The Basics

An impromptu speech is a 3-5 minute speech about a quotation or cartoon that follows a very brief period of preparation, three minutes. You will be expected to deliver a well-organized, clear speech with that proves a thesis related to the topic in question.

The Introduction

The components of the introduction are

* an attention getting introduction (one of the techniques we have previously discussed)
* an statement of the importance of the topic
* a restatement of the direct quote or summary of the cartoon, followed by a restatement of what you intend to discuss
* a preview of your main points.

The introduction should never be longer than one minute.

The Body of the Speech

The speech will have two or three main body points that support your thesis. You want to chose appropriate examples from a wide variety of subject areas, rather than focus on one narrow area. Each example should help prove your thesis, how the quotation is either true or not.

You can choose from a wide variety of areas, including history, literature, movies, sports, current events, science, personal experience and more. The only real requirements are that the points help develop your thesis and that you cover at least two wide areas. No speeches with two main points about movies or books, for example!

If you use a personal example, it should always come last.

You should have an effective transition before each of your main points, and use physical movement across the front of the class to demonstrate changing points.

The Conclusion

The conclusion should be, in many ways, the mirror of the introduction. You want the speech to appear to have bookends in the introduction and conclusion. For that reason, the conclusion should have a review of main points, a restatement of the thesis, and a return to the attention getter in the introduction.

The conclusion should never be longer than 30 seconds.

Sample Speech Outline

“Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.”—Oscar Wilde

Introduction

**Attention Getter:** Jeanette Rankin, voting against World War II

**Importance:** In world where people are all too willing to conform to those around them, there is no more important idea than that of Oscar Wilde.

**Restatement/Thesis:** When he wrote, “Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong,” he was expressing a profound, yet simple idea, that we should follow our own consciences rather than go along with the crowd.

**Preview:** In order to understand this idea, I will present three examples: first, the courage of Martin Luther King during the Civil Rights Movement; next, the non-conformity of Atticus in To Kill a Mockingbird; and finally, the danger of conforming to one’s peers in high school.

Body of the Speech

**Point 1: Martin Luther King**

1 minute discussing the way that Martin Luther King challenged the social orthodoxy of his times, and did what he believed.

**Point 2: Atticus in To Kill a Mockingbird**

1 minute discussing the way that Atticus Finch demonstrated the courage of his own convictions when confronted by an angry mob and a town that did not believe he should defend Tom Robinson.

**Point 3: High School Conformity**

1 minute discussing the ways that conformity makes the high school experience less valuable, and/or leads people to do the wrong things.

Conclusion

In the past few minutes, we’ve looked at the idea of being one’s self through the examples set by Martin Luther King, Atticus Finch and our own experiences (**Review of points)**. We’ve seen that Oscar Wilde was right to question the idea of conforming one’s opinion to the herd (**Restatement of thesis**) and the danger of not thinking for one’s self. Ultimately, Jeanette Rankin, though incredibly unpopular for her decision made the right one(**Return to attention getter)** by deciding to follow her own moral compass rather than be cowed by society.