

Style Up Your Platforms

script

What will it take to make your speech stand-out? To be remembered despite the judge hearing 8, 16, or 24 speeches that day? How can you make the message that is so important to you become important to your audience? What will they remember about it the next day? Today I want to give you some tools that you can use to spruce up and add some body and texture to your speeches.

We’ll look at 10 ways you can strengthen your speech to really draw in the audience.

Once you have the basics down pat it is time to style things up. If your speech is not that far along, no problem - these are just things to keep in mind as the season goes along. You might qualify to the Regional tournament and want to upgrade your speech. These rhetorical devices can really put some polish on your piece.

The first three are rhetorical devices we will look at are taken from *As I Was Saying* by Thane Rehn

I Antimetabole (an-tee-meh-TA-boe-lee)

This is a repetition of certain words, but in reverse order.

*“Eat to live, not live to eat.” ~Socrates*

*“We gotta play with emotion but not let emotion play with us”*

*~Coach Chip Kelly*

*“Jesus Christ came to pay a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay” ~Greg Laurie*

*“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for*

*your country.” ~John F. Kennedy*

II Parallelism

This is putting together phrases with similar sound and meaning.

*“We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any*

*friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.”*

*~John F. Kennedy*

*“New roads; new ruts.” ~G.K. Chesterton*

*“Buy a bucket of chicken and have a barrel of fun.” ~KFC Slogan*

These really can dress up a sentence – they are pleasing to the ear.

III Anadiplosis (an-uh-dih-PLO-sis)

This is a figure of repetition that occurs when the last word or terms in one sentence, clause, or phrase is/are repeated at or very near the beginning of the next sentence, clause, or phrase.

*“This means much more than the mere success of a party. The success of a*

*party means little except when the Nation is using that party for a large and*

*definite purpose.” ~Woodrow Wilson*

*“Somehow, with the benefit of little formal education, my grandparents recognized the inexorable downward spiral of conduct outside the guardrails: If you lie, you will cheat; if you cheat, you will steal; if you steal, you will kill.” ~Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas*

*“Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.”*

*~Yoda, Star Wars*

IV Restatement

This is simply the repetition of an important sentence several times in the

course of a speech.

Jan Darcy @ <http://www.cfug-md.org/SpeakerTips/775.html> explains:

The repetition or restatement of an idea at intervals not only promotes clarity, but encourages the acceptance of an idea. When you repeat and emphasize one idea, competing ideas are subordinated and sometimes are driven completely out of the audience's mind.

*Dr. Anthony Compollo, Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Youth Ministries at Eastern College in Pennsylvania, gave a speech in which he referred to the "bad news on Friday," the harsh reality that we have to deal with in life. But he urged us to look forward to the "good news on Sunday." He declared, "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming." He gave illustrations of the bad news and the good news, but periodically he would say, "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming." And by the end of the speech, he had the whole audience shouting, "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming."*

V Metaphor

In her book *Hit the Ground Speaking!* Professional speech coach Maureen

Murray encourages the use of metaphor:

“A metaphor is a speech pattern that compares one thing to another so that listeners get a better visual image and understand your point more easily. Common examples are sports metaphors such as “finish line” and ‘get out of the starting gate.”

*“With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.” ~Martin Luther King*

The last 5 rhetorical devices we will look at come from author Brendan McGuigan (ma-gee-gan) at the website Virtual Salt and the American Rhetoric website

VI Alliteration

This is the recurrence of initial consonant sounds. Two words used

together calls attention to the phrase and helps fix it in the reader’s mind.

*“Ah, what a delicious day!”*

*“Done well, alliteration is a satisfying sensation.”*

*“I think I need a bigger box” ~Taco Bell commercial*

*“Somewhere at this very moment a child is being born in America. Let it be*

*our cause to give that child a happy home, a healthy family, an a hopeful*

*future.” ~Bill Clinton*

VII Analogy

Analogies compare two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clafrifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea or object by showing how the idea or object is similar to some familiar one.

*“Knowledge always desires increase: it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself.”*  *~Samuel Johnson*

VIII Distinctio

This is a figure of explication in which an introductory reference to a word’s

meaning is made followed by a further elaboration of that word’s meaning.

*“To make methanol for twenty-five cents a gallon is impossible; by*

*“impossible” I mean currently beyond our technological capabilities.”*

*“The modern automobile (and here I refer to the post-1975, desmogged*

*American car) is more a product of bolt-on solutions than of revolutionary*

*engineering.”*

*“Solid security arrangements on the ground are necessary not only to protect the peace; they’re necessary to protect Israel in case the peace unravels, because in our unstable region, no one can guarantee that our peace partners today will be there tomorrow. And my friends, when I say tomorrow, I don’t mean some distant time in the future; I mean tomorrow.”*

*~Benjamin Netanyahu*

Debate students know that many words can be understood very differently by different people. Words like justice, democracy, equality and oppression need to be defined so the audience knows how you are using the word.

IX Procatalepsis

If you are doing a Persuasive speech, you might want to listen closely to

this one:

Procatalepsis anticipates an objection and answers it, allowing the

argument to move forward while taking into account points or reasons

opposing the conclusion.

*“It is usually argued at this point that if the government gets out of the*

*mail delivery business, small towns like Podunk will not have any mail*

*service. The answer to this can be found in the history of the Pony*

*Express…”*

*“Occasionally a person of rash judgment will argue here that the high-speed motor is better than the low-speed one, because for the same output, high-speed motors are lighter, smaller, and cheaper. But they are also noisier and less efficient, and have much greater wear and shorter life; so that overall they are not better.”*

All persuasive speeches must overcome objections to be credible. Make sure you understand what the main objections are so they can be addressed in your speech.

X Rhetorical Question

Figure which asks a question, not for the purpose of further discussion, but

to assert or deny an answer implicitly; a question whose answer is obvious

or implied.

“*Can anyone look at the record of this Administration and say, “Well done””?*

*~Ronald Reagan, 1980 Republican National Convention*

*Acceptance Address*

*“Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he had offered Isaac,*

*his son upon the altar?” ~James 2:20-21 (KJV)*

Finally, we will look at one more way to “style up your platform”. It is not a rhetorical device, but another way to add texture to your speech.

Accents

Another powerful, effective tool is the use of accents. Yes, even in platform

speeches a bit of interpretive flair can really capture the interest of your

audience.

1. Joe’s Mark Twain

A few years ago, a guy from one of our sister clubs, Joe Funte, did a speech on Mark Twain. Whenever he quoted Mr. Twain, he acted and spoke as Mr. Twain, imaginary pipe in hand. The results were quite powerful and made the quotes much more effective. (In fact, on the way to a regional tournament, his family stopped at the museum at the home of Mark Twain – and when they heard about his speech, asked him to deliver it right there in the museum)!

1. Karolina’s Frederic Bastiat (fred-er-ik baa stee ah)

Troy’s use of character interpretation for quotes motivated one of our club members last year to adopt a French accent when quoting her biographical narrative subject, economist Frederic Bastiat. When she had the speech pretty well written, she wrote out all the quoted material and went to visit the mother of a tennis team member who was from France. She had called ahead and the lady agreed to read the quotes into the girl’s itouch in French. The student could then listen to the recording as often as she needed to in order to really get the accent correct.

Obviously, forcing an accent into your speech where it doesn’t make sense doesn’t make sense ☺ But if it does fit, it is a nice add-on.

So remember, maybe it is all you can do to get the basic speech written before the tournament. That is OK. But if you have a chance during the season, or need to upgrade the speech for another tournament, look back at some of these devices and brainstorm on which you could incorporate to your speech for extra pop and flair.