

The Inspirational Speech

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the purpose of a particular type of speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Inspirational Speech

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When we think of the word **inspire**, we typically think of motivational and rousing ideas and imagery. In a very literal sense, inspiration is a synonym of the biological function of inhalation: by inspiring, we take air into our lungs.

It only makes sense then, that inspirational words, images and situations cause our chests to swell with pride, excitement or even anger. Inspiration can elicit extreme emotional responses within us. As such, the inspirational speech is one that can elicit those same strong emotional responses within our audiences, no matter their size.

Some of the most famous inspirational speeches in history include Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" and President John F. Kennedy's inauguration speech. A modern day example could be President Barack Obama's "Yes We Can" campaign stump speech made in 2008.

The power of these speeches lies in the rousing words and imagery that capitalize on the emotional response of their audiences. Inspirational speakers are often characterized as warm, encouraging, and able to instantly connect and engage with their audiences.

But not all messages are necessarily warm and fuzzy; take for example, the speech made popular by actor Mel Gibson as William Wallace in the film, *Braveheart*, as he motivates his ragtag band of Scotsmen to fight against the English troops:

Wallace: Sons of Scotland, I am William Wallace.

Young soldier: William Wallace is 7 feet tall.

Wallace: Yes, I've heard. Kills men by the hundreds, and if he were here he'd consume the English with fireballs from his eyes and bolts of lightning from his arse. I AM William Wallace. And I see a

whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny. You have come to fight as free men, and free men you are. What would you do without freedom? Will you fight?

Veteran soldier: Fight? Against that? No, we will run; and we will live.

Wallace: Aye, fight and you may die. Run and you'll live--at least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!

Wallace and Soldiers: Alba gu bra! (Scotland forever!)

The successful inspirational speech is one that is memorable, truly inspiring, and one that can stand the test of time.



TERM TO KNOW

Inspire

To infuse into the mind; to communicate to the spirit; to convey, as by a divine or supernatural influence; to disclose preternaturally; to produce in, as by inspiration.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that inspirational speakers are often characterized as warm, encouraging and able to connect and engage almost instantly with their audiences. **Inspirational speeches** elicit strong emotional responses from their audiences. Not all inspirational speeches must be geared toward positive or happy messages; many times, these speeches are often used in "rally the troops" situations.

Source: Boundless. "The Inspirational Speech." Boundless Communications Boundless, 17 Mar. 2017.

Retrieved 4 Jun. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/special-occasions-17/speeches-for-special-occasions-86/the-inspirational-speech-333-10659/>



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