

**A POCKET
GUIDE TO
PUBLIC
SPEAKING
4TH EDITION**

Chapter 16

Using Language

Style and Rhetorical Devices



- Style
 - ▶ Specific word choices in a speech
- Rhetorical devices
 - ▶ Techniques of language
 - ▶ Used by speakers to express ideas

Prepare Your Speeches for the Ear

- Strive for simplicity.
 - ▶ Use simpler terms and fewer words.
 - ▶ Translate jargon into simple language.
- Making frequent use of repetition
 - ▶ Adds emphasis to important ideas;
 - ▶ Imbues language with rhythm and drama.

Prepare Your Speeches for the Ear (cont.)

- Use personal pronouns.
 - ▶ Draws listeners into the message
 - ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ I
 - ▶ We
 - ▶ You

Choose Concrete Words and Vivid Imagery

- Use concrete language.
 - ▶ Specific, tangible, and definite words
 - ▶ Abstract language is nonspecific.
- Offer vivid imagery.
 - ▶ Brings the senses into play
 - ▶ Try modifying nouns with descriptive adjectives.

Choose Concrete Words and Vivid Imagery (cont.)

- Use figures of speech.
 - ▶ Simile
 - ▶ Comparison using *like* or *as*
 - ▶ Metaphor
 - ▶ Describes one thing as being another

Choose Concrete Words and Vivid Imagery (cont.)

- ▶ Analogy

- ▶ Extended metaphor or simile
- ▶ Compares the unfamiliar with the familiar
- ▶ Helps explain key ideas or processes
- ▶ Avoid faulty analogies (misleading/inaccurate comparisons).

Choose Words that Build Credibility

- Use words appropriately.
 - ▶ Match formality to the occasion
 - ▶ Code-switching
 - ▶ Sensitive use of dialect
 - ▶ Creates image of friendliness, nostalgia, honesty
 - ▶ Must ensure your meaning is clear

Choose Words that Build Credibility (cont.)

- Use words accurately.
 - ▶ Misuse causes audiences to lose confidence.
 - ▶ Beware malapropisms.
 - ▶ Words/phrases used inadvertently and incorrectly
 - ▶ Used in place of similar-sounding words/phrases

Choose Words that Build Credibility (cont.)

- Use the active voice.
 - ▶ Makes your statements clear and assertive
 - ▶ Active verb
 - ▶ Subject performs the action
 - ▶ Passive verb
 - ▶ Subject is acted upon

Choose Words that Build Credibility (cont.)

- Use culturally sensitive and gender-neutral language.
 - ▶ Language should respect audience members'
 - ▶ Cultural beliefs;
 - ▶ Norms;
 - ▶ Traditions.

Choose Words that Build Credibility (cont.)

- ▶ Eliminate language that reflects
 - ▶ Unfounded assumptions;
 - ▶ Negative descriptions;
 - ▶ Stereotypes.
- ▶ Explain terms foreign to some listeners.
 - ▶ Especially colloquial expressions and idioms

Choose Words that Build Credibility (cont.)

- ▶ Use gender-neutral language whenever possible.
 - ▶ Avoid third-person masculine pronouns.
 - ▶ *His, he*
 - ▶ Use inclusive pronouns instead.
 - ▶ *His or her, we, our, your*

Choose Words That Create a Lasting Impression

- Use repetition to create rhythm.
 - ▶ Implants important ideas in listeners' heads
 - ▶ Works well with appropriate voice inflections
 - ▶ Use anaphora and epiphora.

Choose Words That Create a Lasting Impression (cont.)

- ▶ Anaphora

- ▶ Repeating words/phrases at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences

- ▶ Epiphora

- ▶ Repeating words or phrases at the end of successive statements

Choose Words That Create a Lasting Impression (cont.)

- Use alliteration for a poetic quality.
 - ▶ Repeating sounds in neighboring words/syllables
 - ▶ Lends a poetic, musical rhythm

Choose Words That Create a Lasting Impression (cont.)

- Experiment with parallelism.
 - ▶ Arranging words in a similar form
 - ▶ Can help emphasize important ideas
 - ▶ Can be simple (simply numbering points)
 - ▶ Creates a steady, building rhythm
 - ▶ Triads (three parallel elements) are popular.