

## Speech Opening and Closing

A good speech opening always grabs the audience's attention, but don't confuse this with "shocking" the audience. Upsetting the audience will usually deter from your talk and should only be used when it is essential to the speech.

Since your opening sets the stage for the rest of your speech, you want it to be great. Even if the rest of your talk is extemporaneous, memorize your opening. You can work with it while rehearsing, but once speech time comes, don't change it, even if you think you have a better idea.

Some good ways to open include a startling fact, a question, a challenge to the audience, a good quotation, a story, or a displayed object. Do not open your speech with any of the following: an apology, a dull and commonplace observation, a long or slow developing statement, a trite question, or anything unrelated to your speech.

Your closing should be memorized as well and should effectively tie up your speech. It should indicate to the audience (along with your body language) that the speech is ending. Very often a closing will relate back to the opening, but this is not always necessary.

Many of the closing strategies are similar to the opening ones, especially the list of what to avoid. You may also want to close by summarizing your points, demonstrating what you talked about, or by appealing to the audience for action.



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