quality files of research are crucial to the success of an extemp team. There are a number of ways to organize your files – the key is to develop a system that works for your team and to *be consistent* in maintaining that system. In this section we will explore some of the best ways to organize extemp files.

Most schools now maintain extemporaneous speaking files. Until recently, all extemp files have been maintained in physical form – meaning they consisted of hard copies of articles photocopied or printed from a computer. As most extemp teams currently conduct the bulk of their research on the Internet, many schools have gravitated away from hard copies of files to maintaining their extemp research electronically.

Not all tournaments allow the use of computers in the prep room, and if your school frequently attends tournaments that require hard copies of research, maintaining files electronically may not be for you. If most of the tournaments you attend are accepting of computers, tablets, and other devices in the prep room, then maintaining your files on computers can be both more convenient and, in the long run, less resource-intensive (as it does not require the printing of massive amounts of information).

If you do maintain electronic files, keep in mind that your research needs to be stored locally on an external hard drive, USB storage device, or directly on the computer. Before a competition, always check the tournament's policies regarding internet access in the prep room. Most tournaments allow it, but if one does not, you will need to download and store evidence to your computer before each tournament. The National Tournament permits use of internet during Extemp prep per the Current Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Extemporaneous Speaking

While the exact rules regarding the use of electronic files will differ depending on the district and tournament, it is useful to use the National Speech & Debate Association's guidelines on their use as a standard:

Students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles, including internet enabled devices either used in the draw or those materials published from internet sources, provided:

1. They are originals or copies of whole pages.
2. Provided those originals or copies are uncut.
3. There is no written material on that original or copy other than citation information.
4. Topical index without annotation

may be present.

5. Files stored either on a computer or electronic device hard drive or cloud storage system. All files in this format must meet the same guidelines as printed sources.

6. Active research from the internet during the round that meets the established criteria found in the “Guidelines for Use of Internet Enabled Devices.”

No other material will be allowed in the Extemp prep room other than stated previously. Extemp speeches, handbooks, briefs and outlines, including those stored on cloud storage systems or published on websites created for that purpose, are prohibited from the Extemp prep room. Students may not use the internet to gain help from coaches, other students, or any person, such that it would prevent the speech from being the original work of the competitor. Students are prohibited from accessing outlines and speeches that have been written prior to their draw time. Underlining or highlighting in Extemp will be allowed if done in only one color on each article or copy. Electronic device use must comply with the “Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events.” Printed copies of information from online computer services may be used. Electronically retrieved evidence used in any Association

Extemp competition must conform to the same citation standards as evidence used in debate events as described in the Unified Manual.

Different tournaments will have different regulations regarding which types of electronic devices are allowed, how they may be shared among team members, and whether devices may be plugged in during prep time. Be sure to consult with tournament hosts before using any electronic file storage system. For a full list of NSDA rules which many tournaments adopt, visit the Unified Manual at [www.speechanddebate.org/high-school-unified-manual](http://www.speechanddebate.org/high-school-unified-manual).

When saving articles as electronic files, you will need to establish a system of naming documents to which everyone on your team adheres. Exactly what that system looks like can be up to you, but consistency is the key. For example, you might give the file a name listing the publication first and the title of the article second, or the other way around. Be careful to avoid a naming system that could be interpreted as a notation system – the National Speech & Debate Association and district tournaments do not allow notes on articles, and this extends to creative naming systems.

Whether you choose to maintain physical files or electronic files, it is important to keep them organized and current, and to be familiar with their structure and contents. While there are a number of ways to structure your files, in general extemporaneous speaking files are

organized into categories, which can also be divided into multiple sub-categories.

Many regions follow the model established by the National Speech & Debate Association in separating domestic extemporaneous speaking from international extemporaneous speaking. At Association district tournaments and the national tournament, international and domestic extemp are completely separate, with students only competing against other students in the same sub-category. Some regions allow students to select questions from either an international pool or a domestic pool, although speakers will still compete against one another. Other parts of the country make no distinctions between international and domestic extempers, and students all draw from the same pool of questions that alternate between international and domestic topics by round.

No matter what format your region follows, we recommend splitting your files into domestic and international categories. Because almost every tournament makes some distinction between international and domestically focused questions, we think this approach makes the most sense.

### **Maintaining Your Files**

The people, places and topics that are prominent current events change from year to year. Thus it is crucial to maintain current files. This means regularly eliminating articles that are out of date. This doesn't mean discarding all articles more than a few months old. Some

topics may be less often discussed in the news, meaning older articles may still be relevant. For major news topics, newer articles are preferable. At the beginning of each speech season, your files should be purged of old articles and new research should be conducted.

### **Proper Documentation of Sources**

When conducting your research it is important to capture all of the citation information about a source. This means making sure that your printout (if using hard copies) or the document you upload (for electronic files) includes the author's full name if provided, the publication or source name, the article title, the date of the article, the page number if the document is a hard copy, and the date that the article was retrieved online. You will need to include the retrieval date whether you print out the article or keep it as an electronic file.

### ***Domestic Files***

Having divided your files into domestic and international, what should be the internal organization of the research? There are several ways to organize your domestic files. Our preferred approach involves dividing your files into several sub-categories based on theme. For example, within the domestic files you may have sub-categories such as "politics," "economy," "society," "science & technology," "education," "environment," "military," and so on. Within each of these areas you will again divide files into smaller categories. For example, in the

politics folder, you may divide your files into “Congress,” “President,” “Courts,” “Agencies,” “Interest Groups,” etc. Then within the Congress file, you could divide files into more sub-categories: “Republicans,” “Democrats,” “Elections,” etc. or “Senate,” “House,” etc. Within each file, sub-files should be organized alphabetically for easy access.

This kind of filing system does give rise to the potential problem of not knowing where to file an article that may apply to more than one category. For example, should you file an article about Hillary Clinton considering another run for President in the Hillary Clinton file, or in the Elections 2016 file? When such issues arise, the choice is really yours as to where the article will finally reside. This is where knowledge of current events becomes especially important. If you draw a question on the 2016 Elections, it would be a mistake to turn only to the file with that name. Instead, also use the files for each potential candidate – by the time you are asked a question about potential candidates for an election, there will be enough news about the election that you should have a general idea of who is in contention. *Very rarely will you only use one file when preparing a speech.*

### *International Files*

International files are a bit more straightforward than domestic files because fewer judgments must be made about how to divide and organize folders and where to file articles. Some extempers choose to organize their files

alphabetically by country and leave it at that. While this approach has some merits, including being easy to understand, it has more drawbacks. Many questions ask about regional issues or thematic topics. In these cases, we find it to be more helpful to group countries together by region rather than alphabetically. This approach is especially helpful for teams with many novice speakers who may be unfamiliar with some international topics. For example, having the Afghanistan and Pakistan files near each other in a broader Middle East file makes it easier to analyze these two countries that share many characteristics and problems.

Thus one of the most pragmatic ways to organize your international files is to sort them first by region, then by country. You may even consider grouping regions together by geography – for example, Europe would be adjacent to Asia and the Middle East, which would be adjacent to Africa, etc. Some countries fall into more than one region (both geographically and conceptually) – Turkey, for example, is a European country in many ways but is also often considered a Middle Eastern country. The region of the Middle East is deeply connected to North Africa, which also has much in common with Sub-Saharan Africa. While there are no neat boundaries between regional file divisions, maintaining groupings by geographic area can help ameliorate some of these problems.

Some countries are so prominent that they necessitate sub-categories within them. For example, China is in the news often enough to warrant sub-categories for its economy, politics, human rights, and environment.

All of this categorization may have your head spinning. Setting up extemporaneous speaking tubs is really only difficult the first time it is done – after the initial organizing system is established they can serve your team for years to come.

## CONDUCTING RESEARCH: A TEAM EFFORT

---

It is challenging to conduct all of the research needed for extemporaneous speaking as a single person (although it is certainly possible). Because of this, extemporaneous speaking is truly a team event. In order to get the most out of – and into – your files, your team should divide responsibility for conducting research among team members. There are a few ways to do this.

One way to divide the labor of conducting research is by *subject* – each extemper is assigned a few subjects to conduct research on each week and is responsible for ensuring that there are enough sources in the files to intelligently speak on related questions. More experienced extempers might be assigned more complex or unwieldy topics, with less experienced extempers assigned topics with more concrete boundaries that are relatively easy to find evidence on.

The other approach to dividing research responsibilities is to assign each extemper a few *sources* to find evidence from each week. The extemper would be responsible for filing evidence from an entire publication, regardless of subject. More experienced extempers would be assigned more sophisticated sources and younger extempers would be assigned more basic sources, with the caveat that some daily publications may be too large of a project for a novice extemper to undertake.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. As more and more research is done online, thematic or topic based research is easier to conduct. This approach also leaves fewer gaps in the files because each subject area will be researched each week. One of the drawbacks is that unless team members rotate assignments throughout the year, speakers may become very familiar with a few topics, but know less about what is happening in other subjects because they are not browsing articles related to them.

Dividing research responsibilities up by publication gives extempers more exposure to a range of topics because they are in charge of finding all of the current event related articles from a given publication each week. But because the focus is on publication rather than topic, it is possible that some subjects may go without any research for weeks if they are not prominently discussed in the news.

Whichever system of assigning research responsibilities your team chooses, it is

important for each person to be diligent about completing their research assignments. The success of the entire team depends on every person being able complete their research assignments on time and thoroughly.

## BUILDING YOUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

---

Well-researched and maintained files are crucial for an extemper, but it is equally important to have your own mental database of information. Successful extempers know what is going on in the world. They have a broad range of knowledge about a variety of topics, and they have a depth of knowledge about the most significant ones. It is simply impossible to be as knowledgeable as you need to be if you only read about a topic when you're preparing a speech on it. If you go into your prep time with a general idea of what the answer to your question is, you can focus on structuring your speech and perfecting your delivery. If instead you have to spend the bulk of your time trying to figure out how to answer your question, you are forced to neglect structure and delivery, two elements which are crucial to standing out in a round.

Cultivating a knowledge base in advance of the tournament will also help you exude confidence. Think of a subject you know a lot about – a sport, kind of animal, fashion, type of cuisine, genre of movie, etc. Whatever it is, chances are you could speak about it for seven minutes without much difficulty. The reason

is simple: you know what you're talking about. Developing your knowledge base will make you more confident about your speeches because you won't be worrying about making inaccurate statements. Instead of having to figure out what to say, you can spend more time figuring out how best to say it.

That said, it would probably be an inefficient use of your time to read the newspaper cover to cover every day, given the myriad of commitments you have in and out of school. Fortunately there are a number of ways you can build your knowledge base while maximizing your time spent. We urge you to make use of technology as much as you can. There are a number of excellent (and free) podcasts available from a variety of sources that you can download and listen to on your way to school, in the shower, or whenever you have time to multitask. Several of the publications you will be conducting research from also offer email briefings, daily or weekly, with short synopses of the main events. There are applications for mobile devices that provide the same service. Both of these sources offer a significant advantage in that they give you information on the most current topics in synopsis format and usually have links to full stories if you want to know more about an event. Keep a notebook with you to jot down analysis or facts that you want to remember – you will be surprised by how much you absorb just by writing it down.

Those resources can help you develop a *breadth* of knowledge. There are some topics



that will require a depth of knowledge as well – issues that are never really out of the public eye. In domestic extemp, you can count on often seeing a question about welfare programs like Social Security and Medicare. If an election is on the horizon, work to deepen your knowledge of the candidates and the major challenges they face; you will almost assuredly be asked a question about them. In international extemp, try to build your knowledge base about any major armed conflicts taking place, and pay close attention to any long-term (usually economic) crises.

## INSIDE THE PREP ROOM

---

The preparation room – or “prep room” as it is usually known – can be an intimidating place for first time extempers. Typically a library, cafeteria, or large auditorium at the tournament, this is where students congregate to prepare their speeches. Teams arrive with computers or bins of research in tow. This is where you will use the files you and your teammates have carefully compiled to prepare your speeches throughout the tournament. Once in the prep room, you will need to access your files quickly and efficiently. Knowing what information you have, where it is located, and who else on your team may be using it will be key to your success.

## KNOWING YOUR FILES

---

Knowing what research you have in your files is crucial before you even begin preparing your speech. When selecting a question, it is helpful to know what topics you have a wealth of information on and which ones could use more research. As we discussed in the section “Selecting a Question,” one factor you should consider when choosing which topic you will speak on is what research you have available. It is important to know what subjects you have evidence for and which ones are lacking quality, supporting sources. No matter what method for dividing research assignments among team members your team uses, it is important to be familiar with all of the files at your disposal.

Knowing your files means not only having an idea of what is in the files, but also knowing where the files are located. You only have thirty minutes to prepare your speech; you don’t want to waste any of it searching for the file you need. Thus in addition to understanding the filing system your team employs, if you use physical (as opposed to electronic) files, it is also important to keep track of what your teammates are speaking on so you know which files are in use and may be unavailable to you. It is against regulations at all tournaments to confer with your teammates during prep time, but you are not prohibited from asking who has the Israel/Palestine folder.

## PROPERLY CITING SOURCES IN YOUR SPEECH

---

The correct method for citing sources in an essay is fairly straightforward; you are expected to list the author, the publication name, the article title, the date of the article, the page number, and so on. In a speaking situation, citing a source in such a manner is awkward and time consuming. Thus most extempers will give either the publication name or the author's name, the date of the evidence, and a summary of the author's analysis. It is difficult to memorize every quotation you will use in your speech word for word, and it is seldom necessary to do so. As we discussed in the Introduction, it is important to memorize quotations used in your attention getter. In most other circumstances, paraphrasing the quotation is sufficient.

There are many ways to cite evidence in your speech. There are a few important things to keep in mind when doing so:

- When citing the source, speak clearly and slowly enough that your judge can make a brief notation of your evidence, should they choose to do so.
- Because many judges keep track of sources used in an extemp speech, always introduce the source before giving the evidence.
- Unless your evidence is from a prior year, providing the month and day of

the evidence is sufficient (your judge will assume your evidence is from the current year unless told otherwise).

- At a minimum, you must state the month of the evidence and either the author or source name.
- When using the author's name, give qualifications whenever possible. This will help your judge evaluate the credibility of your source.
- Never, ever, EVER make up a source. This can get you disqualified. If you forget your source, give as much information as you remember. If you can't remember the exact month, for example, say that the article was published "this spring" or refer to it as "a recent *New York Times* article." Not remembering the date of your source will undermine your credibility far less than lying about a source that you can't recall.

In addition to citing the evidence by providing the author or source name and the date of the article, it is important to introduce your evidence in as seamless a manner as possible. Unlike an essay in which you can distinguish a quotation with punctuation and spacing, evidence used in a speech must be incorporated in a way that flows with the rest of the speech. Here are a few do's and don'ts of citing and incorporating evidence into a speech:

Weak Use of Citation	Better Use of Citation	Why?
An article from the Washington Post explains, quote: violence in Syria has reached the scale of an all-out civil war, unquote.	According to the Washington Post on July 13, the violence in Syria has reached the scale of an all-out civil war.	Saying “quote” and “unquote” in a speech is very awkward, and is unnecessary. Simply paraphrase the evidence – if you introduce the source first, your judge will understand that what follows is the quotation.
One woman has even gone so far as to call San Diego Mayor Robert Filner a sexual predator, according to USA Today on August 18.	An August 18 <sup>th</sup> article from USA Today states that one woman has even gone so far as to call San Diego Mayor Robert Filner a Sexual Predator.	Always provide the citation first. Your judge may be keeping track of your sources and may miss it if the citation follows the evidence.
According to the book <i>The Lexis and the Olive Tree</i> , Globalization is the integration of capital, technology, and information across national borders in a way that is creating a single global market.	In his 1999 book <i>The Lexis and the Olive Tree</i> , Pulitzer Prize winning author Thomas Friedman defines Globalization as the integration of capital, technology, and information across national borders, in a way that is creating a single global market.	Citing more information about a quality source can enhance your credibility. The second citation identifies the date of the book, the author’s name, and his qualifications while the first attempt simply cites the book title.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Sometimes you may find yourself in an unenviable position of having to speak on a question with very little research at your disposal. In these instances, there are a few ways to troubleshoot the situation. First, ask yourself what closely related topics on your question

may have more research available. Hopefully, you chose a question that you know at least a little about. How were you planning on answering the question before you realized you didn’t have much evidence on it? For example, if you drew a question about Texas State Senator Wendy Davis, who staged an old-fashioned filibuster in 2013 during a special session of

Congress, and you were planning on making an argument about the way her male colleagues spoke about her, is there another female politician that you have more research about who may have been spoken about in the same way? Can you remember seeing any articles that spoke about the way women in general are treated by their male colleagues in politics? To successfully troubleshoot a situation like this, draw on your knowledge of what other articles are in your files to pull together relevant evidence for your speech.

# Chapter 4

## *Presenting Your Speech*

It may seem like the most intimidating aspect of extemp speaking, but if you have done your preparation and planning and practice thoroughly, performing your speech is actually the easy – and fun – part. This is also the stage of extemp speaking where confidence really makes a difference.

### LEARNING YOUR SPEECH

---

Major memory lapses can be confidence killers for extemporaneous speakers. Memory lapses do not have to be disastrous, however. Keep in mind that as an unscripted category, extemporaneous speaking gives rise to delivery flubs and memory lapses more often than other cat-

egories. Never in the history of extemporaneous speaking has a person delivered a speech exactly the way they intended to, without forgetting or muddling the ideal phrasing of a single piece of analysis. In order to be successful in extemporaneous speaking, you need to keep memory lapses or delivery errors from derailing your presentation. The key to overcoming



delivery issues is twofold: first, minimize their occurrence, and second, minimize their impact.

### **Practice, Practice, Practice!**

Minimizing the frequency with which memory lapses occur comes with practice and experience. The more often you practice the art of delivering a speech extemporaneously, the easier it will be to speak smoothly and without significant memory lapses. Over time, you will develop ways of coping with memory lapses as they occur—rather than standing in silence

trying to remember what you were going to say, you can insert a fact or anecdote that you are familiar with while you think of your forgotten point. One of the many skills extemporaneous speakers learn is the ability to multitask while speaking. While you are saying one thing, your mind will learn to think a few steps ahead to the next bit of analysis you are going to deliver. As you develop and hone this skill, you will find that it can serve you in an inverse way as well—if your mind gets stuck trying to remember one part of your speech, you can use the speaking



skills you have learned to buy time to recall your analysis.

The best way to minimize the occurrence of memory lapses, however, is with practice—both outside of the tournament setting and, most importantly, inside the prep room. It is important to develop discipline and devote a significant part of your preparation time to practicing the delivery of your speech. When we suggest that you practice delivering your speech, we mean actually speaking the words out loud. It is not enough to visualize yourself giving the speech while looking over the outline. All tournaments will provide some space for you to practice your speech out loud, whether in the prep room or just outside the room you speak in. To practice your speech, face away from any distractions. To do this it is often helpful to face a wall and deliver your speech from a couple of feet away. Talking to walls will feel a little strange at first, but over time you will become comfortable with practicing your speeches in this manner.

At a minimum, try to devote at least ten minutes to practicing your speech. Ideally, you should be spending half of your preparation time—fifteen minutes—practicing your delivery. Fifteen minutes gives you the chance to deliver the speech in its entirety twice. Whether you leave yourself ten minutes, fifteen minutes, or somewhere in between to practice your speech, *it is imperative to practice delivering each part of your speech at least once*. Often extempers will find themselves stopping as

they deliver their speech to re-rehearse the introduction or analysis towards the beginning. While it is important to have a solid introduction that is delivered smoothly, it should not come at the cost of practicing and polishing your other analysis. Just as the first sentence you speak will set the tone for your performance, the last statement you make will have a lasting impression on your judge.

### Shallow vs. Deep Memory

Practicing your delivery is one way to reduce the number of memory lapses you have — being more knowledgeable about what you are speaking on is another. As you develop a greater depth and breadth of knowledge about current events, you will find that memory lapses occur with less frequency. This is another reason why it is important to cultivate a mental database of information on the major events happening in the world—the more you know about a topic, the easier it is to talk about it.

Think of the information you learn while prepping your speech as your shallow memory—you learn it just in order to deliver the speech. While you might remember parts of it after the speech, most of it will be gone from your mental database by the time you prepare your next speech. If you doubt this, then try to remember the date and author of the evidence you used in a previous speech—it will be difficult if not impossible. This is because the information we commit to our shallow memory is learned for a very specific purpose:

to deliver it to the audience a few minutes after memorizing it. Think of it like cramming for an exam—you may remember some of the information you study, but a lot of it will be forgotten.

On the other hand, information that you gather over the weeks, months, and years of your extemporaneous speaking career will stay with you much longer. Think of this information as part of your deep memory. You cultivate your deep memory by reading about current events, delivering practice speeches, talking with your teammates about issues, and observing your competitors. One of the most efficient ways you will build your deep memory is by delivering speeches in practice and in competition. Studies have long indicated that we retain information best when we have to explain what we have learned to others,<sup>7</sup> and this is exactly what delivering an extemporaneous speech entails.

### **Don't Sweat the Small Stuff**

While you will try to minimize the occurrence of delivery problems and memory lapses, you will inevitably encounter some. When delivery flubs do occur, try to minimize their impact. Minor mistakes will be forgotten before the speech is over. Do not apologize for making a mistake—chances are, your audience didn't even notice it. If they did notice it, there is no need to draw more attention to it by apologizing. Instead, forge ahead as if nothing happened. Continue the rest of your speech

with confidence. This will demonstrate to your judge and your audience that the delivery mistake was an anomaly, and that you are in fact a polished, gifted speaker. Dwelling on the mistake, allowing it to undermine your confidence, or apologizing for it gives the opposite impression, that you are inexperienced and uncomfortable speaking in front of others.

More importantly, *you* should forget the delivery mistake as soon as it happens. Continuing to think about a memory lapse or how you phrased something differently than how you intended distracts your mind from your speech. When you are thinking about something besides your analysis, you are more likely to continue to forget parts of your speech or make further delivery mistakes. Obsessing about a delivery error can cause your presentation to spiral out of control quickly.

### **Learn, Don't Memorize, Your Speech**

We recommend that you try to *learn* your outline, not *memorize* it. When practicing your delivery during prep time, try not to get hung up on the particular phrasing you use, but instead understand the point of each area of analysis. If you forget to use a word or phrase you intended, or refer to a point in different terms than you wanted, just let it go. Your audience will only realize that you made a mistake if you try to correct it.

The difference between learning and memorizing a speech is reflected in the difference between fluent delivery and fluid delivery. In

a scripted, memorized speech event it is reasonable to expect the performers to be fluent, to know the exact wording of their speech and to deliver it nearly exactly every time. In extemporaneous speaking, no one is expecting perfectly fluent delivery. Instead, your judges will be looking for your speech to be fluid, for the language and analysis to flow naturally, and for you to overcome memory lapses or delivery hiccups by acting as though they never happened.

Fluid delivery is conversational. It gives the impression that the speaker is confident in her *knowledge* of her subject and in her ability to *explain* it to her audience. While she will have rehearsed her speech, she will not appear stiff and scripted. Think of it this way: if you were going to explain a current event to a young, inexperienced team member, you would not give a formal presentation. You would instead employ a natural style, and because you are being conversational in tone, minor mistakes in your delivery will seem less obvious.

## Presenting Your Speech

The old saying couldn't be more true: you never get a second chance to make a first impression. While you may expect to be evaluated on your speech itself, remember that you are being judged from the moment you walk into the room. Unlike scripted events in which every speaker is in the room at the beginning of the round, extemp speaking gives each speaker the opportunity to make an entrance.

From the moment you enter the room, your posture, demeanor, and facial expression all convey a message about you.

The image that you project to your audience has an immediate and profound impact on their perception of you. Another old saying is applicable here—nothing succeeds like the appearance of success.<sup>8</sup> Arrive on time and enter the room calmly. Once in the room, smile naturally and make eye contact with audience members as you walk to the front of the room. It is important that you appear—and be—ready to deliver your speech. If you appear distracted or seem to be running through your speech in your head (instead of making eye contact with the audience and waiting patiently for the judge to give you the signal to start), you will come across as less prepared and less polished.

With any performance event, it is important to start strong and finish strong. This means having a polished introduction and conclusion. It also means pacing your conclusion in such a way that it is obvious when you have finished your speech. As we discussed in the section on conclusions, avoid saying “thank you” to end your speech; instead, use pitch and vocal variation to indicate that you have concluded your analysis.

Because your speech is not memorized, you must cultivate these tools of public speaking as skills. You are not writing out your speech word for word, so you cannot necessarily decide in advance that in a particular place you are going to drop your volume or slow down your

pace. This is why we emphasize using a conversational tone in extemp speaking, because in conversation we do these things naturally. In conversation, your voice and language will reflect the seriousness of what you are talking about. When you want to drive home a point in a discussion, you use gestures to emphasize your ideas and may slow down your pace.

What makes a compelling speaker? Ultimately, it is not their ability to regurgitate words that they have memorized, or even to explain facts that they have learned. A compelling speaker is one who uses language, their voice, and nonverbal factors to communicate an interesting and important message.

## Use of Language

Humans are unique in their capacity for language. Animals of other species may employ vocal sounds to convey a message to one another, but only humans have an extensive system of grammar and vocabulary designed to impart meaning. You have millions of words at your disposal—choose them wisely to give your speech the most impact.

When we use language to convey meaning, we can do so by being literal—that is, describing something exactly as it is, or we can express ideas using words in non-literal ways by getting at what those words mean beyond their dictionary definition. This is the difference between what a word *denotes* and what a word *connotes*. Denotation is the literal meaning of the word; it is the meaning you would

find in a dictionary. Connotation is what the word means in a broader context. Connotative meanings conjure up images or feelings.

Consider the word “red,” for example. The word red *denotes* the color at one end of the spectrum that refracts light of a certain wavelength. It is next to orange and opposite purple on a color wheel. In Western cultures, the *connotations* of red are more complex. It could suggest anger, love, power, or the absence of money. We talk of someone who is furious as “seeing red,” a business which is losing money is “in the red.” Red is associated with blood and fire, and those words are themselves associated with certain feelings and emotions.

In extemporaneous speaking, you can make your performance more memorable and interesting by choosing words with connotations that express a message rather than using literal descriptions. Connotations include figures of speech, metaphors and similes, personification, and hyperbole.

Many of the memorable sayings that are part of our everyday culture are based on the connotations of words. When we talk about Congress putting off a difficult decision, for example, we often say that they are kicking the can down the road. When someone accomplishes something through trickery and deceit, we may say that they are using smoke and mirrors. Instead of saying that there are many aspects of a proposal, we could talk about peeling away the layers. Instead of saying that a new CEO is inexperienced and unfamiliar with

a company's culture, you could say that she is a fish out of water.

In addition to choosing words with expressive connotations, you can employ certain rhetorical tools to make your speech more memorable. One such technique is known as alliteration – a rhetorical device in which the speaker repeats a sound or syllable in different words. To illustrate:

*Alliteration can be an alluring, amusing, and sometimes annoying rhetorical device.*

In this sentence, both the sound at the beginning of the words (the letter A pronounced as “ah”) and the *-ing* suffix are examples of alliteration. Rhyming and repeated phrases can also make your analysis stick in your judge's memory.

Use rhetorical devices like alliteration, rhyming, and repetition sparingly. They can be memorable when used to tie different parts of your analysis together, but if they are overused they can make your speech seem gimmicky and frivolous. Ultimately, you want your rhetorical devices to enhance your analysis—they cannot take the place of substance.

## Using Your Voice

In this section when we talk about using your voice we mean it quite literally—using vocal inflection, pacing, volume, and tone to convey a message. Different vocal attributes have their own connotations in our society. Some of these connotations are unfair and are based on

stereotypes and biases, but whether the connotations are deserved or not, it is important to be aware of them. A booming, aggressive voice can make a person seem domineering and hostile, while a quiet voice can make a person seem weak and ineffectual. A high-pitched voice is often seen as a sign of immaturity, whereas an overly husky voice can seem sultry (which would be inappropriate for an extemporaneous speech). An excessively slow pace can make the speaker seem intellectually slow, whereas an extremely rapid delivery can make the speaker seem hyper and unfocused.

As noted, many of these connotations are unfairly associated with certain attributes. You cannot help it if you have a very deep or very high voice and those traits certainly don't indicate anything about your speaking abilities. Being aware of how these attributes may come off, however, can help you adjust your presentation in other ways to compensate for biases about certain speaking styles.

As for the attributes that are within your control, it is best to have a neutral default position and vary your voice as needed. By this, we mean speaking at an average (conversational) pace, at a reasonable volume, and with a normal range of vocal inflection. When emphasizing a point, use vocal variation to drive your message home.

When delivering a speech, you want your voice to fill the room, but not make it overflow. You should project so that everyone in the room can hear you well, but not so loudly that it is

awkward or uncomfortable for those who are closer to you. This gives you the ability to raise or lower your volume to draw attention to a point you want to emphasize. Speaking more loudly can indicate that something is a “big deal,” but speaking quietly can also draw your audience in and force them to listen more closely.

It is important to keep a natural pace when delivering your speech, even if you notice that you are running out of time. Your performance will suffer more if you try to speed up your delivery to get in all of your analysis than if you cut out some of what you intended to say. This is why we recommend starting with your most persuasive or interesting point, as mentioned in the planning section. If you have to cut back on analysis, let it be in the weaker areas of your speech.

Your judge may or may not give time signals; at some tournaments they may not even be timing your speech. It is your responsibility to know how much time has elapsed throughout your speech. If you notice your judge is keeping track of time, feel free to ask him or her for hand signals indicating how much time you have used or when you only have a certain amount of time left. If your judge is not timing your speech, try to locate a clock and keep track of the length of your speech as best you can. For the most part, a judge who isn't timing your speech won't penalize you for being a little under or a little over time. It is important, however, not to be noticeably short or long on time.

## Confidence Above All Else

The most important factor in successful delivery is confidence. If you are calm, sure of yourself, and able to roll with the punches when mistakes do happen, then you will send the message to your audience that you are someone who knows what they are talking about. Conveying confidence enhances your ethos by indicating that you are credible and knowledgeable. It also indicates that you trust your skills, which shows your judge that they should too.

In the end, confidence has two sides: one that you show to the audience, and one that only you are aware of. You may be nervous or uncertain of your analysis, but you do not have to let it show. Extemp speaking involves taking risks. You stand in front of an audience without the aid of a podium or notes to shield you, and the analysis you are giving is your own. Because of this it is natural to feel vulnerable. Projecting an air of confidence, then, doesn't mean delivering a flawless speech. Rather, it means having faith in your skills to overcome any challenges that arise during your performance. Your performance is your opportunity to let your personality shine through. Have fun, and enjoy this opportunity to showcase the skills you have been working so hard to develop.




# Conclusion

**E**xtemporaneous speaking combines some of the most difficult aspects of public speaking—delivering a speech confidently, without the benefit of notes, while thinking on your feet—with complicated international and national current events. Do not be dismayed if your first attempts at the activity are difficult and not very smooth—as with all highly skilled tasks, the more you practice extemp speaking, the better you will become.

As you develop the critical thinking skills and public speaking abilities that are central to extemporaneous speaking, you will find that your confidence and knowledge grow as well. The skills that you will develop in extemporaneous speaking—from the research you conduct well in advance of the tournament to the presenta-

tion you deliver in a round—will be some of the most important and useful in your life.

In this text we have examined the different components of an extemporaneous speech, giving special attention to the structure of introductions, effective argumentation style, and successful delivery. We have taken an



in-depth look at the research process, breaking down the process of gathering sources for extemp speeches into manageable pieces. We have talked about selecting a question and different approaches to answering it.

All of these lessons will be useful guides, but there is nothing that will help you develop the skills involved in extemporaneous speaking like preparing and delivering speeches. Participating in the activity by giving practice speeches, conducting research as a member of a team, and delivering speeches at a tournament are the best ways to hone your skills.

Of all of the skills and knowledge that a person gains from participating in public speaking activities, we believe that self-confidence is the most important. Years after you leave the world of forensics, any competitive success you have had will be of little value compared to the poise, grace, and fortitude that come with challenging yourself to take on difficult and frightening situations. Believe in your own ability to become a talented extemporaneous speaker through hard work and commitment, and you will be rewarded with faith in yourself to take on almost any challenge.

# Appendix A:

## *Sample Extemporaneous Speaking Questions*

**T**hese questions were drawn from past tournaments and practice questions published by the National Speech & Debate Association. As such, most of them refer to past events and may deal with people or subjects that are no longer current. They are meant to be representative of typical extemporaneous speaking questions and are designed to give you insight into the format and structure of questions. They should not be used in tournaments without significant updating.

### **DOMESTIC QUESTIONS**

---

- What are the challenges facing America's immigration system?
- How should the US improve its visa system?
- Is "Right to Work" legislation good for states?
- Is natural gas fracking good for the United States?

- What impact do illegal immigrants have on the United States economy?
- Should the US secure the borders before instituting comprehensive immigration reform?
- How can the US reduce its trade deficit?
- Should Social Security be privatized?
- Will Chuck Hagel be an effective Secretary of Defense?
- What will be Barak Obama's political legacy?
- What will be the economic impact of implementing the Affordable Care Act?
- What can be done to reduce health care costs?
- Should doctor compensation be based on patient health?
- Who will be the Republican nominee for President in 2016?
- Is the Republican Party doing enough to appeal to minority voters?
- Is Joe Biden an effective Vice President?
- What financial impact have privatized prison systems had on state budgets?
- Why have prison costs increased in recent years?
- Can the Republican Party overcome internal divisions?
- What should be done to make college more accessible for everyone?
- Is the mandatory minimum sentencing system effective at reducing crime?
- How should we reform America's tax system?
- Does income tax law need to be updated?
- Is NASA still relevant?
- Should the United States continue funding space exploration?
- Should the United States increase funding for the arts?
- What do Republicans in the House of Representatives hope to accomplish by repeated votes to defund Obamacare?
- Should Congress develop a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants?
- Should the Electoral College be abandoned?
- What will Michelle Bachman do next after leaving Congress?
- Is the Tea Party still an influential force in American Politics?
- What will be the impact of Texas Congresswoman Wendy Davis's filibuster of anti-abortion laws?
- Should the minimum wage be increased?
- Can Democrats retake control of the House of Representatives in 2014?
- Is Marco Rubio the future face of the Republican Party?
- Will Hillary Clinton pursue a second run for President?
- Should the government do more to promote high-speed Internet access for everyone?
- Can Detroit recover from bankruptcy?
- What lessons can cities learn from Detroit's declaration of bankruptcy?

- Has FEMA learned from mistakes made in the wake of Hurricane Katrina?
- Will Common Core standards improve K-12 education in the U.S.?
- What will be the impact of the Supreme Court's decision striking down key parts of the Voting Rights Act?
- What will be the effects of the Supreme Court's recent rulings on gay marriage?
- Should Edward Snowden be protected by whistleblower laws?
- Is it time for DC statehood?
- Should the Federal Reserve end its policy of quantitative easing?
- Are manufacturing jobs a thing of the past?
- Is No Child Left Behind hindering education in America?
- Do high-stakes tests improve learning?
- Should the United States adopt a voucher system to improve education?
- In the wake of recent mass shootings, will Congress pass stricter gun laws?
- What can Chicago do to reduce gun violence affecting teenagers?
- Who will replace Thomas Menino as Boston's next mayor?
- How will the cheating scandal in Atlanta public schools impact the debate over standardized testing?
- Will other states follow Colorado and Washington's lead in legalizing the recreational use of marijuana?
- What will be the long-term effects of Sequestration?

- Should Congress reform rules governing filibusters?

## INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS

---

- Should the United States lift the embargo against Cuba?
- What effect would lifting the Cuban embargo have on US relations in Latin America?
- Should the US intervene militarily in the conflict in Syria?
- How should the US respond to allegations that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons against citizens?
- Is the Syrian civil war a proxy conflict for regional powers?
- Is the use of unmanned aerial drones undermining US foreign policy goals?
- How has the US's use of drones in targeted killings affected its relationship with Pakistan?
- Is Yemen a trusted partner in the war against terror?
- Do the six party talks hold any promise for stopping North Korea's nuclear program?
- How will Kim Jong Un's leadership differ from that of his father?
- Can the international community quell North Korea's nuclear ambitions?
- What can the United States do to improve the status of women in Afghanistan?





- How can Mexico reduce drug related violence?
- What steps should be taken to reduce corruption in Mexico?
- Is NATO obsolete?
- What should the international community do to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS?
- Does China have genuine influence over North Korea?
- Is the slowing growth rate of China's economy a cause for concern?
- Was the Arab Spring an overall success?
- Is Egypt on the verge of collapse?
- Is austerity the best way to promote economic recovery in the Eurozone?
- Can Sudan and South Sudan coexist peacefully?
- Is Robert Mugabe serious about stepping down if he loses Zimbabwe's Presidential election?
- What will be Hugo Chavez's legacy?
- Can Venezuela prosper without Chavez?
- Is natural gas fracking an economic boon for Canada?
- Has Haiti recovered from the earthquake of 2010?
- Has the G8 lost its clout?
- Is Russia becoming an authoritarian state?
- Should Israel halt settlements in the Palestinian territories?
- Are cyber vulnerabilities a major threat to U.S. National security?
- Is Myanmar serious about democratic reforms?
- Will Iran's newly elected President Hassan Rouhani pursue engagement with the United States?
- How can the United States encourage China to stop manipulating the value of its currency?
- Does Japan's trade deficit signal another lost decade?
- How will the newly elected Pope Francis differ from his predecessor?
- Is it time for U.S. Military intervention in Syria?
- How can India reduce economic disparities among its citizens?
- What does Afghan President Hamid Karzai hope to gain from distancing himself from the United States?
- Will Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government pursue a peace agreement with Palestine?
- Can Nepal's interim government maintain stability until new elections are held?
- How should the international community respond to ethnic violence in Kenya?
- What should the United States do to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons?
- Should the International Olympic Committee move the 2014 Winter Olympics in protest of Russia's harsh anti-gay laws?

- How can South Africa improve its economy?
- What can Greece do to jumpstart its economic recovery?
- Will the election of Ali Larayedh bring stability to Tunisia?
- How will strife in Mali impact regional political stability?
- Will Cuba flourish without a Castro at the helm?
- Has greater foreign investment in Ethiopia improved overall quality of life for its citizens?
- Does heavy media coverage of the corruption trial of Bo Xilai indicate China's commitment to the rule of law?
- Is the World Health Organization close to eradicating Polio?
- What should the international community do to stop desertification in Africa?
- Do leaks at the Fukushima nuclear plant pose a significant threat to Japan's environment?
- What should the United States do to repair diplomatic relations after revelations of NSA spying on allies?

# Appendix B

## *Resource List*

### **American Interest**

<http://www.the-american-interest.com/>

Very good journal focused primarily in public policy issues. Some material is free but most requires a subscription.

### **American Institute for Economic Research**

<http://www.aier.org/>

Provides some quality economic analysis.

### **Borowitz Report**

<http://www.borowitzreport.com/>

Topical humor source that can assist extemporaneous speakers develop introductory material

### **Brookings Institute**

<http://www.brookings.edu/>

A very good source of analysis covering a wide range of domestic and international issues

## **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**

<http://carnegieendowment.org/>

A global think tank providing quality analysis of issues affecting the world.

## **CATO Institute**

<http://www.cato.org/>

A think tank covering a wide range of domestic and international issues

## **Center for Economic and Policy Research**

<http://www.cepr.net/>

A good website dedicated to economic issues both domestic and international

## **Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments**

<http://www.csbaonline.org/>

Focus of research is on U.S. Defense Policy, Planning and Budgeting

## **Center for Strategic and International Studies**

<http://csis.org/>

An excellent source of analysis covering a range of domestic and international public policy issues.

## **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**

<http://www.cbpp.org/>

This site focuses primarily on domestic budget and economic issues.

## **Council on Foreign Relations**

<http://www.cfr.org/>

A think tank specializing in U.S. foreign policy and international affairs.

## **Current History**

<http://www.currenthistory.com/>

Requires a subscription but contains in-depth analysis on today's global issues.

## **Foreign Affairs**

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/>

This website and journal is an excellent source of in-depth analysis on current issues confronting the world. A subscription is required to access most material but they do provide some material free of charge.

## **Foreign Policy**

<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

An excellent source of information covering a wide range of foreign policy issues. A subscription is necessary to access most material while some material is available free of charge.

## **Harvard International Review**

<http://hir.harvard.edu/>

Excellent articles covering a range of international issues.

## **Heritage Foundation**

<http://www.heritage.org/>

A think tank covering a wide range of domestic and international issues.

## **International Crisis Group**

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/>

Primarily focused on the analysis of international conflicts.

## **National Affairs**

<http://www.nationalaffairs.com/>

Journal covering primarily domestic issues. Some materials is available free of charge while most requires a subscription.

## **National Education Policy Center**

<http://nepc.colorado.edu/>

A very good source for analysis of contemporary issues in U.S. education.

## **National Public Radio**

<http://www.npr.org/>

Provides up to the minute news information and analysis focused on a wide range of current issues.

## **PBS Newshour**

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/>

A quality source providing analysis on news stories happening around the world.

## **Peterson Institute for International Economics**

<http://www.piie.com/>

A very good source for analysis of economic issues

## **PEW Research Center**

<http://pewresearch.org/>

A very good source for analysis of a wide range of current issues.

## **RAND Corporation**

<http://www.rand.org/>

Quality source of timely research.

## **SCOTUSblog – Supreme Court of the United States Blog**

<http://www.scotusblog.com/>

A very good source with qualified authors writing about the cases and issues before the U.S. Supreme Court.

## **The Atlantic**

<http://www.theatlantic.com/>

A high quality source for news and analysis covering domestic and international issues.

## **The Christian Science Monitor**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/>

A quality daily newspaper covering a wide range of domestic and international issues.

## **The Economist**

<http://www.economist.com/>

The best source for news each and every week. Requires a subscription but contains really in-depth analysis on today's global issues.

## **The Financial Times**

<http://www.ft.com/home/us>

A very good source of daily news covering a wide range of issues. A subscription is required.

## **The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs**

<http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Fletcher-Forum>

This website features articles covering a wide range of world issues from legal to environment. Some materials is free; most requires a subscription.

## **The Guardian**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

A very good daily news source from the United Kingdom.

## **The Journal of International Security Affairs**

<http://www.securityaffairs.org/>

Mostly focused on U.S. Security Affairs. Some material is free while most requires a subscription to access.

## **The National Interest**

<http://nationalinterest.org/>

A quality website covering a wide range of national and international issues. Some materials is free; most requires a subscription.

## **The National Law Journal**

<http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/index.jsp>

Very good source for analysis of current legal issues. Access requires a subscription.

## **The New York Times**

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

One of the top newspapers in the world. Subscription required for access beyond 20 articles per month.

## **The Onion**

<http://www.theonion.com/>

Topical humor source that can assist extemporaneous speakers develop introductory material.

## **The Wall Street Journal**

<http://online.wsj.com/home-page>

An excellent news source but you need a subscription to access most articles.

## **The Washington Quarterly**

<http://www.twq.com/>

An excellent journal covering domestic as well as international issues. Some material is free while most requires a subscription to access

## **World Policy Institute**

<http://www.worldpolicy.org/>

Website covers a wide range of international issues and also links to their World Policy Journal articles. Some material is free while most requires a subscription to access.



# Appendix C

## *Tournament Logistics*

### LOGISTICS – WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN EXTEMP ROUND?

---

Before we explore the substance of extemporaneous speaking, we need to understand how an extemp round works. Extempers often become a team within their team – unlike other events, the extempers are sequestered in the preparation room (usually the school’s library or other quiet place) for most of the tournament. As a draw event, speaking times are staggered and speakers’ down time will come at different times. While the exact rules and structure

of an extemp round will vary between states and districts, an extemp round has three basic features:

1. The Draw
2. Preparation Time
3. The Speech

“**The Draw**” refers to the process of drawing a question to speak on. We devote a section of this text to choosing, understanding and unpacking an extemp question later on. For now we are going to stick to the logistical aspects of the draw.

Extempers who speak at different places in the speaking order will also draw their questions at different times. Thus the first speaker will draw their questions thirty minutes before the round is scheduled to start, the second speaker will draw their questions seven minutes later (the length of an extemp speech), and so forth. Tournaments sometimes vary as to how much prep time they give competitors, but it is typically thirty minutes.

When your position in the speaking order is called, you will select three questions at random (usually from an envelope) and select one to speak on. **No peeking!** Unlike most of the other speech events, it is possible to “cheat” at extemp in a number of ways – one of which is trying to surreptitiously catch a glimpse at the topic before selecting it from the envelope.

After drawing your three questions, you will select one to speak on. As we mentioned before, we will address the issue of how to select a question later in the text – here we are interested only in the logistics. You will choose one question to speak on. Depending on tournament policy, they may return the other two topics or they may have a unique set of topics for each speaker position. At the National Tournament, each speaker position will receive a unique set of three topics to choose from. Don't lose or throw away your question – most judges collect them before the round.

“**Prep Time,**” or more formally “preparation time,” consists of all the time between the moment you draw your question to the

moment you begin your speech. Extempers generally divide their prep time into two informal parts – writing their outline and practicing their delivery.

During prep time you will use the research you have been compiling in your practice time outside of competition. Drawing on the news articles, think tank papers, books and other resources, you will create an outline that answers the question you selected.

Although extemp is not scripted, speakers are still expected to cite evidence. It is not necessary to state a quotation verbatim – indeed memorizing quotations is usually a terrible waste of time. Rather, focus on getting the essence of the author's point. You should, however, memorize the citation for this evidence, which we will also discuss in greater detail later in this text. For now, keep in mind that extempers use their research to build their outlines and support their arguments. We will also cover outlines and persuasive argumentation in greater detail in a later chapter.

After writing their outlines, extempers will practice delivering their speech. This step is crucial in committing your answer and analysis to memory so you can more easily explain it during your speech, but many extempers short-change themselves by spending a disproportionate amount of time on their outline. Remember that an extemp speech is seven minutes long – that means if you save yourself half of your prep time (fifteen minutes) to practice your delivery you *might* be able to



get through the speech twice. Your chances of delivering a polished and coherent speech when you are before your judge

This brings us to the third phase of an extemp round, “**The Speech**” itself. At this point, most of your work is already done – now it is up to you to explain your answer to your judge in a well reasoned and clearly spoken way. In most speech categories, competitors in a round also make up the audience – along with the judge(s) – for each other. They will each speak in a designated order, but will remain in the room to listen to the other students before and

after delivering their own speech. In contrast, because extemp speaking requires students to be preparing and practicing their speeches up to the moment they deliver them, they do not typically serve as audience members for the other competitors in their rounds. In some regions it is customary for students to remain in the room after giving their speech to watch subsequent speakers, but an extemp round will always start out with only one audience member – the judge. Check with your teammates or fellow competitors to find out what the local protocol is.

Being required to give a speech in front of other people consistently ranks at the top of surveys about anxiety provoking situations. People fear public speaking because they worry about their performance and fear that they will do a poor job, resulting in a bad speech. Recent research suggests that there is a direct correlation between anxiety about public speaking and the speaker's confidence in her abilities – the more confident the speaker is that she knows what she is talking about and can speak clearly about it, the less anxious about delivering the speech she will be. (Reference: Paul Witt, Mendy Roberts & Ralph Behnke, "Comparative Patterns of Anxiety and Depression in a Public Speaking Context." *Human Communication*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 215-226.) More than anything else, extemporaneous speaking is worthwhile because it imparts the skills necessary to be confident in one's public speaking abilities.

# Appendix D

## *Writing Quality Extemporaneous Speaking Questions*

### **SOURCES FOR EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING QUESTIONS:**

---

Extemporaneous speaking questions should be timely. To find inspiration for your questions, look to news sources from the previous two weeks. Browse through newspapers and magazines and pay attention to weekly news summaries provided by television and radio programs. Keep in mind that extemporaneous speaking questions should be current, but not so new that students are unlikely to have research on them. An unanticipated news event that breaks on Thursday evening may be too recent to be

included in the pool of questions for a tournament the following Saturday.

### **What should the topic of questions be?**

In American culture, the media cover many topics that would not necessarily make suitable extemp speaking questions. Political, economic, and international events are clear candidates for extemp questions. Some topics are trickier to evaluate as potential sources for questions. For example, a question about which quarterback should start for a football team would not

be a valid extemp question because it does not deal with a significant current event. A question about the use of steroids in professional sports, however, does deal with a significant issue facing the public. A question about the impact of a political scandal on an election would be a viable topic because it has the potential to affect the public, but one about the impact of the scandal on a politician's family would not.

### What kinds of evaluations should you ask students to make?

Extemp questions should invite an analysis of current events. This means asking students to predict outcomes, assess policy options, and solve problems. Extemporaneous speaking

is not a category focused on ethical dilemmas. Although it is impossible to separate current events from some value judgments, avoid asking students to assess the morality of a situation.

### Aim for questions that can be answered clearly.

Questions of degree are difficult to answer with a cohesive thesis statement. They also presuppose that something will happen (and that the question is only about the extent to which it will happen), forcing the student into taking a particular side. Instead of asking “how much” or “to what extent,” try framing the question as a yes or no question. Consider these examples:

Question of Degree	Rewritten as a Yes/No Question
How strong is the democratic wave brought on by the Arab Spring?	Will the Arab Spring usher in a wave of true democracy?
How problematic is political infighting for the Republican Party?	Does the Republican Party have a problem with political infighting?
How important are illegal workers to the American economy?	Are illegal workers important to the American economy?
To what extent is Myanmar embracing real democratic reforms?	Is Myanmar embracing real democratic reforms?

Make the broadness of the question inversely proportional to the “bigness” of the topic.

For very broad topics, like the economy, US foreign policy, Congressional elections, etc.

consider using more narrow topics, helping focus the student's speech. For more obscure topics with less coverage in the news, ask more open-ended questions to broaden the range of analysis the students can use.



# References

1. Dwyer, Karan Kangas & Marlina M. Davidson. "Is Public Speaking Really More Feared than Death?" *Communications Research Reports*, Vol. 29, Issue 2, 2012. Pages 99 – 107.
2. Jasinski, James. *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001.
3. Toulmin, Stephen. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge University Press (1958). Cambridge, UK.
4. Full source citation: Browning, Noah. "Palestinian Negotiator: New Israeli Settlements Undermine Talks." *Reuters*, August 11, 2013.
5. Fard, Maggie Fazeli. "Sandra Fluke, Georgetown Student Called a 'Slut' by Rush Limbaugh, Speaks Out." *Washington Post*, March 2, 2012.
6. National Speech & Debate Association: *Competition Events Guide 2012-2013*. Released November 15, 2012 (version 2.2). You may obtain an electronic copy of the current competition events guide on the National Speech & Debate Association website, [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org).
7. Paul, Annie Murphy. "The Protege Effect: Why Teaching Someone Else is the Best Way to Learn." *Time*, November 30 2011. <http://ideas.time.com/2011/11/30/the-protege-effect/>
8. Lasch, Christopher. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Retrieved September 2, 2013, from BrainyQuote.com Web site: [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/christopher\\_lasch.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/christopher_lasch.html)

