



D. Delivering a speech

Information and Activity Plans for School Debaters

INTRODUCTION

At first it may seem like debating is all about speaking, yet up until now you have been doing more reading and writing than talking! These sessions change that. Now all your preparation starts to pay off and the debating begins!

Previous activities have examined initial analysis of motions and brainstorming to generate ideas for arguments (A), how to research a motion (B), and how to properly develop a logical case and construct a speech (C).

We now set aside most of the learning from the previous activities to concentrate exclusively on the development of presentation and speechmaking skills. These only come through practice, and usually are best developed by practice in front of an audience who can then give constructive and positive feedback.

Anyone entering a competition should have at least spoken in front of the fellow students prior to attending their first debate, to prepare them for having to stand up in public.



Activity D1 – Two-minute talks

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session students should be able to:

- Stand up and offer a two-minute short-preparation speech
- Identify key aspects of delivery
- Identify key aspects of body language
- Experience 'summing up' a speech

Resources Required

- Copies of the topics worksheet
- Copies of the marking worksheet
- Stopwatch
- Audio or video recording equipment (optional)

Introduction

This a very simple session, based on getting every member of the group to give a two-minute presentation. The emphasis is on speaking style, not content, so the topics used are not the type that would ever be a debate motion.

Running the Activity

PART 1

1. Give the group five minutes to prepare notes to give a two-minute presentation on one of the topics on the topics worksheet
2. Explain that the students will be asked to mark their peers, and give positive and constructive feedback
3. Then hand out the 'marking sheet' and discuss as a group the criteria used
4. Explain that being able to 'sum up' the speeches (identifying themes and arguments) of your own side and the opposing side is an essential skill in debating
5. For this reason, everyone will be asked to record a 'summation' to their fellow pupils speeches– as if they were going to have to sum up what their colleague had said in a debate



PART 2

6. Give everyone marking sheets, and ask them to mark each of the speakers – emphasising the need for positive, supportive and constructive feedback. Explain that they will be asked to discuss the positive aspects of each presentation first, then the areas for improvement
7. Ask each student in turn to come to the front and deliver their speech
8. At the end of each talk, ask one student to offer a **summation** of the speaker's talk
9. Ask another student to lead the **feedback** on the talk
10. Then allow the rest of the group to contribute – always sticking to the pattern of positive first, then areas for improvement.

Assessing Progress

- Did each student manage to speak for the allotted time?
- How did they perform in relation to the criteria in the marking sheet provided?
- Could the students effectively sum-up someone else's speech?
- Could they critique their peers' performance in a positive and constructive manner?

Finishing Up

To close the session emphasise to the students:

- That a lot of people would not like to even speak for two minutes in front of others – so congratulate them on taking part
- That speaking style only develops through practise; be that in a classroom, in front of a mirror at home, or in a competitive debate
- The importance of listening, and being able to sum-up someone else's key themes and arguments



Variations

A variety of variations are possible:

- If your group is less confident then you might allow the students to sit at desks and deliver the speech –it works best if the session is run again (with different topics) at the next available opportunity, but that time asking them to come out to the front
- The preparation and speaking times can be varied, depending on group ability
- In a small group you may want to lead the feedback, then ask students their views
- The session can be run in groups, with students running the whole session themselves and feeding back their experiences at the end of the session
- In a more confident group, you may wish to record the speeches on either audio or video recording equipment, which may help with the next activity (D2)



TOPICS WORKSHEET – TWO MINUTE PRESENTATIONS

- Where I went and what I did on my last holiday
- Where in the world I would like to visit... because...
- My favourite book/film/TV show/play... because...
- In my spare time I like to... .. because...
- My ideal career would be... .. because...
- If I was prime minister I would ...
- My favourite sport is... because...
- If I could only save three items from a house fire they would be...



MARKING WORKSHEET – TWO MINUTE PRESENTATIONS

Name of Speaker..... Time (2 min)

		COMMENTS
Personal - Style	Voice - Volume - Pitch - Emphasis Clarity Speed Confidence Authority Enthusiasm Rapport Distracting habits?	
Speech - Style	Start/middle/end Sentence construction Metaphor / Simile Humour	
Body Language	Eye contact Use of Notes Hand/arms actions Feet (shuffling, still?) Head (up, down, swaying?) Posture	
Summing Up		



Activity D2 – Speaking for effect

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session students should be able to:

- Analyse a speech to identify how speaking style can be used to enhance it
- Practise using different types of emphasis

Resources Required

Copies of the UN-annotated speech sheet
Copies of the sample annotated speech sheet
Copies of the worksheet
Flipchat / whiteboard / overhead
Writing materials
Audio/Video recording equipment (optional)

Introduction

This session is based on how you can use your voice and your body language to emphasise particular points and arguments, to offer the most polished performance, and to maximise the overall impact of your speech.

Running the Activity

PART 1

1. Explain that this session focuses on the different ways in which a speech can be delivered and emphasis placed on certain elements
2. The session is about experimenting and having fun, so today the idea is to really 'ham up' the speeches and over exaggerate elements like how fast or slow you might speak to find out how that alters the delivery of the speech
3. Ask one student to read out the (worksheet) UN-annotated version of the speech ('*We shall fight them on the beaches...*'), in a normal speaking manner
4. Now ask another student to come forward and read the annotated version. Give them a minute to read the notes, and explain that they should over-exaggerate each of the notations. It does not matter if they stumble trying to follow the words and the annotation – the aim is to make the point about different emphasise
5. What difference does this make?
6. Brainstorm a list (on flipchart/blackboard) of things you can vary in a speech to add emphasis (see overleaf for ideas)



Some ideas of what you can do to add emphasis:

- Vary speed (slow, medium, fast)
- Vary pitch (low, high)
- Vary volume (to build up to a point)
- Take pauses (short and long)
- Staccato speech (to attract the audience's attention)
- Stare audience in eyes
- Move away from lecture/desk
- Point / bang fist (strong / aggressive/ angry)
- Make open hand gestures, sweeps of room (inclusive)
- Lean forward (to engage with audience)
- Repeat certain words/phrases (to emphasise a point)
- Vary facial expressions (to convey feeling/opinion)

PART 2

7. Divide the students into groups, giving them each copies of the annotated example (of '*We shall fight them on the beaches...*') AND a copy of the blank worksheet version of '*Blood, toil, tears and sweat...*'.
8. Ask them to work as a group to annotate the copy '*Blood, toil, tears and sweat...*'.
9. Get one person from each group to deliver the speech, and explain why they decided on those annotations

Assessing Progress

- Did they understand the annotations? Could they alter their pattern of speech and body language to take account of these?
- Did the annotate the sample speech in an appropriate manner?



Finishing Up

To close the session emphasise to the students:

- That today you have been over-emphasising these elements in order to think about the effect they have, but that in live speeches they need to be used more subtly
- That they should look out for speeches on TV, and listen out on radio, and to think about the different effects people use to add emphasis and how different methods are appropriate depending on the forum being used (TV/radio)

Variations

A number of variations are possible:

- If speeches are being developed for an actual debate, then these could be annotated and used instead of '*Blood, toil, tears and sweat...*'.
- The session can be run as a competition, with the students marking which version of the speech was annotated and delivered to best effect
- This can be linked to an English or drama class by using passages of prose or from plays, or in history by using famous historical speeches.
- If there is access to audio or video recording equipment, the speeches can be recorded and the students can play back the audio recording first, followed by the video recording. This will help the students to understand how they can create different emphasis using their voice and their body language, and how the two things interrelate.



EXAMPLE – UN-annotated Speech

We shall fight them on the beaches...

Sir Winston Churchill

June 4th 1940

"... I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone.

At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government-every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation.

The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength.

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail.

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old."



EXAMPLE – Annotated Speech

We shall fight them on the beaches...

Sir Winston Churchill, June 4th 1940

Test of Speech	Annotation
<p>"... I have, MYSELF, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, [PAUSE] if necessary for years, [PAUSE] if necessary alone. [PAUSE]</p>	<p>Slow, loud, forceful, emphasis on each bold word – when word is in capitals put hand on heart- bang desk with a closed fist on underlined words</p>
<p>At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government-every man of them. [PAUSE] That is the will of Parliament and the nation. [PAUSE]</p>	<p>Quieter for this paragraph</p>
<p>The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end:</p>	<p>Medium 'talking' pace</p>
<p>we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills;</p>	<p>FAST, getting faster and louder with each point – like a machine gun battering these points home</p>
<p><u>we shall never surrender</u>, and even if, WHICH I DO NOT FOR A MOMENT BELIEVE, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old."</p>	<p>SHOUT, then slower and quieter – when word is in capitals put hand on heart</p>



WORKSHEET

Blood, toil, tears and sweat...

Sir Winston Churchill

May 13th 1940 (first speech as Prime Minister)

I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this government: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering.

You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.

Let that be realised; no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal. But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope.

I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, "come then, let us go forward together with our united strength."



Activity D3 – Five-minute talks

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session students should be able to:

- Stand up and offer a five-minute short-preparation speech
- Identify key aspects of delivery
- Identify key aspects of body language
- Critique their own performance on a recorded format
- Offer, accept, and respond to questions

Resources Required

- Copies of the marking sheet used in Activity D1
- Video or audio recording equipment
- Sufficient blank video, cassettes, or recording space for the number of speeches you will be having
- Stopwatch

Introduction

This session is simply a re-run of Activity D2, with three key differences:

- the speeches are longer (five minutes), which allows for...
- questions, to be offered and taken during the speech
- the speeches will be recorded. A video format works best, as people can then also analyse their posture and body language, however the session can be effective with a simple tape-recording if video equipment is not available, as this will be sufficient for the students to analyse how well they emphasised different parts of their speech. Their opinion of their own speech may change after they have heard it played back to them!

Running the Activity

PART 1

1. Give the group five minutes to prepare notes to give a five minute presentation on one of the following subjects on the Topics Worksheet used in activity D1
2. Not everyone finds seeing/hearing himself or herself a pleasant experience! Additional time and care should be taken with briefing the students beforehand and debriefing them afterwards to ensure that they are comfortable with the session.



3. This time, those watching the speech will not be grading the speaker, but will be asking questions
4. The nature of the topics should make this easy – from asking for more detail on a hotel stayed in on a holiday, to suggesting a different band/sport/book is actually better than the one the speaker is talking about
5. The speaker will have a 'protected' first and last minute
6. During the middle three minutes of the speech they will accept two questions
7. Students in the audience should try to offer plenty of points, without deliberately distracting the speaker
8. They should simply put their hand up when they have a question to ask

PART 2

9. The recordings can be de-briefed in a variety of ways – perhaps the best is getting the speaker to review their own performance using a marking sheet (such as the one provided in activity D1), and then suggest to the group what they thought they did well and what they thought they could improve. The group can then discuss their own ideas.

Assessing Progress

- Did each student manage to speak for the allotted time?
- Did they each manage to accept two questions?
- Did they manage to answer the questions?
- Did they then manage to return to their speeches?
- Did those offering questions do so clearly and concisely?
- Did they have sufficient self-awareness to be able to appropriately feedback on their own performance?



Finishing Up

To close the session emphasise to the students:

- Questions are an important part of debating, and one of the hardest parts, so they have all done well to deal with them
- That these aspects of debating will only develop through practise, so they need to take every opportunity to do so
- Being able to analyse your own performance is essential in developing good debating skills

Variations

A variety of variations are possible:

- The format can be varied by using one session to do all the recordings, and then the next session (after they have had a chance to 'cool off') to review the performance – this tends to lead to a more objective appraisal of performance
- If there is no access to recording equipment the session can be run in the same format as Activity A1, but still introducing the new concept of questions
- The students can give anonymous feedback on each others' speeches (including the student who gave the speech), to encourage a more frank discussion on how well the student performed. This may help the speaker to deal with constructive criticism.