

# Chapter 2. Giving Speeches

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## The Basics

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**Where to start** The Toastmasters Program is designed to help you build the skills you'll need in many different communication situations. Your most effective tool for this is giving the speeches outlined in your CTM Manual. After you've completed the ten speeches in this manual, you have earned your CTM, or Competent Toastmaster Award.

**No manual?** New members should get their CTM manuals within XX weeks of joining. If you haven't received your by this time, tell the VP of Education and he or she will help track the manual down.

**Manual vs. non-manual** Not every speech we give at our meetings is from a manual, but the more manual speeches you give, the farther you'll advance in your speaking skills.

We keep a chart of manual and non-manual speeches to help us all focus on this. Some of the more established members have been through the CTM manual several times, and many of the advanced manuals, so they may give non-manual speeches. But as a new member, we hope you'll stay focused on your CTM manual.

# Your CTM Manual

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- Introduction** The Manual's title is Communication and Leadership Program. The CTM Manual has valuable information about giving speeches and about receiving evaluations. The ten speeches in this manual are focused on specific aspects of presentations:
- **Ice Breaker:** first opportunity to speak before and also introduce yourself to club members
  - **Speaking with Sincerity:** talk on a subject about which you have strong conviction and also an exercise in controlling nervousness
  - **Organizing Your Speech:** teaches clear and logical structure
  - **Show What You Mean:** stresses the value of gesture and body language
  - **Vocal Variety:** explains how to make full use of your voice
  - **Working with Words:** encourages good word choice to ensure your audience understands you
  - **Apply Your Skills:** chance to practice all you've learned so far
  - **Add Impact to Your Speech:** adds visual aids (props) to illustrate and emphasize your message
  - **Persuade with Power:** offers ways to get other people to understand, accept and act on your ideas
  - **Inspire Your Audience:** teaches how to deliver a talk that uplifts and inspires

**Follow the manual** Don't be intimidated by any of these. The manual leads you through the steps for writing and giving each speech. Because the speeches build on skills learned in previous speeches, it's best if you give the speeches in the order laid out in the manual.

## Speech Times and Topics

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**How long?** While the CTM manual gives the expected time for each speech, in our club we try to keep the speeches less than ten minutes, usually from five to seven minutes. If all three speakers go over this time, the meeting may run late and affect peoples' schedules. Always practice your speech before giving it so you'll know how long it is.

When you get into the more advanced manuals, some of the speeches may be longer. If you require more time, let the Toastmaster that week know, and he or she will adjust the number of speakers to accommodate your longer speech.

**Speech topics?** One of the great joys of Toastmasters is learning about a wide range of facts and ideas through each other's speeches. The spectrum of topic possibilities is wide, and only limited by your imagination.

All we ask, however, is that you follow one of the basic rules when speaking to an audience: Be considerate of your audience and its needs. Avoid making your audience uncomfortable. This leads most of us to avoid the three basic 'taboos' in our speeches: sex, politics, and religion. While these subjects can certainly be touched on, recognize that we all come to the meeting with very different backgrounds and experiences. Some may be Catholic, some Lutheran, some Quaker, some agnostic. Some may be political conservatives, some may be liberals. Some may be straight, some may be gay. Some may be wealthy, some may be struggling. Some may be Vikings fans, some may be (gasp) Packer fans. Our diversity is what makes us such a great group, but it requires sensitivity on all our parts.

Getting to know your audience is critical to giving a successful speech, and this applies whether you are giving a speech to an unfamiliar audience, or to Pine Island Toastmasters. If you have an idea for a speech that touches on one of the three 'taboos,' consider running the idea past your mentor first. We don't want to 'gag' anyone, but your first consideration should be your audience, not yourself.

## Being Evaluated

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- Why be evaluated?** We need feedback whenever we set out to develop new skills. It lets us know how we're doing—whether or not our efforts are bringing positive results. Following every speech you give, another Toastmaster will take a few minutes to give you and the club immediate feedback on your speech. In addition, members may fill out the small comment sections on each ballot. The purpose of both types of evaluation is simple: To help you become a better speaker.
- How it works** Before the meeting begins, give your manual to your evaluator, and discuss the speech. Is there any problems you struggle with that you'd like the evaluator to help you with? Are you trying to speak more slowly? More clearly? Improve your hand gestures? Your evaluator will follow the guidelines laid out in your manual, but it doesn't hurt to give them something specific to watch for.
- Please remember that your evaluator is not a judge or a person with all the answers. You may not agree with everything your evaluator says, and that's okay. You must decide which comments are 'on target.' Your evaluator is not an adversary, so do your best to listen to his or her comments with an open mind. Don't become defensive, but realize that you are hearing one person's observations of your speech.
- Strive to improve** Keep a record of your evaluations. Use them the next time you prepare a speech. Work on your weak areas. You'll see improvement in both your speeches and their evaluations.
- Watch those "ah's"** Many inexperienced speakers fill pauses in their speeches with "ah's" and "um's." Pauses between words and sentences aren't to be feared, but to be used effectively for emphasis, and to help your audience focus on your words. To help you move toward eliminating ahs from your presentations, an Ah Counter will listen carefully to your speech, and let you know during the evaluation portion of the meeting how well you did. This is something we all work on together, so everyone, including the Ah Counter, wants to help you succeed.

# Ten Tips on Giving Speeches

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- Introduction**    Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here are ten tips for controlling nervousness and making effective, memorable presentations:
- 1. Know the room**    Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
- 2. Know the audience**    Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
- 3. Know the material**    If you're not familiar with your material or uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it several times if necessary.
- 4. Focus your topic**    Given the limited attention span of even the most interested audiences, your presentation will be more successful if you explore one topic in great detail rather than give perfunctory information about a number of topics.
- 5. Relax**    Ease tension by doing exercises. Breathe deeply to calm yourself.
- 6. Write your introduction and conclusion**    Your audience will remember most what was said first and last, so your opening and conclusion should be memorable for their impact and strength. Writing these parts out will ensure you'll not forget them and lessen their impact.
- 7. Visualize**    Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.

**8. Realize  
people want  
you to  
succeed**

Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They are on your side. They don't want or expect you to fail.

**9. Don't  
apologize**

If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you're having, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed. Keep silent about problems and just move forward.

**10. Practice,  
practice,  
practice**

Rehearse your speech at least three times out loud. Practicing in your head where you are eloquent won't work as well. If you will be delivering your speech standing up, then practice the same way. Tape record yourself and take notes on how to improve. Remember, if you don't find your presentation interesting, no one else will.

**Bonus tip:**

Enjoy yourself. Have fun!

# Beyond Your CTM

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**Introduction** As a new member it may seem intimidating to think about giving all ten speeches in the CTM Manual. The thought of doing more than this may overwhelm you at this point, but we want you to know the Toastmaster experience doesn't have to end there. You'll notice that many of us have been members for 5-10-20 years. Why do we keep coming? Because we keep learning.

**Advanced manuals** One reason for this is the series of Advanced Communication and Leadership Manuals. Each of these manuals presents five speeches in a highly specialized area. If you have specific communication needs for work or other areas of your life, you may want to consider working on one of these advanced manuals after you've completed your CTM:

- The Entertaining Speaker
- Speaking to Inform
- Public Relations
- The Discussion Leader
- Specialty Speeches
- The Professional Speaker
- Technical Presentations
- The Professional Salesperson
- Communicating on Television
- Storytelling
- Interpretive Reading

For more on the goals you can set and achieve after your CTM with these advanced manuals, see Chapter Four.