

# Choosing Appropriate Words

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## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn further techniques for selecting the appropriate language to use in your speech.

1. The Style and Tone of Speaking
  - a. Sectioning Your Speech
  - b. Avoid Weasel Phrases

## 1. The Style and Tone of Speaking

Consider for a few minutes exactly where, when, and how you will be giving your speech. Consider the tone and style of your speech. From there, think about how you will structure your speech, given these various contexts.

Thinking about these parameters can give you an idea of the most appropriate language to use in the wording of your speech.

### 1a. Sectioning Your Speech

As you outline your argument, you will want to break your speech into sections. A speech consists, broadly, of an introduction, body, and conclusion.

However, as you begin to highlight your thesis and specific supporting points and examples, you will create additional sections to your speech. This is particularly helpful if you have a long speech because sectioning makes the information easier for your audience to process.

Each section of your speech should have a specific purpose or focus. As you move from one section to the next, you will want to make sure you transition smoothly between each section.

Here are some useful phrases for transitions and sectioning your ideas:

Purpose	Examples
Generalizing	as a general rule, as a rule, in general, generally, normally, on the whole, usually
Explaining	in other words, that is, this means that
Expressing	it is certain that, there is no doubt that, I am confident that, certainly, definitely, clearly, undoubtedly, presumably,

likelihood	will, is, should, it is probable that, it is likely that, probably, can, may, it is possible that, could, might, might possibly, possibly, perhaps
Expressing doubt	it is doubtful that, maybe, is improbable, is unlikely, it is uncertain, impossible, cannot, can't, will not, is not
Drawing attention	it is worth noting that, it should be emphasized that, it should be highlighted that, it should be underlined that, in particular, especially, mainly, chiefly, mostly, it should be pointed out that, it should be noted that, it should be remembered that, it is worth stressing that, is vital, is crucial
Contrasting two points	however, but, in spite of, despite, in spite of the fact that, despite the fact that, nevertheless, nonetheless, instead, conversely, on the contrary, by contrast, whereas, while, whilst, although, even though, on the one hand, on the other hand, in contrast, in comparison with, but, yet, alternatively, the former, the latter, respectively, all the same, there are two possibilities, alternatively, the one, the other, either, or, neither, nor, in addition, not only, but also, worse still, better still, equally, likewise, similarly, correspondingly, in the same way, another possibility, in a similar vein, as well as, furthermore, moreover, also, although, again, what is more, besides, too, as well as
Giving examples or introducing illustrations	for example, for instance, to name an example, to give an example, is well illustrated by, a case point is, such as, such, one of which, illustrates, is an example of this, is shown by, is exemplified by, is illustrated by, (something) is, means, describes, is defined as, is used, is concerned with, deals with, relates to, involves, signifies, consist of
Stating consequences	so, therefore, as a consequence, as a result, now, consequently, because of, thus, for this reason, then, this is why, accordingly, hence, given this, with reference to, given, on this basis, is caused by, causes, due to, has the effect, affects, the reason for, because of this, if, then, results in, leads to, produces, owing to, through, as, since, because
Summarizing	to sum up, in summary, to summarize, in brief, altogether, overall, I conclude, I therefore conclude, reached the conclusion that, it is concluded, therefore, for this reason, then, thus, in conclusion, to bring it all together
Qualifying frequency	never, rarely, sometimes, usually, often, always, generally, on the whole, frequently, occasionally, hardly ever, seldom
Qualifying results	under no circumstances, mainly, generally, predominantly, usually, the majority, most of, almost all, a number of, may be, some, a few, a little, fairly, very, quite, rather, almost
Qualifying change	no, minimal, slight, small, slow, gradual, steady, marked, large, dramatic, complete, steep, sharp, rapid, sudden (rise, increase, fluctuation, decrease, decline, reduction, fall, drop, upward trend, downward trend, peak, plateau, level off)

## 1b. Avoid Weasel Phrases

**Weasel phrases** are those that make a lot of promise but do not follow through on the delivery. These trigger phrases often precede statements that lack much substantive quality.

These terms are particularly important to avoid so as not to invalidate the credibility of your argument.

Here is a list of common weasel phrases:

- Allegedly
- Arguably
- As opposed to most
- Considered by many
- Contrary to many
- Critics/critics say that

- It could be argued that
- It has been suggested/stated/said/noticed
- It is widely believed/generally claimed
- Many people say
- Many scientists argue that
- Research has shown
- Researchers argue that
- Serious scholars say that
- Social science says/believes that
- Some historians argue
- The scientific community
- This is widely considered to be/regarded as



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Weasel Phrases

Phrases that often precede statements and that lack substantive quality.



#### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that it's important to pay attention to your **style and tone of speaking**. **Section your speech** into parts arranged in a logical order, with each section having a specific focus or purpose. Transition between sections with phrases and words that connect your ideas. **Avoid weasel phrases** in order to keep your speech credible and authoritative.

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#### TERMS TO KNOW

### Weasel Phrases

Phrases that often precede statements and that lack substantive quality.