

Choosing Clear Words and Phrasing

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to ensure that you are communicating your message clearly. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. How Well Do You Fully Understand Your Topic?
2. Delimit the Question
3. Define Key Terms

1. How Well Do You Fully Understand Your Topic?

You know that you have to write a speech, and you may or may not have been given a specific topic about which to write. Easy as pie, right?

Hold on there— take a step back for a moment and ask yourself: how well do you fully understand your topic? It's important to take that step back and look at your speech from a distanced perspective.

Looking at your speech from a distance allows you to **dissect** exactly how you can begin to tackle the specific wording of your speech. You want to make sure that your speech is easy to understand and follow, so it's imperative to choose clear words and phrasing.

When you think of your speech in delimiting the question and defining key terms, you have a great starting point for how to begin selecting the clearest words and phrasing.



TERM TO KNOW

Dissect

To analyze an idea in detail by separating it into its parts.

2. Delimit the Question

What question does your speech address? You might be thinking, "Wait a minute. My speech isn't even answering a question. I'm just supposed to talk about a business plan I've made for a fake company for an

assignment in my entrepreneurship class. "

Here's the thing: Your speech actually is answering a question, that question being, "Why should you invest in my business?" (however fake that business may be).

The importance of identifying the broader question to which your speech will speak not only helps your audience understand your point, but it pinpoints exactly how you need to tailor your speech to your audience. Essentially, when you take the steps to **delimit** your question (your speech's purpose), you help to outline exactly how your audience can follow your line of reasoning.

When you delimit the question, first think about the purpose of your speech. This will usually point you in the direction of the broader question. From there, list step-by-step how you plan to address that question. Set the parameters for your rhetoric for your audience.



TERM TO KNOW

Delimit

To mark or fix the limits of.

3. Define Key Terms

Even though your speech could be about something that is otherwise common knowledge to your audience, it is helpful to also define key terms for them as you go along in your speech.

Even though you may have outlined your plan of attack by delimiting the question, it also helps to explain exactly what you're talking about to your audience. When you establish your key terms by defining them for your audience, you set a **baseline** standard of understanding for your audience, thus eliminating any confusion.

When you delimited your question, were there any key words used in that question? Define those terms as necessary. You'll want to source your definitions appropriately by looking up those key terms from reliable sources. In doing so, you indicate to your audience that not only do you fully understand the ways in which to approach your argument, but that you understand your topic.

Do be careful: You don't want to "dumb down" your speech by defining every single key term throughout your speech. Make sure you only highlight and define those words that are necessary for establishing a foundation of your speech topic.



TERM TO KNOW

Baseline

A datum used as the basis for calculation or for comparison.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of clear phrasing in your speech. You should consider **how well you know your topic**— make sure you fully understand everything that goes into

your topic as you begin to craft the specific wording of your speech. Start by **delimiting the question**, that is, fully parsing out exactly what question you are answering by giving your speech. Even if you don't think there is a specific question, your speech topic exists for some purpose. What purpose does your speech fulfill? From there, **define the key terms** of your speech.

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TERMS TO KNOW

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