

How to Write an AMAZING Speech!

You should **always have your speech written down before speaking at an event** (although you should *never read it word for word*). Writing a speech is a good way to organize your ideas and decide what you want to say. **Researching** an issue is an important part of writing a speech. Go to the library or surf the net to find useful information. Look for **interesting stories and statistics** to give your speech that extra punch. If you are having trouble with researching or writing, ask a teacher, librarian, or parent for help. You can find lots of information about child labor on ICCLE's website. Look on the resources page or in the real-life collection for stories and quotes from actual child laborers. Also, don't be afraid to add *personal* elements to your speech. Share one of your favorite stories about how the issue affected *you* or your club. Personal elements can show that your actions are as powerful as your words.

A good speech is like a good essay – it has **three important sections**:

Introduction:

- In some cases, you will have been introduced before arriving on stage. If you were not, be sure to tell the audience – your name, your age or grade, and your school or organization.
- The introduction is where you have the opportunity to get the audience's attention. A good introduction is like a coming attraction for a great movie: it *briefly outlines the issues and makes people want to find out more*.
- To *get the audience's attention*, use a powerful **quote**, a catchy statistic, or a **moving story**. For example, in a speech about the use of child soldiers in Africa, a quote could be,
"I left Liberia to go fight in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2004 and fought for a full week. I've come and gone a few times to bring more people over. I don't have much to look forward to in my life. If I die over there, then, I guess, that will just be the end of my life." – 15-year-old child soldier in Côte d'Ivoire¹
- Follow your quote or story with an unforgettable **statistic**. For example, with the above quote, you could add, As of 2004, there were an estimated 100,000 child soldiers in Africa.² (Quotes and statistics should be written on note-cards beforehand.)
- Your introduction should be short, so follow the story, quote, and/or statistic with a *brief discussion of why/how you became interested in your issue* and then get into the body of your speech.

Body:

- Most of your research should be in the body of your speech. Continuing our movie analogy, this is **the plot** of the movie itself. Here should be all of your ideas about your issues. Here is also where the speech can get dull, so try to

¹ Human Rights Watch. "Recruitment of Ex-Child Soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire." 2005. Available from <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/03/30/cotedi10402.htm>; Internet accessed March 2006

² Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. "Questions and Answers." Available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/questions-and-answers>; Internet accessed March 2006

keep it interesting with statistics and real-life stories. For example, for a child soldier speech, you could talk about what a child soldier is, which conflicts in Africa involve child soldiers, how it affects children's lives, and maybe give a brief story of a child soldier.

- If you or your club have been working on the issue, **talk about your successes**. Just because your issues are serious, doesn't mean your speech must be doom and gloom. Let your speech show your *hope* for the future. Talk about the advancements that other organizations and governments have made. Emphasize the role of *the individual* in changing the world – remember, speeches should make the audience *want* to do something. For child soldiering, you could mention the new international treaties against child soldiers or a fundraiser your club ran to help rescued soldiers.

Conclusion:

- End by *challenging the audience to get involved* in your issue. Give them some easy options (sign a petition or write a letter) and some harder ones (donate money or time).
- *State the rewards* of getting involved. How have *you* benefited? Has this enriched *your* life?
- If you can, tell the audience you will be there afterwards to answer questions or network.
- Give *one last powerful message to inspire and motivate*. It can be another quote or a strong sentence. For example,
"I would like you to give a message. Please do your best to tell the world what is happening to us, the children, so that other children don't have to pass through this violence." – 15-year-old Ugandan abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army
-or-
Together we *must* raise local, national, and international awareness of the continued use of child soldiers, for in protecting the safety of us, the children, we protect the future of our world.
- Finish with a quick and sincere "Thank you for your time"

TIPS:

- Don't write words that you wouldn't use or have difficulty saying. Your writing doesn't need to be overly formal – just sincere and heart-felt. **Write like you speak** and you'll be fine. Just watch for grammatical errors!
- Don't be afraid to *show your personality* in your speech. The speech doesn't need to be 100% percent serious. If you have *a funny story* from your club that you think is appropriate, add it. As long as you don't start a comedy routine on stage, a little humor or light-heartedness is fine.
- Familiarize yourself with the statistics you are using. If you really can't remember a statistic well or it disrupts the flow of your speech, don't use it.

- Remember: ENTHUSIASM, ENTHUSIASM, ENTHUSIASM – public speaking can be fun and rewarding if you really practice and talk from the heart!