

ORATORY, BEST QUOTES ON

Words that come from the heart enter the heart.

—The Sages

If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect.

--Benjamin Franklin

Think as a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.

--William Butler Yeats

Your purpose is to make your audience see what you saw, hear what you heard, feel what you felt. Relevant detail, couched in concrete, colorful language, is the best way to recreate the incident as it happened and to picture it for the audience.

—Dale Carnegie

But I don't practice to make perfect, and I don't memorize. If I did either, I'd sound like a robot, or worse, like a person trying very hard to say things in an exact, specific, and entirely unnatural style, which people can spot a mile away. My intent is simply to know my material so well that I'm very comfortable with it. Confidence, not perfection, is the goal.

--Scott Berkun

A speech that is read is like a dried flower; the substance indeed, is there, but the color is faded and the perfume is gone.

--Paul Lorain

Be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed the deeper they burn.

--Robert Southey

Commencement speeches were invented largely in the belief that outgoing college students should never be released into the world until they have been properly sedated.

—Garry Trudeau

A good speech, like a woman's skirt, should be long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest.

--Winston S. Churchill

The more you say, the less people remember. The fewer the words, the greater the profit.

--Fénelon

Once you get people laughing, they're listening and you can tell them almost anything.

--Herbert Gardner

I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

--Voltaire

Oratory is the power of beating down your adversary's arguments, and putting better in their place.

--Samuel Johnson

All the great speakers were bad speakers at first.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Speech is a mirror of the soul: as a man speaks, so is he.

--Publilius Syrus

If you haven't struck oil in your first three minutes, *stop boring!*

--George Jessel

The finest eloquence is that which gets things done.

--David Lloyd George

No one cares to speak to an unwilling listener. An arrow never lodges in a stone: often it recoils upon the sender of it.

—St. Jerome

There is only one rule for being a good talker—learn how to listen.

--Christopher Morley

All epoch-making revolutionary events have been produced not by the written but by the spoken word.

--Adolf Hitler

The object of oratory is not truth but persuasion.

--Thomas Babington
Macaulay

Every man, who can speak at all, can speak elegantly and correctly if he pleases, by attending to the best authors and orators; and, indeed, I would advise those who do not speak elegantly, not to speak at all; for I am sure they will get more by their silence than by their speech.

--Lord Chesterfield

He can compress the most words into the smallest ideas of any man I ever met.

--Abraham Lincoln

Men of few words are the best men.

--Shakespeare

The flowering moments of the mind drop half their petals in our speech.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

Rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men.

--Plato

An orator is a man who says what he thinks and feels what he says.

--William Jennings Bryan

Men of action intervene only when the orators have finished.

--Emile Gaboriau

Speech is the Mother, not the handmaid, of Thought.

--Karl Kraus

There is no true orator who is not a hero.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Far more effective (than books) is the spoken word. There is something in the voice, the countenance, the bearing, and the gesture of the speaker, that concur in fixing an impression upon the mind, deeper than can even vigorous writings.

--Pliny the Younger

Speech is the image of life.

--Democritus

A man's character is revealed by his speech.

--Menander

Here comes the orator! With his flood of words, and his drop of reason.

--Benjamin Franklin

Be skillful in speech, that you may be strong;...it is the strength—of...the tongue, and words are braver than all fighting...a wise man is a school for the magnates, and those who are aware of his knowledge do not attack him.

--*The Teaching for Merikare*

Speech finely framed delighteth the ears.

--*The Apocrypha*

Fear of serious injury cannot alone justify suppression of free speech and assembly. Men feared witches and burned women. It is the function of speech to free men from the bondage of irrational fears.

--Louis Dembitz Brandeis

Speech is civilization itself. The word, even the most contradictory word, preserves contact—it is silence which isolates.

--Thomas Mann

Speech is the image of actions.

--Solon

Oratory is the power to talk people out of their sober and natural opinions.

--Chatfield

Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it.

--Samuel Johnson

It is a tiresome way of speaking, when you should dispatch the business, to beat about the bush.

--Plautus

A soft answer turneth away wrath.

--Proverbs

Man does not live by words alone, despite the fact that sometimes he has to eat them.

--Adlai Stevenson

A popular speaker is one who knows all the advantages of stopping sooner than his audience expects him to.

--O. A. Battista

Nothing helps you to make an impromptu speech a big success like coming fully prepared for it.

--O. A. Battista

A good speaker is one who gets more applause when he is finished than when he is introduced.

--O. A. Battista

Applause at the beginning of a speech is a manifestation of faith.
If it comes in the middle of the speech it's sign of hope.
If it comes at the end it's always charity.

--E. C. McKenzie

Most politicians have four speeches: what they have written down, what they actually say, what they wish they had said, and what they are quoted as saying the next day.

--E. C. McKenzie

Oratory is the greatest art known to man and embraces a number of great arts.

--Mary Perry King

If all my talents and powers were to be taken from me by some inscrutable Providence, and I had my choice of keeping but one, I would unhesitatingly ask to be allowed to keep the Power of Speaking, for through it, I would quickly recover all the rest.

--Daniel Webster

Speech is the index of the mind.

--Seneca

Eloquence of mere words has no power in this generation....Get up and say something that is something, or excuse yourself on the grounds that you have laryngitis, lumbago or lockjaw. Anything is better than to stand up and make others suffer.

--Joseph Parker

Let any man speak long enough; he will get believers.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

Some speakers drive home facts; others drive home their audiences.

--Ray D. Everson

Boring speakers accomplish one thing, at least. They set us straight on some people we once thought were bright.

--M. Dale Baughman

A good speech is like an insect. It has a head, a body, and a stinging end.

--Hanor A. Webb

Public speaking is a performing art. The painter exhibits his painting, the sculptor his piece of sculpture, the architect his completed building, but the public speaker must present himself as exhibit A. He is both the creator and what is created.

--Virgil L. Baker

All public speaking of merit is characterized by nervousness.

--Cicero

Always start your speech with a statement deliberately planned to seize the listener gently by his ears.

--M. Dale Baughman

When words are scarce they are seldom spent in vain.

--William Shakespeare

Words once spoken can never be recalled.

--Wentworth Dillon

Oratory: the art of making deep voices from the chest sound like important messages from the brain.

--H. I. Phillips

Speech is a faculty given to man to conceal his thoughts.

--Talleyrand

A man's character is revealed by his speech.

--Greek Proverb

A speech is a solemn responsibility. The man who makes a bad thirty minute speech to two hundred people wastes only a half hour of his own time. But he wastes one hundred hours of the audience's time—more than four days—which should be a hanging offense.

--Jenkin Lloyd Jones

Of course, sometimes it is not possible to prepare an address fully, but it is much better to do so even if you intend to speak extemporaneously.

--Robert A. Taft

If wise men try to address the common herd in their own language, instead of using the common tongue, they cannot possibly make themselves understood.

--J. J. Rousseau

Not speech but facts convince.

--Greek Proverb

It is terrible to speak well and be wrong.

--Sophocles

The voice is a second face.

--Gérard Bauër

In Maine we have a saying that there's no point in speaking unless you can improve on silence.

--Edmund Muskie

If the announcer can produce the impression that he is a gentleman, he may pronounce as he pleases.

--George Bernard Shaw

The tones of human voices are mightier than strings or brass to move the soul.

--Friedrich Klopstock

Because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of the wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented acts; and generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped to establish.

--Isocrates

Set your face against cliches, against fad phrases—and vow to express a thought in your own words instead....Don't dress a simple idea in complicated language.

--Edwin Newman

Speak properly, and in as few words as you can, but always plainly; for the end of speech is not ostentation, but to be understood.

--William Penn

Be a craftsman in speech that thou mayest be strong, for the strength of one is the tongue, and speech is mightier than all fighting.

--*Maxims of Ptahhotep*
3400 B.C.

To sway an audience, you must watch them as you speak.

--C. Kent Wright

Always be shorter than anyone dared to hope.

--Lord Reading

Cultivate ease and naturalness. Have all your powers under command. Take possession of yourself, as in this way only can you take possession of your audience. If you are ill at ease, your listeners will be also. Always speak as though there were only one person in the hall whom you had to convince. Plead with him, argue with him, arouse him, touch him, but feel that your audience is one being whose confidence and affection you want to win.

--Charles Reade

If you are speaking, forget everything but the subject. Never mind what others are thinking of you or your delivery. Just forget yourself and go ahead.

--Dale Carnegie

Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening.

--Dorothy Sarnoff

Never let it be said of you, 'I thought he would never finish...'
Get off while you're ahead; always leave them wanting more.

--Dorothy Sarnoff

Speak clearly, if you speak at all;
Carve every word before you let it fall.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

Consult a dictionary for proper meanings and pronunciations. Your audience won't know if you're a bad speller, but they will know if you use or pronounce a word improperly.

--George Plimpton

Do not underestimate the intelligence of an audience and do not talk down to them. The audience may be wiser than you think, and they will resent any idea that you are downgrading them.

--Herbert V. Prochnow

The only way you can bring genuine enthusiasm to a speech is to know your subject thoroughly. No one can enthuse about something of which he is not sure.

--Herbert V. Prochnow

It is impossible to defeat an ignorant man in argument.

--William G. McAdoo

Eloquence is the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

In a country and government like ours, eloquence is a powerful instrument, well worthy of the special pursuit of our youth.

--Thomas Jefferson

God, that all-powerful Creator of nature and architect of the world, has impressed man with no character so proper to distinguish him from other animals, as by the faculty of speech.

--Quintilian

My soul, conscious of new strength, came out of bondage, and was reaching through those broken symbols of speech to all knowledge and all faith.

--Helen Keller

I learnt to speak as men learn to skate or to cycle—by doggedly making a fool of myself until I got used to it. Then I practised it in the open air—at the street corner, in the market square, in the park—the best school.

--George Bernard Shaw

There are a few people who make things happen, some others who watch them happen, and the vast majority who don't know that anything has happened. Your place in this categorization is revealed by the things you know, and what you know is revealed by what you say.

--Carl H. Weaver

Not less talk but more—more debate and better debate—that is the manner in which the very principle of revolution is peacefully preserved in our American institutions and the spirit of evolution is made the deepest law of our land.

--T. V. Smith

That words reveal personalities is not accidental. Language serves the purpose of giving public form to otherwise private thoughts. Words, in short, get people out into the open. They may think they are talking about something quite other than themselves—about a stranger who cuts across their lawn; or about an editorial in the morning paper; or about an educational experiment, a minister's sermon, a housing project, a strike, a radio program. But it is *they* who are doing the talking, who choose the words and the tone of voice, and who, *with* those words and that tone of voice, recite their own philosophy, their own attitude toward human beings and human arrangements.

--Bonaro W. Overstreet

Some degree of nervous tension one must expect before an important speech. At least before certain speeches, especially in a debate or symposium, one shivers on the brink of speech as before diving into cold water. But once in, the speech, like the water, is bracing.

--Norman Thomas

Worms are the words but joy's the voice.

--E. E. Cummings

A fool may talk but a wise man speaks.

--Ben Johnson

A talk should be as personal and familiar as a conversation between two friends riding along in a buckboard.

--Abraham Lincoln

Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely.

--Thomas Babington
Macaulay

Effective speaking is a prerequisite to effective leadership.

--M. Dale Baughman

Look wise, say nothing, and grunt: speech was given to conceal thought.

--W. Osler

Actions speak louder than words—but not so often.

--*Farmer's Almanac*

Talk is the principal product of the world. It is divided into plain, loud, big, back, double, idle, and just. It is said in every language known to man, and of course, to woman. It comes out of loudspeakers, professional speakers, after-dinner speakers and plain windbags. It is a means of communication, expression, exaggeration, and prevarication.

--Dexter Williams

Giving a speech with a manuscript is like making love to a girl through a picket fence; everything that's said can be heard, but there isn't likely to be much contact.

--M. Dale Baughman

Enthusiasm is the most convincing orator; it is like the infallible law of nature. The simplest man, fired with enthusiasm, is more persuasive than the most eloquent man without it.

—La Rochefoucauld

Effective leadership means effective speaking. Men, like bullets, go furthest when they are smoothest. Tact and leadership demand effective speaking. Leadership is yours—if you speak for it.

--Edmund Mottershead

Notes, like the hammer and saw and axe in a Pullman coach, are emergency tools, only for use in the case of total smash-up.

--Dale Carnegie

Keep skid chains on your tongue. Always say less than you think. Preserve an open mind on all debatable questions. Discuss but don't argue. It is the mark of superior minds to disagree and yet be friendly.

--Willard Givens

The world today needs men who can speak effectively. We have men who can build bridges or skyscrapers, who can build and fly airplanes faster than the speed of sound, who can perfect the processes of atomic fission, but we are in short supply of men who can make effective speeches, and sway men's minds.

--C. W. Scott

Probably no scourge since the 'Black Plague' has inflicted such suffering upon mankind as speeches of introduction.

--Walter A. Steigleman

Applause is the only appreciated interruption.

--A. Glasgow

It is a paradox that every dictator has climbed to power on the ladder of free speech. Immediately on attaining power each dictator has suppressed all free speech except his own.

--Herbert Hoover

To say nothing, especially when speaking, is half the art of diplomacy.

--Will and Ariel Durant

Think twice before saying nothing.

--Laurence J. Peter

Applause is the spur of noble minds, the end and aim of weak ones.

--Charles Caleb Colton

Humor is richly rewarding to the person who employs it. It has some value in gaining and holding attention. But it has no persuasive value at all.

--J. K. Galbraith

Let us have a reason for beginning, and let our end be within due limits. For a speech that is wearisome only stirs up anger.

--Saint Ambrose

The first principle of a free society is an untrammled flow of words in an open forum.

--Adlai E. Stevenson

Never argue; repeat your assertion.

--Robert Owen

In perfect eloquence, the hearer would lose the sense of dualism, of hearing from another; would cease to distinguish between the orator and himself.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

There has never been a poet or orator who thought another better than himself.

--Cicero

All pleasantries should be short; and it might even be as well were the serious short also.

--Voltaire

Men are born with two eyes, but with one tongue, in order that they should see twice as much as they say.

--Charles Caleb Colton

The ability to charm, to amuse, to inform a crowd of ten thousand...with voice and gesture does not necessarily carry with it the ability to think sensibly.

--Laurence Peter

Every ass loves to hear himself bray.

--Thomas Fuller

The eloquent man is he who is no beautiful speaker, but who is inwardly and desperately drunk with a certain belief.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Eloquence lies as much in the tone of the voice, in the eyes, and in the speaker's manner, as in his choice of words.

--La Rochefoucauld

Continuous eloquence wearies.

--Pascal

A thing said walks in immortality
if it has been said well.

--Pindar

Loquacity storms the ear, but modesty takes the heart.

--Thomas Fuller

Most people have ears, but few have judgment; tickle those ears, and, depend upon it, you will catch their judgments, such as they are.

--Lord Chesterfield

He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been greater than the power of sense.

--Joseph Conrad

Would you persuade, speak of interest, not of reason.

--Benjamin Franklin

Soft words are hard arguments.

--Thomas Fuller

When you've got a thing to say,
Say it! Don't take half a day.
When your tale's got little in it,
Crowd the whole thing in a minute!

--Joel Chandler Harris

Elocution is nothing but the correctness and splendor of well-chosen words set in impressive but short sentences, which enhance verse in the same way as precious stones beautifully engraved set off the fingers of some nobleman.

--Pierre de Ronsard

If we make ourselves understood, we are speaking correctly.

--Moliere

It is easier to talk than to hold one's tongue.

--Greek Proverb

To speak without thinking is to shoot without first taking aim.

--Spanish Proverb

With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions.

--Abraham Lincoln

One should respect public opinion in so far as is necessary to avoid starvation and to keep out of prison, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny.

--Bertrand Russell

Great orators who are not also great writers become very indistinct shadows to the generations following them. The spell vanishes with the voice.

--Thomas Bailey Aldrich

An orator can hardly get beyond commonplaces: if he does, he gets beyond his hearers.

--William Hazlitt

All that is necessary to raise imbecility into what the mob regards as profundity is to lift it off the floor and put it on a platform.

--George Jean Nathan

In oratory the greatest art is to hide art.

--Jonathan Swift

He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good.

--Confucius

The aim of forensic oratory is to teach, to delight, to move.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

No freedom is so outrageously and so often abused as the freedom of speech.

--Unknown

To be a good speaker in public, you must be a good thinker in private.

--Scott Berkun

Know the likely counterarguments from an intelligent, expert audience. If you do not know the intelligent counterarguments to each of your points, your points cannot be good.

--Scott Berkun

If some disaster happens, something explodes or I trip and fall, I'll have more attention from the audience than I probably had 30 seconds before. And if I don't care that much about my disaster, I can use the attention I've earned and do something good with it - whatever I say next, they are sure to remember.

--Scott Berkun

You can rip off any of the following titles and be well on your way to a stronger presentation:

The top five problems you have with _____ and how to solve them.

Why _____ sucks and what we can do about it.

Mistakes I made in _____ and what I learned.

The most frequently asked questions and brilliant answers about _____.

The truth about _____ and how it can help you.

Smart shortcuts and clever tricks only experts know about _____.

The five reasons you win by giving me _____.

Why _____ will change your life forever, for free, right now.

--Scott Berkun

Mark Twain, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Roosevelt all used a short outline of five or six points—often with just a few words per point—to help them recall their hour-long speeches while giving them.

--Scott Berkun

When the entire audience goes silent. All the conversations and rustlings stop, and everyone, at about the same time, falls into quiet anticipation for what is about to happen. This is called the hush over the crowd, but really it's the moment when the crowd itself first forms. The 200 unique people with different thoughts and ideas now become one single entity, joining together for the first time to give their unified attention to the front of the room.

And the strange part is that the audience gives control over to the unknown. They have not seen the movie before. They haven't heard the lecture or seen the play. It's an act of respect and an act of hope - and it's amazing.

--Scott Berkun

You do not have to be perfect, but you do need to play the part. In other words, be bigger than you are.

Speak louder, take stronger positions, and behave more aggressively than you would in an ordinary conversation. These are the rules of performing.

--Scott Berkun

Most people say ‘umm’ and ‘uhh’ when they speak. These are called filler sounds. We make them mostly to hold our place in conversation. You’re letting the people you’re talking to know you are not done speaking. When presenting, this isn’t necessary since you’re the only one with the microphone.

--Scott Berkun

Listen to stand-up comedians: about 20–30% of their time on the microphone is spent in silence, often just to let the audience laugh and enjoy the last thing said, or to provide a pacing break to set up the next thing they want to say. Silence provides time for consolidation and thought. Their timings requires the skill of an actor. They are useful after rhetorical questions, or when a problem has been posed.

--Scott Berkun

Surely human affairs would be far happier if the power in men to be silent were the same as that to speak. But experience more than sufficiently teaches that men govern nothing with more difficulty than their tongues.

--Benedict Spinoza

Fine words butter no parsnips.

--Sir Walter Scott

What if one does say the same things,—of course in a little different form each time, —over and over? If he has anything to say worth saying, that is just what he ought to do.

--Oliver Wendell
Holmes, Sr.

Write with the learned, pronounce with the vulgar.

--Benjamin Franklin

Discretion of speech is more than eloquence.

--Francis Bacon

I love a natural, simple and unaffected speech, written as it is spoken and such upon the paper as it is in the mouth, a pithy, sinewy, full, strong, compendious and material speech.

--Montaigne

Language most sheds a man: Speak, that I may see thee.

--Ben Jonson

The greatest things gain by being expressed simply; they are spoiled by emphasis. But one must say trifling things nobly, because they are supported solely by expression, tone and manner.

--La Bruyere

Don't quote Latin; say what you have to say, and then sit down.

--Duke of Wellington

Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.

--*Constitution of the
United States*

He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley

The music that can deepest reach,
And cure all ill, is cordial speech.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Bright vocabularies are transient as rainbows.
Speech requires blood and air to make it.
Before the word comes off the end of the tongue,
While the diaphragms of flesh negotiate the word,
In the moment of doom when the word forms,
It is born alive, registering an imprint—
Afterward it is a mummy, a dry fact, done and gone.
The warning holds yet: Speak now or forever hold your peace.
Ecce Homo had meanings: Behold the man! Look at Him!
Dying he lives and speaks!

--Carl Sandburg

A man of words and not of deeds
Is like a garden full of weeds.

--Percy B. Green

Don't appear so scholarly, pray. Humanize your talk, and speak to be understood. Do you think a Greek name gives more weight to your reasons?

--Molière

A man is hid under his tongue.

--Eli Ibn-Abi-Talib

A fool uttereth all his mind.

--*Proverbs* 29.11

A dog is not considered good because of his barking, and a man is not considered clever because of his ability to talk.

--Chuang Tzu

One never repents of having spoken too little, but often of having spoken too much.

--Philippe de Commynes

Let thy speech be better than silence, or be silent.

--Dionysius the Elder

First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak.

--Epictetus

There is always time to add a word, never to withdraw one.

--Baltasar Gracian

Nobody talks much that doesn't say unwise things—things he did not mean to say; as no person plays much without striking a false note sometimes.

--Oliver Wendell
Holmes, Sr.

The tongue is more to be feared than the sword.

--Japanese Proverb

We oftener say things because we can say them well, than because they are sound and reasonable.

--Walter Savage Landor

The unluckiest insolvent in the world is the man whose expenditure of speech is too great for his income of ideas.

--Christopher Morley

It is less dishonour to hear imperfectly than to speak imperfectly. The ears are excused; the understanding is not.

--Ben Jonson

There are some who speak well and write badly. For the place and the audience warm them, and draw from their minds more than they think of without that warmth.

—Blaise Pascal

Every man should study conciseness in speaking; it is a sign of ignorance not to know that long speeches, though they may please the speaker, are the torture of the hearer.

—Owen Feltham

There is no power like that of true oratory. Caesar controlled men by exciting their fears; Cicero, by captivating their affections and swaying their passions. The influence of the one perished with its author; that of the other continues to this day.

--Henry Clay

An orator or author is never successful till he has learned to make his words smaller than his ideas.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Freedom rings where opinions clash.

--Adlai E. Stevenson

True eloquence does not consist in speech. Words and phrases may be marshaled in every way, but they cannot compass it. It must consist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion. It comes, if at all, like the outbreaking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original native force.

--Daniel Webster

True eloquence consists in saying all that is proper, and nothing more.

--François de

La Rochefoucauld

It is of eloquence as of a flame; it requires matter to feed it, and motion to excite it; and it brightens as it burns.

—Tacitus

Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she had laid an asteroid.

--Mark Twain

Discretion in speech is more than eloquence.

--Francis Bacon

If you want to be an orator, first get your great cause.

--Wendell Phillips

Examine what is said, not him who speaks.

--Arabian Proverb

Never be so brief as to become obscure.

--Tryon Edwards

Brevity is the best recommendation of speech, whether in a senator or an orator.

--Cicero

Brevity is a great charm of eloquence.

--Cicero

There's a great power in words, if you don't hitch too many of them together.

--Josh Billings

Words spoken without meaning have no tentacles. They float endlessly, bouncing here and there, restless pieces of the spirit; sent out without any mission or specific destination, landing nowhere and serving no purpose, except to diminish the spirit of the speaker.

--J. C. Bell

The best way to compel weak-minded people to adopt our opinion is to terrify them from all others, by magnifying their danger.

--Cardinal de Retz

Oratory is just like prostitution; you must have little tricks. One of my favorite tricks is to start a sentence and leave it unfinished. Everyone racks his brains and wonders what I was going to say.

--Vittorio Emanuele
Orlando

He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been greater than the power of sense.

--Joseph Conrad

Through an emotional speech, a charismatic leader is able to ‘infect’ followers, to stir them to action. It is the charismatic speaker’s skill in emotional expressivity that people most often associate with charisma....Sensitivity to nonverbal and emotional messages is a second critical component of charisma.

--Ronald E. Riggio

To acquire immunity to eloquence is of the utmost importance to the citizens of a democracy.

--Bertrand Russell

Only constant repetition will finally succeed in imprinting an idea on the memory of the crowd.

--Adolf Hitler

Eloquent speakers are inclined to ambition; for eloquence seemeth wisdom, both to themselves and others.

--Thomas Hobbes

The most important things must be said simply, for they are spoiled by bombast; whereas trivial things must be described grandly, for they are supported only by aptness of expression, tone and manner.

--Jean de La Bruyère

Condense some daily experience into a glowing symbol, and an audience is electrified.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

The most fundamental requirement in constructing a persuasive message is to select arguments that are consistent with the beliefs and values of the audience.

--Ruth Anne Clark

Sound style is part of the reason that so many great comics were stars in radio. Had they been born with nondescript voices, they wouldn’t have made it. You can spot the sound of Groucho, Benny, Burns, Hope from the first word, the way your eye can spot a Picasso across the street in a window, or the way a musician can tell from a recording in another room whether it’s Rubinstein or Horowitz at the piano.

--Dick Cavett

A sword kills one,
but a tongue kills thousands.

--Finnish Proverb

There is no index of character so sure as the voice.

--Benjamin Disraeli

I do not like explanatory speeches. Young people pay little attention to them and rarely remember them. Give them facts. I cannot say often enough, that we allow too great power to words. With our babbling education we only make babblers.

--Jean Jacques Rousseau

One of the most important ingredients in a recipe for speechmaking is plenty of shortening.

--Croft M. Pentz

Speech is power; speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

The mind is a wonderful thing. It starts working the minute you're born and never stops until you get up to speak in public.

--Roscoe Drummond

Ridicule is man's most potent weapon.

--Saul Alinsky

Rhetoric without logic is like a tree with leaves, blossoms but no root; yet more are taken with rhetoric than logic, because they are caught with fine expressions when they understand not reason.

--John Selden

Like stones, words are laborious and unforgiving, and the fitting of them together, like the fitting of stones, demands great patience and strength of purpose and particular skill.

--Edmund Morrison

It's as interesting and as difficult to say a thing well as to paint it. There is the art of lines and colours, but the art of words exists too, and will never be less important.

--Vincent van Gogh

Style is a simple way of saying complicated things.

--Jean Cocteau

Winston (Churchill) has devoted the best years of his life to preparing his impromptu speeches.

--F. E. Smith

Oratory: the art of making deep noises from the chest sound like important messages from the brain.

--H. I. Phillips

If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile-driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time—a tremendous whack!

--Winston Churchill

Nothing is so unbelievable that oratory cannot make it acceptable.

--Cicero

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.

--Hubert Humphrey

Too much talk will include errors.

--Burmese Proverb

10 persons who speak make more noise than 10,000 who are silent.

--Napoleon Bonaparte

Whene'er you lecture, be concise; the soul
Takes in short maxims, and retains them whole;
But pour in water when the vessel's filled,
It simply dribbles over and is spilled.

--Horace

Grasp the subject, the words will follow.

—Cato the Elder

Public speaking is an audience participation event; if it weren't, it would be private speaking.

--Unknown

Great public speakers listen to the audience with their eyes.

--Unknown

That which we are capable of feeling, we are capable of saying.

--Miguel de Cervantes

A soft tongue may strike hard.

--Benjamin Franklin

Could discourses teach the world, The Sermon on the Mount would have been realized long ago.

--Georges Clemenceau

True eloquence does not consist in speech. Words and phrases may be marshalled in every way, but they cannot compass it. It must consist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion.

--Daniel Webster

Always be shorter than anybody dared hope.

--Lord Reading

It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.

--Mark Twain

Be sincere; be brief; be seated.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

When I die I hope it is during a lecture. The transition from life to death will be so slight it will hardly be perceptible.

--Unknown

If one cannot state a matter clearly enough so that even an intelligent twelve-year-old can understand it, one should remain within the cloistered walls of the university and laboratory until one has a better grasp of one's subject.

--Margaret Mead

Some experience of popular lecturing had convinced me that the necessity of making things plain to uninstructed people was one of the very best means of clearing up the obscure corners in one's own mind.

--T. H. Huxley

Is sloppiness in speech caused by ignorance or apathy? I don't know and I don't care.

--William Safire

Words are like golf strokes: the fewer you use, the higher they score.

--Greg Henry Quinn

People think that I can teach them style. What stuff it all is! Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style.

--G. W. E. Russell

It is not so much the content of what one says as the way in which one says it. However important the thing you say, what's the good of it if not heard or, being heard, not felt?

--Sylvia Ashton-Warner

Speech is human nature itself, with none of the artificiality of written language.

--Alfred North Whitehead

We speak little if not egged on by vanity.

--François de
La Rochefoucauld

The true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them.

--Oliver Goldsmith

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it.

--Robert Frost

The bond of human society is reason and speech.

--Cicero

Don't talk to me of your Archimedes' lever....Give me the right word and the right accent and I will move the world.

--Joseph Conrad

Speak less...No one ever put their foot in their mouth when they were not speaking. Worse, if you are speaking, you can't be listening, and we always learn much more from listening.

--Mark H. McCormack

The prime purpose of eloquence is to keep other people from speaking.

--Louis Vermeil

It is ten times harder to command the ear than to catch the eye.

--Duncan Maxwell
Anderson

Remember, every time you open your mouth to talk, your mind walks out and parades up and down the words.

--Edwin H. Stuart

Ask any successful executive and he or she will tell you there is no such thing as an unimportant speech.

—*The Speechwriter
Newsletter*

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt.

--Abraham Lincoln

The tongue is but three inches long, yet it can kill a man six feet high.

--Japanese Saying

Oratory is the art of making a loud noise sound like a deep thought.

--Bennett Cerf

Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.

—Groucho Marx

No speech can be entirely bad if it is short enough.

—Irvin S. Cobb

Speech is conveniently located midway between thought and action, where it often substitutes for both.

--John Andrew Holmes

Speeches are like steer horns—a point here, a point there and a lot of bull in between.

--*Liberty*

A speech is like a love affair. Any fool can start it, but to end it requires considerable skill.

--Lord Samuel Mancroft

Nothing is more despicable than a professional talker who uses his words as a quack uses his remedies.

--Fénelon

If you can speak what you will never hear, if you can write what you will never read, you have done rare things.

--Henry David Thoreau

Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact.

--George Eliot

When a man gets up to speak, people listen then look. When a woman gets up, people *look*; then, if they like what they see, they listen.

--Pauline Frederick

Somewhere in your presentation, the audience stops thinking of you as a 5-foot, 6-inch woman with freckles on your nose. If people think you are immersed, are serious, have done your homework, then they take you seriously.

--Carla Hills

The more articulate one is, the more dangerous words become.

--May Sarton

If the word *arse* appears in a sentence, even in a sublime sentence, the public will hear only that one word.

--Jules Renard

Things in which mediocrity is insupportable—poetry, music, painting, public speaking.

--La Bruyère

Most people have ears but few have judgment; tickle those ears and, depend upon it, you will catch their judgments, such as they are.

--Lord Chesterfield

Whereas logic is the art of demonstrating truth, eloquence is the gift of winning over people's hearts and minds so that you may inspire them and persuade them in whatever way you choose.

--La Bruyère

Once you get 'em laughing and their mouths open, you can stuff something in.
--Francis Harvey Green

Everyone may speak truly, but to speak logically, prudently, and adequately is a talent few possess.
--Montaigne

What orators lack in depth they make up in length.
--Montesquieu

Lecturer: One with his hand in your pocket, his tongue in your ear, and his faith in your patience.
--Ambrose Bierce

The great questions of the time are not decided by speeches and majority decisions—that was the error of 1848 and 1849—but by blood and iron.
--Otto von Bismarck

Style: A peculiar recasting and heightening, under a certain condition of spiritual excitement, of what a man has to say, in such a manner as to add dignity and distinction to it.
--Matthew Arnold

A man's style is intrinsic and private with him like his voice or his gesture, partly a matter of inheritance, partly of cultivation....More than a pattern of expression, it is the pattern of the soul.
--Maurice Valency

Well-timed silence hath more eloquence than speech.
--Martin Farquhar
Tupper

Better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.
--Mark Twain

Black people need to work on their speaking and writing skills to avoid the pitfalls of exploitation, exclusion, and economic illiteracy. Knowing the language of power and finance is gaining clout, not selling out.
--Gerrard McClendon

Be skilled in speech so that you will succeed.

—Sacred Wisdom of
Ancient Egypt

No word spoken is ever lost. It remains and it vibrates; and it vibrates according to the spirit put into it.

--Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid
Inayat Khan

Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.

--Alexander Pope

To please people is a great step toward persuading them.

--Lord Chesterfield

I see
that everywhere among the race of men
it is the tongue that wins and not the deed.

--Sophocles

By inflexion you can say much more than your words do.

--Malcolm S. Forbes

Well done is better than well said.

--Benjamin Franklin

Words without actions are the assassins of idealism.

--Herbert Hoover

Speech is the mirror of action.

--Solon

It is a thing of no great difficulty to raise objections against another man's oration—
nay, it is very easy; but to produce a better in its place is a work extremely troublesome.

--Plutarch

The longer I live, the more I have come to value the gift of eloquence. Every American youth, if he desires for any purpose to get influence over his countrymen in an honorable way, will seek to become a good public speaker.

--George F. Hoar

The head cannot take in more than the seat can endure.

--Winston S. Churchill

We often say a speaker needs no introduction: what most of them need is a conclusion. In my view, an after dinner speech—and I've experienced 40,000 of them—needs a good beginning, a good ending, and not much space in between.

--Ivor Spencer

Eloquence is the art of saying as little as possible but making it sound as much as possible.

--Evan Esar

Applause at the beginning of a speech shows the audience has faith; in the middle, it shows their hope; and at the end, their charity.

--Unknown

Why shouldn't speech be free: very little of it is worth anything.

--Unknown

Free speech is a wonderful thing: we'd hate to have to pay to hear some public speakers.

—Unknown

Freedom of speech is still guaranteed in Russia. You can say anything you want—at least once.

—Unknown

The Founding Fathers who introduced freedom of speech hadn't the remotest idea of what would be said today.

--Unknown

Freedom not to listen is sometimes even more precious a right than freedom of speech.

--Unknown

The *Constitution* guarantees free speech; it does not guarantee listeners.

--Unknown

The person who uses a lot of big words isn't trying to inform you; he's trying to impress you.

--Olin Miller

Whenever my great command of the sublime threatens to induce solemnity of mind in my audience, I at once introduce a joke.

--Bernard Shaw

A lecturer often makes you feel dumb at one end and numb at the other.

--Evan Esar

The man who can make others laugh obtains more votes for a bill than the man who forces them to think.

--Malcolm de Chazal

The hardest thing about making a speech is knowing what to do with your hands.

--Kin Hubbard

Short speeches are not always the best, but the best speeches are always short.

--Unknown

Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

I was very glad that Mr. Attlee described my speeches in the war as expressing the will not only of Parliament but of the whole nation. Their will was resolute and remorseless and, as it proved, unconquerable. It fell to me to express it, and if I found the right words you must remember that I have always earned my living by my pen and by my tongue. It was a nation and race dwelling all round the globe that had the lion heart. I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar.

--Winston Churchill

The art of reasoning becomes of first importance. In this line antiquity has left us the finest models for imitation; ...I should consider the speeches of Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus, as pre-eminent specimens of logic, taste, and that sententious brevity which, using not a word to spare, leaves not a moment for inattention to the hearer. Amplification is the vice of modern oratory.

--Thomas Jefferson

A member of the Cabinet congratulated Wilson on introducing the vogue of short speeches and asked him about the time it took him to prepare his speeches. He said: 'It depends. If I am to speak ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now.'

--Woodrow Wilson

In my youth, I, too, entertained some illusions; but I soon recovered from them. The great orators who rule the assemblies by the brilliancy of their eloquence are in general men of the most mediocre political talents: they should not be opposed in their own way; for they have always more noisy words at command than you. Their eloquence should be opposed by a serious and logical argument; their strength lies in vagueness; they should be brought back to the reality of facts; practical arguments destroy them. In the council, there were men possessed of much more eloquence than I was: I always defeated them by this simple argument—*two and two make four*.

--Napoleon

However pernicious an opinion may seem, we depend for its correction not on the consciences of judges and juries but on the competition of other ideas.

--Justice Lewis F. Powell

A people's speech is the skin of its culture.

--Max Lerner

Tecumseh's voice resounded over the multitude—now sinking in low and musical whispers, now rising to the highest key, hurling out his words like a succession of thunderbolts.

--Robert Cwiklik

Trees are swayed by winds, men by words.

--Joan Aiken

Words are like spices. Too many is worse than too few.

--Joan Aiken

Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning.

--Maya Angelou

A teacher asked a student to sum up Socrates' life in four lines. Here's what he said:

1. Socrates lived long ago.
2. He was very intelligent.
3. Socrates gave long speeches.
4. His friends poisoned him.

-- Charles Mechem

The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.

--Mark Twain

Persuasion is better than force.

--Aesop

Talk does not cook rice.

-- Chinese Proverb

Public speaking is the art of expressing a two-minute idea with a two-hour vocabulary.

--John Fitzgerald
Kennedy

I love a finished speaker

I really, really do.

I don't mean one who's polished

I just mean one who's through.

--Richard Armour

When I give a lecture, I accept that people look at their watches, but what I do not tolerate is when they look at it and raise it to their ear to find out if it's stopped.

--Marcel Archard

The secret of being a bore is to tell everything.

--Voltaire

The ability to express an idea is well nigh as important as the idea itself.

--Bernard Baruch

Every speaker has a mouth;
An arrangement rather neat. Sometimes it's filled with wisdom. Sometimes it's
filled with feet.

--Robert Orben

Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow.

--Walt Whitman

To get 'em listening, get 'em laughing.

--Allen Klein

A bore is a fellow who opens his mouth and puts his feats in it.

--Henry Ford

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.

--Thomas Jefferson

Before you speak, ask yourself, it is kind, is it necessary, is it true, does it improve
on the silence?

--Sai Baba

It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he was never reasoned into.

--Jonathan Swift

What is uttered is finished and done with.

--Thomas Mann

Propaganda is a soft weapon; hold it in your hands too long, and it will move about
like a snake, and strike the other way.

--Jean Anouilh

Language springs out of the inmost parts of us. No glass renders a man's likeness so
true as his speech.

--Ben Jonson

In America we can say what we think, and even if we can't think, we can say it
anyhow.

--Charles Kettering

Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in a few words.

--Aprocrypha

Against logic there is no armor like ignorance.

--Laurence J. Peter

The man who sees both sides of a question is a man who sees absolutely nothing.

—Oscar Wilde

A quotation in a speech, article or book is like a rifle in the hands of an infantryman. It speaks with authority.

—Brendan Francis

The wisdom of nations lies in their proverbs, which are brief and pithy. Collect and learn them; they are notable measures of directions for human life; you have much in little; they save time in speaking; and upon occasion may be the fullest and safest answers.

—William Penn

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

--Alan Dundes

A 'fireside chat' will not turn out our fires. On the contrary—if a speaker will take the time to prepare, we are prepared to pay in the coin of our attention. That, of course, is contrary to the trend, against the grain. It can come only from people who care enough to compose, who get in the habit of reading rather than listening, of being in communication instead of only in contact.

--William Safire

Even if you do learn to speak correct English, whom are you going to speak it to?

--Clarence Darrow

When dealing with people remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion.

--Dale Carnegie

Don't use a big vocabulary, either general or technical. Sesquipedalianism obfuscates pellucidity. If you get my drift.

--David Viscott

People will accept your ideas much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.

--David H. Comins

A loud voice cannot compete with a clear voice, even if it's a whisper.

--Barry Neil Kaufman

I'm just preparing my impromptu remarks.

--Winston Churchil

Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

--George Carlin

Never argue with a fool; onlookers may not be able to tell the difference.

—Mark Twain

Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.

--Daniel Patrick
Moynihan

I have never developed indigestion from eating my words.

--Winston Churchill

A word to the wise is not sufficient if it doesn't make sense.

--James Thurber

I turn pale at the outset of a speech and quake in every limb and in all my soul.

--Cicero

Everything you want is on the other side of fear.

--Jack Canfield

Most speakers speak ten minutes too long.

--James Humes

He does not live in vain, who employs his wealth, his thought, his speech to advance the good of others.

--Hindu Maxim

Men are apt to mistake the strength of their feeling for the strength of their argument. The heated mind resents the chill touch and relentless scrutiny of logic.

--William E. Gladstone

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

--Albert Einstein

A voice is a human gift; it should be cherished and used, to utter fully human speech as possible. Powerlessness and silence go together.

--Margaret Atwood

A multitude of words is no proof of a prudent mind.

--Thales

It's not enough to speak, but to speak true.

--William Shakespeare

Anybody who thinks talk is cheap should get some legal advice.

--Franklin P. Jones

The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.

--Dale Carnegie

Fanatics are picturesque; mankind would rather see gestures than listen to reasons.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Tact is the knack of making a point without making an enemy.

—Isaac Newton

If the speaker won't boil it down, the audience must sweat it out.

—Raymond Duncan

Applause is the spur of noble minds, the end and aim of weak ones.

—Edmund Burke

Anyone who has an opinion, and voices it, will offend someone.

—Peter Steele

You go for the quality of the performance, not the longevity of it.

—Don King

The cause of my unpopularity was my parrhesia, my fearless speech, my frank speech, my plain speech, my unintimidated speech.

—Socrates

Take the utmost trouble to find the right thing to say, and then say it with the utmost levity.

—George Bernard Shaw

What you keep by you, you may change and mend but words, once spoken, can never be recalled.

—Earl of Roscommon

Eloquence may set fire to reason.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

The mind is no match with the heart in persuasion; constitutionality is no match with compassion.

—Everett Dirksen

Your fear of looking stupid is holding you back!

—Shannon Luxford

People's minds are changed through observation and not through argument.

—Will Rogers

As a people who value the lessons of history, we must realize that our very survival depends primarily on our collective abilities to speak and write clearly and precisely and to be understood as we strive to understand others.

—Bill Honig

God, that all-powerful Creator of nature and architect of the world, has impressed man with no character so proper to distinguish him for other animals, as by the faculty of speech.

—Quintilian

Mend your speech a little, lest it mar your fortune.

—William Shakespeare

The word makes men free. Whoever cannot express himself is a slave. Speaking is an act of freedom; the word is freedom itself.

—Ludwig Feuerbach

To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful.

—Edward R. Murrow

Simplicity is the glory of expression.

—Walt Whitman

Brevi esse laboro, obscurus fio. (When I labor to be brief, I become obscure.)

—Horace

It's no use of talking unless people understand what you say.

—Zora Neale Hurston

As perfume is to the flower, so is kindness to speech.

—Katherine Francke

Where the speech is corrupted, the mind is also.

—Seneca

The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do.

—James 3:5

Without free speech no search for truth is possible... no discovery of truth is useful.

—Charles Bradlaugh

Unless you go out and say what you stand for, other people will do it for you.

—David Ellis

An ounce of emotion is equal to a ton of facts.

—John Junor

The current total of countries in the world with First Amendments is one. You have guaranteed freedom of speech. Other countries don't have that.

—Neil Gaiman

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and have the two as close together as possible.

—George Burns

Arguing with fools puts you in the fool's position. Learn to step over the BS. Not in it.

—Ged Backland

Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man a political being.

—Hannah Arendt

Propaganda is the art of persuading others of what you don't believe yourself.

—Ausonius

Before a man speaks it is always safe to assume that he is a fool. After he speaks, it is seldom necessary to assume it.

—H. L. Mencken

He who establishes his argument by noise and command shows that his reason is weak.

—Michel de Montaigne

With reasonable men, I will reason; with humane men I will plead; but to tyrants I will give no quarter, nor waste arguments where they will certainly be lost.

—William Lloyd Garrison

The oration is to the orator, the acting is to the actor and actress, not to the audience.

—Walt Whitman

I am all for the man who, with an average audience before him, uses all means of persuasion—stories, laughter, tears, and but so much of music as he can discover on the wings of words.

—William Butler Yeats

Never interrupt your opponent when he's destroying himself.

—Paul Begala

Most public speakers talk so badly that a sudden quotation from a poet appears in their babble like a lady in a slum.

—Austin O'Malley

Never argue with someone who has made up their mind to stay ignorant.

—Unknown

It's hard to win an argument with a smart person, but it's damn near impossible to win an argument with a stupid person.

—Bill Murray

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

—Winston Churchill

There are two things that are more difficult than making an after-dinner speech: climbing a wall which is leaning toward you and kissing a girl who is leaning away from you.

—Winston Churchill

Be careful with your words. Once they are said they can only be forgiven, not forgotten.

—Unknown

If thou thinkest twice before thou speakest once, thou wilt speak twice the better for it.

—William Penn

Complexity serves nothing but our ego. Be able to say what you do in a way that people can understand.

—Chris Brogan

It is as easy to recall a stone thrown violently from the hand as a word which has left your tongue.

—Menander

There is a weird power in a spoken word....And a word carries far—very far—deals destruction through time as the bullets go flying through space.

--Joseph Conrad

Words are treated so often as trifles when in reality they can be more devastating than rifles.

--O. A. Battista

Slogans are both exciting and comforting but some of mankind's most terrible misdeeds have been committed under the spell of certain magic words and phrases.

--James Bryant Conant

As pines
keep the shape of the wind
even when the wind has fled and is no longer there,
so words
guard the shape of man
even when man has fled and is no longer there.

--George Seferis

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

--Emily Dickinson

Grammar made me more trouble than any other study. Somehow I never could learn grammar, and it always made me angry when I tried. My parents and teachers told me that I could never write or speak unless I learned grammar, and so I tried and tried, but even now I can hardly tell an adverb from an adjective, and I do not know that I care. When a little boy, I used to think that if I really had anything to tell I could make myself understood; and I think so still. The longer I live the surer I am that the chief trouble of writers and speakers is the lack of interesting thoughts, and not of proper words.

--Clarence Darrow

Words have a magical power. They can bring either the greatest happiness or deepest despair; they can transfer knowledge from teacher to student; words enable the orator to sway his audience and dictate its decision. Words are capable of arousing the strongest emotions and prompting all men's actions.

--Sigmund Freud

Strong and bitter words indicate a weak cause.

—Victor Hugo

I have always said to students that if you really want to know how to speak, Shakespeare, Sir John Gielgud and Frank Sinatra will teach you. Because one used to present the whole arc of a speech and the other presented the whole arc of a song, without any intrusive extreme emphases.

—Judi Dench

In political language, plainness is powerful. 'Of the people, by the people, for the people.' 'Ask not what your country can do for you.' 'I have a dream.' This is especially so for language designed to be heard, like speeches and debate exchanges, rather than read from a page. People absorb and retain information in smaller increments through the ear than through the eye. Thus the classic intonations of every major religion have the simple, repetitive cadence also found in the best political speeches. 'In the beginning.' 'And it was good.' 'Let us pray.'

—James Fallows

...seventh grade level...is generally the level of effective mass communication—newscasts, advertising, speeches.

—James Fallows

...the hair's breadth margin in which female public speakers have to operate. On one side, they'd be too weak and submissive; on the other, too scolding or tedious....popular culture for some reason recognizes a category of 'Texas women' who are allowed to be tough, sassy, and funny...in ways that would seem 'harsh' from other women.

—Deborah Tannen

Thomas Aquinas, who knew more about education and persuasion than almost anybody who ever lived, once said that when you wanted to convert someone to your view, you went over to where he was standing, took him by the hand (figuratively speaking) and guided him. You didn't stand across the room and shout at him; you didn't call him a dummy, you didn't order him to come over to where you were. You started where he was and worked from that position. That was the only way to get him to budge.

—Joe Griffith

MacDonald has the gift of compressing the largest amount of words into the smallest amount of thoughts.

—Sir Winston Churchill

Every educated person ought to know when a thing is proved and when it is not proved, should know how to investigate and analyze the proposition which confronts him, and how to search for solutions, how to talk about it effectively before others, and how to contribute to a discussion on problems of joint interest.

—William Norwood
Brigance

Graduation Speech: I'd like to thank the internet, Google, Wikipedia, Microsoft Word, and Copy & Paste.

—Steve Weinburg

Did you ever think that making a speech on economics is a lot like pissing down your leg? It seems hot to you, but it never does to anyone else.

—Lyndon B. Johnson

People demand freedom of speech to make up for the freedom of thought which they avoid.

--Søren Kierkegaard

The attorney Clarence Darrow once participated in a panel discussion in Chicago. Curtain time was 8:15, but there was a slight delay in getting started. Backstage the four panelists were waiting for the 'go' sign to take their places on the platform. A reporter or the *Chicago Tribune* approached Darrow and asked, 'Mr. Darrow, do you have an advance copy of your speech? I have an early edition to make and can't stay for the entire evening, and both my city editor and I will be very grateful to you if you can give us the benefit of some advanced copy.'

Barely lifting his eyes, Darrow bent forward and reached into the back pocket of his trousers for a blank pad of paper which he handed the reporter.

The reporter looked at the empty page and said, "But Mr. Darrow, that's the same speech you gave last week.'

—Jacob Braude

An emissary from a learned society came to invite naturalist Louis Agassiz to address its members. Agassiz refused on the grounds that lectures of this sort took up too much time that should be devoted to research and writing. The man persisted, saying they were prepared to pay handsomely for the talk. 'That's no inducement to me,' Agassiz replied. 'I can't afford to waste my time making money.'

—*The Little, Brown Book of Anecdotes*

No community will become humane and caring by restricting what its members can say.

—Derek Bok

Joseph Chamberlain, Prime Minister of England, told this story about himself. He was guest of honor at a banquet. The mayor of the city presided and when coffee was being served he leaned over and touched Mr. Chamberlain, saying, 'Shall we let them enjoy themselves a little longer, or had we better have your speech now?'

—*Speaker's Idea File*

To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar.

--Samuel Johnson

A chill crawls up my back every time I see a clip of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s peroration at the Washington monument. I know that I cried when Adlai Stevenson gracefully and wittily conceded defeat to Dwight Eisenhower in '52. I want to stand up and cheer whenever I see *Henry V*, whether he is Olivier or Branagh, call up his men to rush into the breach once more. Almost anything that British Prime Minister Winston Churchill has done makes the heart beat faster and reminds us of what greatness is and how we all want to follow men and women of imagination and courage.

—Lawrence Ragan

How odd...that our current [high school] requirements do not include oral proficiency when all graduates will need this ability in their personal, civic, social, and professional lives.

—Grant Wiggins

In perfect eloquence, the hearer would lose the sense of dualism, of hearing from another; would cease to distinguish between the orator and himself.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Rev. Samuel J. May: 'Mr. Garrison, you are too excited—you are on fire!
William Lloyd Garrison: 'I have need to be on fire, for I have icebergs around me to melt.'

—*Speaker's Idea File*

Speaking much is a sign of vanity, for he that is lavish with words is a niggard in deed.

—Sir Walter Raleigh

He who talks much cannot talk well.

—Carlo Goldoni

They always talk who never think, and who have the least to say.

—Matthew Prior

No fool can be silent at a feast.

—Solon

Where questions of style and exposition are concerned I try to follow a simple maxim: if you can't say it clearly you don't understand it yourself.

—John Searle

Aim for brevity while avoiding jargon.

—Edsger Dijkstra

Everyone is wise until he speaks.

—Irish Proverb

Because we are generous with our freedom, we share our rights with those who disagree with us.

—Wendell Willkie

When you are trying to impress people with words, the more you say, the more common you appear, and the less in control. Even if you are saying something banal, it will seem original if you make it vague, open-ended, and sphinxlike. Powerful people impress and intimidate by saying less. The more you say, the more likely you are to say something foolish.

—Robert Greene

Don't raise your voice, improve your argument.

—Unknown

Speech is not an attribute but an artifact, a tool crafted by humans that is now so mighty it makes them stronger than any other species....speech constitutes a kingdom all its own—beyond that of animals.

—Tom Wolfe

Man owns or controls...every animal that exists, thanks to his superpower: speech.

—Tom Wolfe

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget temperance that may give it smoothness.

--William Shakespeare

Rhetoric is a poor substitute for action, and we have trusted only to rhetoric. If we are really to be a great nation, we must not merely talk; we must act big.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Speech is the body part of thinking, the voice of the mind.

—Lenora Champagne

I speak this way because I know how perilous speech can be.... A saber might be stopped by a shield. A bullet might be dodged by a stroke of luck. But you can't dodge a word. If one is flung at you it will hit its mark unerringly.... there's nothing in the world more dangerous than talk.

—Galen Beckett

Where there is official censorship it is a sign that speech is serious. Where there is none, it is pretty certain that the official spokesmen have all the loud-speakers.

--Paul Goodman

Better a thousandfold abuse of free speech than denial of free speech. The abuse dies in a day, but the denial stays the life of the people, and entombs the hope of the race.

--Charles Bradlaugh

Free speech is to a great people what winds are to oceans and malarial regions, which waft away the elements of disease and bring new elements of health; and where free speech is stopped, miasma is bred, and death comes fast.

--Henry Ward Beecher

I have always been among those who believed that the greatest freedom of speech was the greatest safety, because if a man is a fool the best thing to do is to encourage him to advertise the fact by speaking.

--Woodrow Wilson

No matter whose lips that would speak, they must be free and ungagged. The community which dares not protect its humblest and most hated member in the free utterance of his opinions, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves. If there is anything in the universe that can't stand discussion, let it crack....Let us always remember that he does not really believe his own opinions, who dares not give free scope to his opponent.

--Wendell Phillips

The nation relies upon public discussion as one of the indispensable means to attain correct solutions to problems of social welfare. Curtailment of free speech limits this open discussion. Our whole history teaches that adjustment of social relations through reason is possible when free speech is maintained.

--Stanley F. Reed

Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us.

--William O. Douglas

It is frequently said that speech that is intentionally provocative and therefore invites physical retaliation, can be punished or suppressed. Yet plainly no such general proposition can be sustained. Quite the contrary....The provocative nature of the communication does not make it any the less expression. Indeed, the whole theory of free expression contemplates that expression will in many circumstances be provocative and arouse hostility. The audience, just as the speaker, has an obligation to maintain physical restraint.

--Thomas I. Emerson

Without an unfettered press, without liberty of speech, all the outward forms and structures of free institutions are a sham, a pretense—the sheerest mockery. If the press is not free; if speech is not independent and untrammelled; if the mind is shackled or made impotent through fear, it makes no difference under what form of government you live you are a subject and not a citizen. Republics are not in and of themselves better than other forms of government except in so far as they carry with them and guarantee to the citizen that liberty of thought and action for which they were established.

--Senator William E.
Borah

Debate is masculine, conversation is feminine.

—Amos Bronson Alcott

When the debate is lost, slander becomes the tool of the loser.

—Socrates

The person who would proof read Hitler's speeches was a grammar Nazi.

—Stephen Lockyer

Preparing for a speech is one of the best ways to ensure you give an effective presentation. Try these tips to help you properly prepare:

- Organize your speech in a logical sequence: opening, main points, summary.
- Practice and rehearse a speech frequently prior to delivering it. Ask friends to be your audience, or practice in front of a mirror. Be sure to use a timer to help you pace your speech.
- Become familiar with the stage or the setting where the speech will take place. Get a sense of the size of the stage, where any steps or obstacles might be, and where to enter and exit.
- Choose comfortable clothes to wear, but always maintain a professional appearance.
- Visual aids should fit a speech, whether they are funny, serious or technical. The main goal of visual aids is to help the audience understand what is being said, and reinforce the points of a speech in unique and interesting ways.

—*Toastmasters*
International

Whether you're talking to a small group of people or speaking to a large audience, you want to be sure your speech is memorable and enjoyable. Follow these five easy tips to help ensure your speech delivers:

- Be prepared. Your audience is giving you their time and consideration, so rehearse enough to be confident you'll leave a good impression.
- Start strong. Begin your speech with a powerful opening that will grab your audience's attention, such as a startling fact or statistic, an interesting story or a funny joke.
- Be conversational. Avoid reading your speech word for word. Instead, refer to notes or points from an outline to help your speech have a more free-flowing, conversational tone.
- Speak with passion. If you're truly invested in what you're saying, you'll be better able to keep your audience's attention.
- Be patient. It's easy to get frustrated if you make a mistake. But remember that public speaking is not easy and it takes time to hone your skills. Keep practicing and you will reach your goals.

—*Toastmasters*
International

Speakers generate a great amount of emotion and interest through the use of non-verbal communication, often called gestures or body language. A speaker's body can be an effective tool for emphasizing and clarifying the words they use, while reinforcing their sincerity and enthusiasm. Here are a few tips on how to use gestures effectively:

- Eye contact establishes an immediate bond with an audience, especially when a speaker focuses in on individual listeners rather than just gazing over the audience as a whole.
- Control mannerisms. Mannerisms are the nervous expressions a speaker might not be aware of such as putting their hands in their pockets, nodding their head excessively, or using filler words like um and ah too often.
- Put verbs in to action when speaking to an audience by physically acting them out with the hands, face or entire body.
- Avoid insincere gestures by involving the entire body as much as possible in the movement and matching facial expressions to it.
- Move around the stage as topics change and move toward the audience when asking questions, making critical connections, or offering a revelation.

—*Toastmasters*
International

There are few skills that will bring more opportunity into your life than the ability to speak well in public. Below are 12 tips that can make the difference between those speakers who leave a powerful, positive impression and those that are quickly forgotten.

1. **Speak with an intent to move people to action.** Know what you want your audience to do immediately after hearing your speech. If nobody does anything different than they would have done before you spoke—the value of your speech is zero.
2. **Start strong with a ‘grabber.’** A personal story, a quote from an expert or a shocking statistic—something that takes a hold of your audience and gets them hooked and opens their mind to your message. Give the audience a chance to see your personal connection to the topic.
3. **Structure your material in three sections—grabber, middle, close.** Know your material. Get really interested in the topic. Find good stories.
4. **Practice. Practice.** Rehearse out loud with all equipment you plan on using. Work to control filler words; Practice, pause and breathe. Use a clock to check your timings and allow time for the unexpected.
5. **Know the audience.** Try to speak to one or two people in the audience as they arrive—they will be your allies in the audience—it is easier to speak to friends than to strangers.

6. **Know the setup.** Arrive in good time to check out the speaking area and get practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
7. **Relax.** Begin with a well prepared grabber. A relevant personal story is a great start. It establishes your credibility. It connects you to the audience and creates the right emotional atmosphere (and calms your nerves).
8. **Visualize yourself successful.** See yourself at the end of the speech surrounded by people asking questions, visualize the applause.
9. **Pauses.** Include 3-8 second pauses at key moments – just before key statements or just after a story—this really brings the audience into the speech.
10. **Don't apologize**—the audience probably never noticed it.
11. **Smile.** Look like the content matters to you—if the audience don't feel that it is important to you, it will be really hard for them to feel that it should be important for them.
12. **Get experience.** Take every opportunity you can get to speak (and listen to other speakers). Prepare well ahead of time. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

—Conor Neill

HERE ARE MY 10 TIPS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING:

1. **Nervousness Is Normal. Practice and Prepare!**

All people feel some physiological reactions like pounding hearts and trembling hands. Do not associate these feelings with the sense that you will perform poorly or make a fool of yourself. Some nerves are good. The adrenaline rush that makes you sweat also makes you more alert and ready to give your best performance.

The best way to overcome anxiety is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Take the time to go over your notes several times. Once you have become comfortable with the material, practice—a lot. Videotape yourself, or get a friend to critique your performance.

2. **Know Your Audience. Your Speech Is About Them, Not You.**

Before you begin to craft your message, consider who the message is intended for. Learn as much about your listeners as you can. This will help you determine your choice of words, level of information, organization pattern, and motivational statement.

3. **Organize Your Material in the Most Effective Manner to Attain Your Purpose.**
Create the framework for your speech. Write down the topic, general purpose, specific purpose, central idea, and main points. Make sure to grab the audience's attention in the first 30 seconds.
4. **Watch for Feedback and Adapt to It.**
Keep the focus on the audience. Gauge their reactions, adjust your message, and stay flexible. Delivering a canned speech will guarantee that you lose the attention of or confuse even the most devoted listeners.
5. **Let Your Personality Come Through.**
Be yourself, don't become a talking head—in any type of communication. You will establish better credibility if your personality shines through, and your audience will trust what you have to say if they can see you as a real person.
6. **Use Humor, Tell Stories, and Use Effective Language.**
Inject a funny anecdote in your presentation, and you will certainly grab your audience's attention. Audiences generally like a personal touch in a speech. A story can provide that.
7. **Don't Read Unless You Have to. Work from an Outline.**
Reading from a script or slide fractures the interpersonal connection. By maintaining eye contact with the audience, you keep the focus on yourself and your message. A brief outline can serve to jog your memory and keep you on task.
8. **Use Your Voice and Hands Effectively. Omit Nervous Gestures.**
Nonverbal communication carries most of the message. Good delivery does not call attention to itself, but instead conveys the speaker's ideas clearly and without distraction.
9. **Grab Attention at the Beginning, and Close with a Dynamic End.**
Do you enjoy hearing a speech start with "Today I'm going to talk to you about X?" Most people don't. Instead, use a startling statistic, an interesting anecdote, or concise quotation. Conclude your speech with a summary and a strong statement that your audience is sure to remember.

10. **Use Audiovisual Aids Wisely.**

Too many can break the direct connection to the audience, so use them sparingly. They should enhance or clarify your content, or capture and maintain your audience's attention.

Practice Does Not Make Perfect

Good communication is never perfect, and nobody expects you to be perfect. However, putting in the requisite time to prepare will help you deliver a better speech. You may not be able to shake your nerves entirely, but you can learn to minimize them.

—Marjorie Lee North

Oratory is the masterful art. Poetry, painting, music, sculpture, architecture please, thrill, inspire—but oratory rules. The orator dominates those who hear him, convinces their reason, controls their judgment, compels their action. For the time being, he is master.

—David Josiah Brewer

It was but the other day that a man sent me a letter asking what matter one should put into a political speech. To which I answered, having an expert knowledge in this, that the whole art of a political speech is to put nothing into it. It is much more difficult than it sounds.

--Hilaire Belloc

All politicians think that the more they talk, the more persuasive they are.

--Leonard Cavise

Political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible...Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.

--George Orwell

Congress is so strange. A man gets up to speak and says nothing. Nobody listens—and then everybody disagrees.

--Boris Marshalov

I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.

—James A. Baldwin

Freedom works better in speeches than in practice.

--Will Rogers

I debated in high school! If you told things that weren't true or just made things out of whole cloth, you were penalized. It's too bad they don't apply the same standards to presidential candidates as they do to high school students.

—Mark Hamill

A presidential speech may be two or three thousand words, every one of them run through the staffing process (in which senior White House officials can comment), fact checked and approved by the president before delivery. A good presidential speech is the result of both thought and craft. A great presidential speech reflects literary, historical and moral inspiration and can speak far beyond its moment.

—Michael Gerson

When Gold argues the cause, eloquence is impotent.

--Publius Syrus

Among mankind money is far more persuasive than logical argument.

—Euripides

Take from the philosopher the pleasure of being heard and his desire for knowledge ceases.

—Jean-Jacques
Rousseau

If you were born with the ability to change someone's perspective or emotions, never waste that gift. It is one of the most powerful gifts God can give—the ability to influence.

—Shannon L. Alder

Speeches are not magic and there is no great speech without great policy.

—Peggy Noonan

Great spirits have always encountered opposition from mediocre minds. The mediocre mind is incapable of understanding the man who refuses to bow blindly to conventional prejudices and chooses instead to express his opinions courageously and honestly.

—Albert Einstein

Only the prepared speaker deserves to be confident.

—Dale Carnegie

Do not fight verbosity with words: speech is given to all, intelligence to few.

—Moralia

Intellectual brilliance is no guarantee against being dead wrong.

—David Fasold

As societies grow decadent, the language grows decadent, too. Words are used to disguise, not to illuminate, action: you liberate a city by destroying it. Words are to confuse, so that at election time people will solemnly vote against their own interests.

—Gore Vidal

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

It is no use speaking in soft, gentle tones if everyone else is shouting.

—Joseph Priestley

Talking and eloquence are not the same: to speak and to speak well are two things. A fool may talk, but a wise man speaks.

—Heinrich Heine

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.

--John Stuart Mill

Deliberation and debate is the way you stir the soul of our democracy.

—Jesse Jackson

All of us are born with a set of instinctive fears - of falling, of the dark, of lobsters, of falling on lobsters in the dark, or speaking before a Rotary Club, and of the words 'Some Assembly Required.'

—Dave Barry

Nerves and butterflies are fine—they're a physical sign that you're mentally ready and eager. You have to get the butterflies to fly in formation, that's the trick.

—Steve Bull

Human speech is like a cracked kettle on which we tap crude rhythms for bears to dance to, while we long to make music that will melt the stars.

—Gustave Flaubert

One may discover a new side to his most intimate friend when for the first time he hears him speak in public. He will be stranger to him as he is more familiar to the audience. The longest intimacy could not foretell how he would behave then.

—Henry David Thoreau

The mark of a true politician is that he is never at a loss for words because he is always half-expecting to be asked to make a speech.

—Richard M. Nixon

Freedom of speech means that you shall not do something to people either for the views they have, or the views they express, or the words they speak or write.

--Hugo Black

Almost nobody means precisely what he says when he makes the declaration, 'I'm in favor of free speech.'

--Heywood Broun

Words ought to be a little wild, for they are the assault of thoughts on the unthinking.

—John M. Keynes

We are cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick is, knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff out.

—Ray Bradbury

Hey! Hate speech and freedom of speech? Two different things.

—Leslie Jones

Lincoln was not a good impromptu speaker; he was at his best when he could read from a carefully prepared manuscript.

—David H. Donald

I can hold an audience for about 20, 23 minutes. Anything beyond that, you basically start to lose the audience. Twenty minutes is plenty to get your message across.

—Ronald Reagan

Had Cicero himself pronounced one of his orations with a blanket about his shoulders, more people would have laughed at his dress than admired his eloquence.

--Joseph Addison

According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy.

--Jerry Seinfeld

In the power of fixing the attention lies the most precious of the intellectual habits.

—Robert Hall

I know what I have given you. I do not know what you have received.

—Antonio Porchia

All those who offer an opinion on any doubtful point should first clear their minds of every sentiment of dislike, friendship, anger or pity.

—Sallust

If the freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.

—George Washington

That which distinguishes this day [July 4th] from all others is that then both orators and artillerymen shoot blank cartridges.

—John Burroughs

Thought is the fountain of speech.

—Chrysippus

There are so many exceptions to free speech: child pornography, cross burning, libel, fighting words.

—Cliff Stearns

You will die, but the words you speak or spoke, will live forever.

--Auliq Ice

Norm-breaking is neither new nor always bad. Thomas Jefferson refused to continue the practice begun by George Washington and John Adams of delivering the State of the Union address in person before Congress, because he believed it resembled the British monarch speaking before parliament. For the next 112 years, presidents conveyed the State of the Union in writing—until Woodrow Wilson astonished Congress by addressing it in person, practice that once again settled into a norm. Wilson’s novel step was part of a broader change from the 19th century, when giving policy speeches before the public was rare and controversial for a president, to the 20th Century, when mass oratory became a routine tool for presidential leadership.

—Jack Goldsmith

We must not always judge of the generality of the opinion by the noise of the acclamation.

—Edmund Burke

If you’re capable of being glib and verbal, the odds are that you have no idea what you’re talking about but it sounds good, whereas if you know a great deal of what you’re saying the odds are you can’t get on a talk show because nobody can understand you.

—C. P. Snow

The late Calvin Coolidge, retired from the presidency, became even less talkative than when he was in the White House. Skeptics doubted Henry Newsome, therefore, when he swore he had persuaded Cal to make a speech—for nothing too—at a local banquet in Vermont. ‘I will admit,’ conceded Mr. Newsom, ‘that when Cal first opened his mouth dust flew out.’

Mr. Coolidge even refused to speak at one whistle stop when he was campaigning for President. He looked over the crowd and stamped back into his private railroad car. ‘This crowd,’ he explained succinctly, ‘is too big for an anecdote and too small for an oration.’

—Bennett Cerf

An internationally famous scientist became so irked by the series of bumbling long-winded speakers who preceded him at one banquet that, when he finally was called upon, he declared, ‘It seems I finally have been asked to give my address. Gentlemen, it’s the Belvedere Hotel, and that’s where I’m headed this very moment, since it’s two hours past my usual bedtime. I thank you!’ And with this, he strode out of the hall.

—Bennett Cerf

Beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your communication possess coalescent consistency and concatenated cogency. Eschew all flatulent garrulity and asinine affectations. Use intelligibility and veracious vivacity without rodomontade or thra-sonical bombast. Sedulously avoid all prolixity and psittaceous vacuity. In other words, 'Be intelligible, think for yourself, and be brief.'

—Bennett Cerf

I love eulogies. They are the most moving kind of speech because they attempt to pluck meaning from the fog, and on short order, when the emotions are still ragged and raw and susceptible to leaps.

—Peggy Noonan

TONGUE TWISTERS

Betty Botter's Better Batter
Betty Botter had some butter,
'But,' she said, 'this butter's bitter.
If I bake this bitter butter,
It would make my batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter,
That would make my batter better.'
So she bought a bit of butter –
Better than her bitter butter –
And she baked it in her batter;
And the batter was not bitter.
So 'twas better Betty Better
Bought a bit of better butter.

Ned Nott and Sam Shott
Ned Nott was shot and Sam Shott was not.
So it is better to be Shott than Nott.
Some say Nott was not shot.
But Shott says he shot Nott.
Either the shot Shott shot at Nott was not shot,
Or Nott was shot.
If the shot Shott shot shot Nott, Nott was shot.
But if the shot Shott shot shot Shott,
Then Shott was shot, not Nott.
However, the shot Shott shot shot not Shott, but Nott.

The Two-Toed Tree-Toad

A tree-toad loved a she-toad
Who lived up in a tree.
He was a two-toed tree-toad,
But a three-toed toad was she.
The two-toed tree-toad tried to win
The three-toed she-toad's heart,
For the two-toed tree-toad loved the ground
That the three-toed tree-toad trod.
But the two-toed tree-toad tried in vain;
He couldn't please her whim.
From her tree-toad bower,
With her three-toed power,
The she-toad vetoed him.

See's Saw and Soar's Seesaw

Mr. See owned a saw.
And Mr. Soar owned a seesaw.
Now, See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw
Before Soar saw See,
Which made Soar sore.
Had Soar seen See's saw
Before See sawed Soar's seesaw,
See's saw would not have sawed
Soar's seesaw.
So See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw.
But it was sad to see Soar so sore
Just because See's saw sawed
Soar's seesaw.

A tutor who tooted the flute
tried to tutor two tooters to toot.
Said the two to their tutor:
'Is it harder to toot,
Or to tutor two tooters to toot?'

What noise annoys an oyster?
The noise that annoys an oyster
is a noise that knows no oyster.

The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick

The Leith police dismisseth thee,
The Leith police dismisseth us.

Pure food for poor mules

(In answer to the question
'Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?')
Perspicacious Polly Perkins purchased Peter's product
And peddled pickles to produce a pretty profit!

Esau Wood sawed wood.
Esau Wood would saw wood with a wood saw.
Esau's wood saw would saw wood!
One day, Wood's wood saw would saw no wood,
so Wood sought a wood saw that would.
Then, Wood saw a wood saw saw wood as no
wood saw Wood ever saw wood sawed wood.
So Wood sought the wood saw that sawed wood
as no wood saw Wood ever saw ever sawed.
Now Wood saws wood with the wood saw Wood
saw saw wood as no wood saw
Wood ever saw would wood saw wood.

I never smelled a smelt that smelled like that smelt smelled

United States twin-screw steel cruisers

Moses supposes his toeses are roses,
but Moses supposes erroneously;
for nobody's toeses are poses of roses,
as Moses supposes his toeses to be.

Theophilus Thistle, the Thistle Sifter,
Sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles.
If Theophilus Thistle, the Thistle Sifter,
Sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles,
Where is the sieve of un-sifted thistles
Theophilus Thistle, the Thistle Sifter, sifted?

A big black bear bit a big black bug
and the big black bug bled black blood.

—*www.fun-with-words.com*

Jessel [George] is one of the greatest after-dinner speakers in the country—incredibly quick with quotable repartee. A toastmaster introduced him as an ‘unusual specimen—you have only to put a dinner in his mouth and out comes a speech.’ Jessel snapped right back with, ‘I want to call attention to your toastmaster, who is also unusual. You only have to put a speech into his mouth—and out comes your dinner.’

—Bennett Cerf

Mayor John Hylan seldom bothered to read speeches that trusted ghosts prepared for him ahead of time. In the middle of one speech he came to the phrase, ‘That reminds me of one of my favorite stories about a traveling salesman.’ It developed that the Mayor had never heard the joke before, and when he finished reading it, he laughed so hard he broke his glasses. The chairman of the dinner had to finish the speech for him.

—Bennett Cerf

Roosevelt’s spin doctors had always been perplexed that some wartime sound bites caught on while others did not. Though lacking the poetry of ‘a day that will live in infamy,’ the ‘Four Freedoms’ was carefully crafted, employing catchy alliteration and enumeratio, the classic rhetorical device of dividing a big idea into numbered parts.

—Abigail Tucker

I received comments on how extraordinary it was that I could keep up speaking for exactly 45 minutes. Indeed, in an age of soundbites lasting some seconds and of quick quotes in the news, all those minutes do seem like an eternity, easy to get lost in. Yet, wait a moment. Television is not the only place where speeches are given. Some hundred thousand teachers teach every day. They all speak 45 minutes, more times a day. They have been doing this for years. Every teacher knows exactly when the time will be over and that by then his speech will need to come to a natural end. It is this tension that determines the success of a lesson. It is a sign of the times that we forget these daily achievements in education. A million students daily attend several ‘live’ lectures and this in secondary education alone. These are high ratings!

--Robbert Dijkgraaf

Eloquence is logic on fire.

—Lyman Beecher

Talent for oratory can simulate the need for action and even thought.

--Barbara W. Tuchman

Your argument is invalid because I am louder.

—Internet Meme

Don't type too far down the page. Two-thirds of the way down the page is as far as your typescript should go. This may sound like nit-picking. It isn't. If you type past that point, when you actually read your speech you'll spend one-third of your time with your head buried, eyes fastened to the bottom of the page. That means lost eye contact with your audience for a third of your speech. And since the audience will lose interest in the top of your head after 15 seconds, you'll see a bored and restless group when you finally look up from your text.

—*Ragan
Communications,
Inc.*

You must establish some common ground between yourself and your audience at the outset. There are at least five workable devices:

- (1) Inform the audience that you and they share a common tie; e.g., you attend the same church, or you support the same college football team.
- (2) Humor. Usually considered foolproof, because everybody loves a joke, and the bond of laughter is very powerful. But suppose you're one of those people who can't even read a joke so that it sounds funny?
- (3) The sincere compliment—to the group addressed or to an institution or person admired by both speaker and audience. But the emotion must be honestly felt by the speaker!
- (4) A parable, i.e., an opening story. The story must foster a sense of drama, and it must illustrate the speaker's theme.
- (5) A bold statement of your theme that brings you and your audience together to face some common danger or to do some higher task. This statement must be simple and memorable.

—*Ragan
Communications,
Inc.*

Why does the good speech satisfy? If we catalogued favorable comments made by listeners after hearing good speeches, three statements would arise repeatedly: 'It was easy to understand,' 'I felt like he was talking to me,' and 'It was interesting.'

—Jeff Scott Cook

When humor does fail, the results can be devastating to the speaker and the remainder of the speech. The silence following the punch line seems like an eternity. The only thing worse than complete silence would be the sound of the speaker laughing alone.

—Jerry Tarver

We can no longer accept the fact that we are graduating our young into society without vital oral and aural communication skills. Many of the potential leaders of the future will be frustrated by their inability to articulate opinions or to be persuasive in argument or by their lack of sufficient listening skill.

We cannot listen to our mumbling youth without being convinced that we must do something. We must identify oral communication and listening as basic skills essential for survival in today's society, and then we must go to work setting up programs offered by qualified teachers to help all of our young people become the articulate adults of tomorrow.

—Lonalee A. Berkowitz
and Perry
Berkowitz

Don't 'disable yourself.' Most people make the mistake of being apologetic [when they begin speaking]. You'll hear people say self-deprecating things like 'I'm not accustomed to speaking,' or 'I'm nervous,' or 'I'll try not to bore you.' When someone says that, you're ready to be bored. Audiences are not aware of that private agony 90 percent of the time—unless you call attention to it. And why do that? You're only inviting the audience to share in your misery.

—Michael Osborn

The more you sweat in advance, the less you'll have to sweat once you appear on stage. Research your topic thoroughly. Check the library for facts, quotes, books and timely magazine and newspaper articles on your subject. Get in touch with experts. Write to them, make phone calls, get interviews to help round out your materials. In short, gather—and learn—far more than you'll every use. You can't imagine how much confidence that knowledge will inspire.

—George Plimpton

It helps one's nerves to pick out three or four people in the audience—preferably in different sectors so that the speaker is apparently giving his attention to the entire room—on whom to focus. Pick out people who seem to be having a good time.

—George Plimpton

Very few speakers escape the so-called 'butterflies.' There does not seem to be any cure for them, except to realize that they are beneficial rather than harmful, and never fatal. The tension usually means that the speaker, being keyed up, will do a better job. Edward R. Murrow called stage fright 'the sweat of perfection.' Mark Twain once comforted a fright-frozen friend about to speak: 'Just remember they don't expect much.' My own feeling is that with thought, preparation and faith in your ideas, you can go out there and expect a pleasant surprise.

—George Plimpton

Are you nervous because you have a presentation to make? Let those butterflies in the stomach work for you....Putting that stress to work during your talk can make you a better speaker.

- Speak out. Direct energy into your voice. Give it an extra push toward your audience.
- Let energy emerge in free natural movements during your speech. Planned or forced gestures become unnecessary.
- Be enthusiastic. You're in front of a group because you have something to say. Say it with zeal.

—Kevin R. Daley

Every 15-minute talk should involve two hours of preparation. Don't be folksy or funny; keep it simple and dignified, and don't be afraid to be eloquent.

—Theodore C. Sorensen

One of Heywood Broun's pet hates was ghost-written political speeches—particularly when they failed utterly to reflect either the convictions or the personalities of the big shots who were delivering them. Warren G. Harding pulled one of these phony orations at a newsman's banquet shortly after he assumed the Presidency— a pompous, cliché-laden address that sounded more like a circus press agent than a President of the United States. There was some polite applause as Harding resumed his seat. Then Broun jumped up and cried 'Author! Author!'

—Bennett Cerf

HOW NOT TO TELL A STORY

1. Don't make a story too long....Great professional comics... can stretch out a story for ten minutes, and actually milk it for additional laughs en route. Ordinary folk cannot.
2. Don't forget your point in the middle of a story... If you haven't got your punchline absolutely straight in your mind, don't start.
3. Don't laugh too much yourself....A hearty laugh at the end of the story, constituting yourself a sort of cheerleader, is not only permissible, but, if not carried to excess, sound strategy. While the story is in progress, however, let your audience do the laughing—if any!
4. Don't lay hands on your audience. Particularly repulsive is the bruiser who accompanies his stories with a series of pokes, jabs, and punches in the tenderest parts of his victims' anatomies.
5. Don't tell your story more than once to the same audience.
6. Don't give the point of the story before you begin....A good detective-story writer saves his solution for the last chapter!
7. Don't insist on telling a story after your victim informed you he has heard it. ... Oscar Wilde's comment on a bore of this ilk was 'He's been invited to all the best homes in London—once!'
8. Don't oversell your story in advance. The man who prefaces a recital with 'This is the funniest story you ever heard in your life' is apt to find the burden of proof sitting too heavily on his shoulders.
9. Don't tell your stories at the wrong places. A quip that convulsed the boys in the club car can fall awfully flat at Mrs. WWaxelbaum's tea for the bishop.
10. Don't tell your story at the wrong time.... The man who can toss off a funny story in the right spot is a wit; the oaf who is telling them all the time is a nitwit.
11. Don't always 'know another version.' A man who can get himself disliked... must always top the other's story with 'Oh, I know another version of that joke—very ancient, too.'
12. Don't tell stories that depend for their humor on events or personalities never heard of by your audience. Many stories, hilarious if you know the people involved, or the circumstances that provoked the original situation, are unbelievably dull to a stranger.
13. Avoid dialect stories as much as possible. Dialect stories are the hardest to tell properly. The endeavor of amateurs to impersonate Scotsman...or Hebrews is often too horrible even to think about.

—Bennett Cerf

Speech is free, all right, but it doesn't mean free from consequences.

—Kathleen Parker

A multimillionaire in the Southwest, piratical in his younger days, but anxious to recapture the esteem of fellow-citizens in his dotage, overwhelmed the dean of the local college with a very generous donation. The wise old dean decided that the first thing to do with the unexpected funds was to hire a competent new head of the English department. The salary offered was generous, and so many applicants turned up for the job that they had to double up in the rooms of the only hotel in town. The field narrowed down to two: one, Mr. Whitmore, a rather wistful, graying, and unquestionably erudite man of fifty; the other, Mr. Collins, a loquacious, bouncy chap at least twenty years younger, looked more like a football coach and unquestionably had away with him as far as the students were concerned. As luck would have it, the two men shared the same room.

The dean and his advisers found it so hard to make a final choice that they decided to leave it all to a public address in the college chapel on the subject of Elizabeth literature. Whitmore spent three agonizing days writing his speech and memorizing it; his younger rival seemingly did no preparatory work at all, and continued making time with the local belles. Just before the contestants walked over to the chapel, however, Whitmore made a disquieting discovery. The typewritten copy of his speech had disappeared.

The gathering was called to order, and Collins, the younger contestant, given priority. While his rival watched with helpless despair, he calmly pulled the purloined speech out of his pocket and read it so eloquently that the audience rewarded him with a burst of cheers.

Now it was Whitmore's turn. The speech he had written contains everything he had to say. He was too shattered by the turn of events to improvise or try a new tack. With his face burning with embarrassment, and the surprised audience wriggling in its seats, he could only repeat the speech, word for word, that Collins had delivered so eloquently before him. As he bumbled on, however, the wise old dean's eyes never left his face.

The trustees retired to reach what appeared to be foregone conclusion. Collins was so sure of his victory that he patted his silent rival on the back and said in a patronizing tone, 'Don't take it too hard, pop. After all, only one of us could win.' Then the dean came back and announced his decision.

Mr. Whitmore had been chosen for the post!

'You are entitled to know how we made her choice,' the dean told the surprised audience. 'All of us, of course, were surprised by the eloquence and erudition of Mr. Collins. I, for one, didn't know he had in him. But you will remember that Mr. Collins read his speech to us. When Mr. Whitmore came before us, he repeated from memory every word of that same speech, although it is inconceivable that he ever heard a line of it before in his life. What a memory, gentleman! And since a fine memory is an invaluable asset for a teacher of Elizabethan literature, we decided that Mr. Whitmore was the man we have been praying for.'

As Whitmore, dazed but happy, was leaving the campus, the old dean came up and whispered in his ear, ‘When you’re on our faculty, my boy, if I were you, I wouldn’t leave my valuable papers lying about carelessly.’

—Bennett Cerf

Asked to deliver the convocation speech for graduating seniors at Syracuse University in 2013, he [George Saunders] anticipated exactly what the more cynical readers (or in this case, listeners) might have on their minds.

‘Down through the ages,’ he told the assembled crowd of restless students, ‘a traditional form has evolved for this type of speech, which is: Some old fart, his best years behind him, who, over the course of his life, has made a series of dreadful mistakes (that would be me), gives heartfelt advice to a group of shining, energetic young people, with all of their best years ahead of them (that would be you)—and I intend to respect that tradition.’

Never underestimate the power of jumping out ahead of your audience—locating exactly what your detractors or the skeptics in the audience might be thinking, and disarming them before they have the chance to strike. Plus, it’s funny.

—Dinty W. Moore

Think before you speak. Read before you think.

--Fran Lebowitz

The mark of a true leader is one who is fearless. A leader is one who has the ability to try new things, take on new challenges, lead a group in a new direction and resolve conflicts. The minute our leader falters or shows his or her fear, we automatically start to lose our faith and confidence in that person. Some people are born fearless, but others need to work at it.

For many people, stage fright is one of their greatest fears. People get physically ill at the thought of speaking in front of their colleagues or making a presentation to clients. Participation in improv training provides just the right kind of fear-defying practice.

Improvisation provides children a safe atmosphere to learn how to take positive risks without being overcome by fear. By incorporating improv into school curriculum or theatre lessons, you are giving children the necessary platform to learn this skill.

—Lisa Phillips

In debate, one randomly was assigned to one side or the other. This had at least one virtue—it made one see that there was more than one side to these complex issues.

—Joseph E. Stiglitz

The lecturer should give the audience full reason to believe that all his powers have been exerted for their pleasure and instruction.

—Michael Faraday

True eloquence consists in saying all that is necessary, and nothing but what is necessary.

—Heinrich Heine

The lights blinded me, and I could feel my heart in my throat. Sweaty-palmed, a hint of nausea stirred within as I stepped out onto the stage and prepared to deliver my lines...dressed as a feathered bird. Although only 11 years old, I was already overly concerned with the judgment of others: What are people going to think? What will they say about me? Will I look like an idiot?

—Maria Walley

The key ingredient to success, happiness and thriving at human connection boils down to the ability to be vulnerable. Essentially, the ability to be human.

—Renée Brown

The fear of speaking in public is a social anxiety, experts say. And according to Erica Crome and Andrew Baillie, who rank such fears in their article ‘Mild to Severe Social Fears,’ it actually represents ‘the lowest level of social anxiety.’ And if you mix this anxiety in the with all possible fears, as Chapman University did in its ‘America’s Top Fears 2017,’ public speaking is way down on the list at number 52. (First is the fear of ‘corrupt government officials.’ Now that’s something to be afraid of!)

—Gail Radley

If you’re going to read a speech, you may as well ask the audience to wear their pajamas. You’ve been asked to give a talk, after all, not give a reading (although that may be requested of you also). There are some occasions in which you can get away with reading a speech—very formal occasions, for example, or a scholarly presentation. But most of the time, your audience will appreciate it if you at least look like you’re speaking off the cuff.

To achieve this, I typed out my talk in a font size I could see at a glance—14 or 16 point. Then I highlighted key points & phrases I wanted to preserve. Reading it over and practicing delivering that will help. Don’t try to memorize it—if stage fright strikes, you may find yourself mute for wont of the particular word that has escaped you. The more talks I put behind me, the better I got at only glancing at the printed page.

—Gail Radley

Experiments show that character-driven stories with emotional content result in a better understanding of the key points...and enable better recall of these points weeks later. In terms of making impact, this blows the standard PowerPoint presentation to bits.

—Paul J. Zak

I have played to audiences all over the country, cities, towns, and right on the bald prairies, and lots of swell charity affairs in New York, and if you talk about International or political affairs a fashionable New York audience is the dumbest one you can assemble anywhere in the Country. Small town people will make a sucker out of em for reading and keeping up with the news.

—Will Rogers

All one has to do to get his Speech reprinted in the Record is to find a Stenographer that can stay awake long enough to take it. Then you mark in the 'Applause' and 'Laughter' parts yourself. But just between us two I would rather tie up with the Police Gazette than the Congressional Record.

—Will Rogers

The last few days I have read various addresses made on Lincoln's Birthday. Every Politician always talks about him, but none of them ever imitate him. They always make that a day of delivering a Lecture on 'Americanism.' When an Office Holder, or one that has been found out, can't think of anything to deliver a speech on, he always falls back on the good old subject, AMERICANISM. Now that is the one thing that I have never delivered an Essay on, either written or spoken. They have all had a crack at it every Fourth of July and Lincoln's Birthday.

—Will Rogers

I've come loaded with statistics, for I've noticed that a man can't prove anything without statistics.

—Mark Twain

Most men make little use of their speech than to give evidence against their own understanding.

—George Savile

It is not of so much consequence what you say, as how you say it. Memorable sentences are memorable on account of some single irradiating word.

--Alexander Smith

The tongue is the only instrument that gets sharper with use.

—Washington Irving

If you want to stress points in a lecture, presentation, or speech—try this effective technique. First, always write down your main points in outline form. Second, stress each of these points by moving to a different spot on the stage or in the room. Each time you move, the audience will reconnect their eyes with yours. Try this technique. It is very effective for holding an audience and making your major points more effectively.

—Robert L. DeBruyn

Some words are considered ‘fillers.’ Unfortunately, the use of these words gives people you are speaking to the impression that you don’t have much to say—or that you don’t know what to say or how to say it. Worse, it can make them feel that you are not up to the task of teaching them very much. Therefore, eliminating these words will always help you be a more effective communicator. These words include: ‘Basically,’ ‘Really,’ ‘Like,’ ‘Um,’ ‘Er,’ ‘Ah,’ and ‘Ya know.’ Look over your next presentation—and look for places where you are likely to use these fillers. A close look will tell you precisely where these spots are and what you need to work on before you give your lesson or presentation.

—Robert L. DeBruyn

It is something you think that half a dozen men could sit down and casually sign a pact to stop the millions of men from killing each other. If Armistice Day had stopped speeches, it would’ve done more than to have stopped the war, for speeches is which starts the next war. It’s not armament, its oratory that’s wrong with this country.

—Will Rogers

The King made the best speech and then showed his real intelligence by leaving.

—Will Rogers

When FDR came to California Will introduced him with a ‘limited praise,’ telling him that if he would come back a ‘President’ real oratory would be spent on him.

—Donald Day

Flew down here to recuperate from one straight month of [political convention] speeches. Heard a mule braying a while ago out at the farm and for minute I couldn’t tell who he was nominating.

—Will Rogers

There should be a moratorium called on candidates speeches. They have both called each other everything in the world they can think of. From now on they are just talking themselves out of votes. The high office of President of the United States has degenerated into two ordinarily find men being goaded on by their political leeches into saying things that if they were in their right minds they wouldn't think of saying.

—Will Rogers

GRADUATION SPEECHES

Several students will be selected this year to deliver speeches at the promotion exercise. A contest will be held, and those students writing speeches judged to be the best will deliver them.

GUIDELINES FOR SPEECHWRITING:

- The speech should be 2-3 minutes long.
- The speech should be written neatly in ink on one side only of each sheet of paper.
- The topic of this speech is of your own choosing. Use your imagination. It should be appropriate for a graduation, and you should say whatever you feel would be interesting, meaningful, and useful for your classmates to hear at this point in their lives. (Don't hesitate to ask for advice from parents and teachers.)
- The first page of the speech should be totally blank except for your name in the upper right-hand corner. Do not put your name on any other page.
- Staple the pages together.
- Turn the speech in to the principal's office by the end of school on Monday, May 18.

I would ask that Language Arts teachers review these guidelines with their students and discuss the writing of the speech. I would ask that other teachers encourage students to enter the contest and offer whatever ideas or advice they can.

I also need a group of teachers to volunteer to read and judge the speeches. I also need some volunteer teachers to work with the winning speakers during the week prior to promotion to help them rewrite, polish, and practice their speeches. Please let me know if you wish to help out.

—Dan L. Miller

It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow necked bottles; the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring out.

—Alexander Pope

The influence of the platform is much more potent than that of the pen.

—James Lendall Basford

It was one of the dullest speeches I ever heard. The Agee woman told us for three quarters of an hour how she came to write her beastly book, when a simple apology was all that was required.

—P. G. Wodehouse

Flew down here to recuperate from one straight month of speeches [at the political convention]. Heard a mule braying a while ago out at the farm and for a minute I couldn't tell who he was nominating.

—Will Rogers

We meet not Roosevelt the candidate, but a neighbor from the other side of the Rocky Mountains. This introduction may have lacked logic, and particularly floweriness, but you must remember you are only a candidate. Come back when you are president and I will do better. I am wasting no oratory on a mere prospect.

—Will Rogers (1932)

There should be a moratorium called on candidates speeches. They have both called each other everything in the world they can think of. From now on they are just talking themselves out of votes. The high office of president of United States has degenerated into two ordinarily fine men being goaded on by their political leeches into saying things that if they were in their right minds they wouldn't think of saying.

—Will Rogers

When you write, you can hide behind your words. When you talk, you are up front, like the clown in the midway booth; and passersby can bean you with a ball.

—Willard R. Espy

Always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor never the tormented.

—Elie Wiesel

Every time he opens his mouth, he subtracts from the sum total of human wisdom.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Nothing so sharpens the thought process as writing down one's arguments. Weaknesses overlooked in oral discussion become painfully obvious on the written page.

—Hyman G. Rickover

Avoid the No. 1 Sin: Jargon

Just because you work for an institution, you don't have to sound like one. As parents we want to think of the men and women who are running our children's schools as people not unlike ourselves. I don't want to give my school my 'input' and get its 'feedback,' though I'd be glad to exchange ideas and options, and even offer some complaints....The message is simple: Avoid sentences that sound like 'informed academic writing.'

—William Zinsser

Keep it simple. As for your use of language: Remember that two great masters of language, William Shakespeare and James Joyce, wrote sentences which were almost childlike when their subjects were most profound. 'To be or not to be?' Asks Shakespeare's Hamlet. The longest word is three letters long. Joyce, when he was frisky, could put together a sentence as intricate and as glittering as a necklace for Cleopatra, but my favorite sentence is his short story 'Eveline' is this one: 'She was tired.' At that point in the story, no other word could break the heart of a reader as those three words do.

Simplicity of language is not only reputable, but perhaps even sacred. The *Bible* opens with a sentence well within the writing skills of a lively fourteen-year-old: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'

—Kurt Vonnegut

There is a fine line between a long sermon...and a hostage situation.

—*Episcopal Church
Memes*

Before you tell your joke, consider where to pause, where to give your audience a chance to visualize the picture so clearly that when you introduce the unexpected or ludicrous 'punch' the effect will be most laughable. This pause may be an actual pause or it may be some unimportant interjection, such as 'Well, then' or 'And do you know what.' Some comedians giggle a moment, or waggle a cigar, or slap someone's back. But the purpose is the same, to let the audience grasp the situation.

—Mildred Meiers and
Jack Knapp

A fact to bear in mind is that the first words of any speech almost never register in the minds of listeners. Every experienced speaker says a few unimportant words at the beginning to enable the audience to get into focus with him. No expert starts off with the meat of his message, story or joke. Therefore, start either with some attention-calling device or with a few words of generalities, such as ‘Everyone is interested in love. As a matter of fact, even I—’ and then go on.

—Mildred Meiers and
Jack Knapp

The most commonly used medium of making speeches and conversation more interesting is humor. There are times when a humorous story, well told, will strikingly illustrate a point or definitely relieve a tense moment in discussion or argument. At other times a short, barbed epigram, subtly introduced, is helpful. Sometimes a witty definition is of assistance. But humor must never be dragged in or consist merely of a series of irrelevant jokes. It must be to the point, clearly told, and without any ‘that reminds me’ introduction.

Quotations from the *Bible* and from literature are important speech materials because they frequently represent the most unusual, thoughtful, and classic expressions great men have made on significant subjects.

The simile is used by far too few men and women. Yet it is a simple and serviceable tool of speech. An occasional simile adds distinct character to utterance and to writing.

—Herbert V. Prochnow
and Herbert V.
Prochnow, Jr

We cannot force someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive, but we must never underestimate the power of planting a seed.

—Internet Meme

They say I tell a great many stories; I reckon I do, but I have found in the course of a long experience that common people, take them as they run, are more easily informed through the medium of a broad illustration than in any other way.

—Abraham Lincoln

The anecdote may be brought into your speech or article at any point. When you have a good story, tell it. It doesn’t need an introduction. If you feel that some preface is necessary you can avoid the hackneyed ‘That reminds me of a story’ by simply letting it arise naturally from the association of ideas and subject matter. You need say no more than, ‘This is like Mark Twain’s missionary....’

—Edmund Fuller

Some years ago in Hartford, we all went to church one hot sweltering night to hear the annual report of Mr. Hawley, a city missionary who went around finding people who needed help and didn't want to ask for it. He told of the life in cellars, where poverty resided; he gave instances of the heroism and devotion of the poor. 'When a man with millions gives,' he said, 'we make a great deal of noise. It's noise in the wrong place, for it's the widow's mite that counts.' Well, Hawley worked me up to a great pitch. I could hardly wait for him to get through. I had \$400 in my pocket. I wanted to give that and borrow more to give. You could see greenbacks in every eye. But instead of passing the plate then, he kept on talking and talking, and as he talked it grew hotter and hotter, and we grew sleepier and sleepier. My enthusiasm went down, down, down—\$100 at a clip—until finally, when the plate did come around, I stole ten cents out of it. It all goes to show how a little thing like this can lead to crime.

—Mark Twain

Good things, when short, are twice as good.

—Baltasar Gracián

Speeches that seem to flow spontaneously, orations that appear to be off the cuff, usually aren't quite that simple. They come from careful preparation and back-grounding. They come from knowing what you want to say, understanding how to get into it gracefully, and how to make it memorable with an appropriate anecdote or wise quotation.

—Leonard and Thelma
Spinrad

Few speeches are remembered for their lengthy oratory. Most of those that live are remembered for a sentence, a paragraph, a turn of phrase here or there. William Jennings Bryan's great 'Cross of Gold' oration, which captured the 1896 Democratic presidential nomination for him, generally has the same three sentences quoted from it, because these relatively few words say so much so well.

Every great speaker in modern times has used these notable piths from speakers of earlier vintage. Sometimes quotations are employed directly. Sometimes the wisdom of previous speakers is studied to suggest new approaches or new directions in which a point can be developed. The wise speaker in preparing a speech, looks for everything from quips and epigrams to scholarly citations.

—Leonard and Thelma
Spinrad

A speech has the same first problem as an automobile. It has to be started. Even though you know exactly what message you want to leave with your audience, you've got to figure out how you can grab their attention at the outset. Audiences are generally eager to be your friends; they don't want to be bored or antagonized any more than you do. Whether they expect to enjoy your speech or not, they hope to.

And even if they know you well, they still have to be led attractively and interestingly into the nitty-gritty of your remarks. It is sometimes helpful to be introduced by someone else who, so to speak, warms up the audience for you. Even gifted entertainers on television like to have somebody warm up the audience for them. But when you step up to speak, you are stepping into a situation that always represents a challenge—a challenge to establish your own quick and clear claim to be worth listening to. Like the farmer who hits a stubborn mule over the head simply 'to get the critter's attention,' you have to use your opening words—since you can't hit the audience over the head—to get its attention.

—Leonard and Thelma
Spinrad

The 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debate confirmed the power of television to influence political opinion. Kennedy won among TV viewers polled, while people who listened on the radio gave the edge to Nixon.

—Ed Kelley

One should use common words to say uncommon things.

—Arthur Schopenhauer

Speech has power. Words do not fade. What starts out as a sound, ends in a deed.

—Abraham Joshua
Herschel

One of the best debates in history was held in 1965 between the writer James Baldwin and William F. Buckley, the founder of *National Review*, at the University of Cambridge. Before a sea of white faces, Baldwin maintained a steady, clam demeanor and pulverized Buckley, leading to a standing ovation. The topic, 'The American Dream Is at the Expense of the American Negro,' is still hauntingly appropriate more than 50 years later.

—Rafael Castillo

It is a lot easier to convince people to change if you treat them in a civil manner. Even if you are unsuccessful in changing minds, treating them as humans rather than as symbols embodying all that you hate is quite simply the right thing to do.

—Diane Nash

The philosophers Justin Tosi and Brandon Warmke have proposed the useful phrase moral grandstanding to describe what happens when people use moral talk to enhance their prestige in a public forum. Like a succession of orators speaking to a skeptical audience, each person strives to outdo previous speakers, leading to some common patterns. Grandstanders tend to ‘trump up moral charges, pile on in cases of public shaming, announce that anyone who disagrees with them is obviously wrong, or exaggerate emotional displays.’ Nuance and truth are casualties in this competition to gain the approval of the audience. Grandstanders scrutinize every word spoken by their opponents—and sometimes even their friends—for the potential to evoke public outrage. Context collapses. The speaker’s intent is ignored.

—Jonathan Haidt and
Tobias Rose-
Stockwell

Our speech, that is, all our utterances [are] filled with others’ words

—M. M. Bakhtin

Love speaks in flowers. Truth requires thorns.

—Leigh Bardugo

All our troubles spring from our failure to use plain, clear-cut language.

—Jean-Paul Satre

If you want to be heard, learn the language of your listeners.

—Jeffrey G. Duarte

Use simple words everyone knows, then everyone will understand.

—Winston Churchill

Without freedom of speech we would never know who the idiots are.

—*rusfu.com*

Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech.

—Benjamin Franklin

If you have an important point to make, don’t try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. The hit it third time—a tremendous whack.

—Sir Winston Churchill

Deliberation and debate is the way you stir the soul of our democracy.

—Jesse Jackson

If you've made your point, stop talking.

—*theChive*

There is an old saying in debate circles: When you get down in the mud and wrestle with a pig, the pig has fun and you get covered in mud.

—Christopher A. Coons

I think about Lincoln on that train ride to Gettysburg, penning his address and listening to that a—hole before him speak for over an hour and a half, who was just drubbing him. And then Lincoln sitting there, looking at his puny 270 words or whatever they were and thinking, Oh, man, I've miscalculated here. And it stands forever. Forever.

—Kevin Costner

Strong communicators increase their influence because they are intentional and focused with their language.

—Dianna Booher

The dumbing down, oversimplification, or flattened character of public speech may make our declamations and documents more accessible, but it deprives us all of a measure of beauty and clarity that could enrich our lives together. In more and more venues where speech and writing are required, adequate is adequate. A most exhilarating denunciation of this sort of mediocrity may be found in Mark Twain's acerbic little essay, 'Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses,' in which he observes:

When a person has a poor ear for music, he will flat and sharp right along without knowing it. He keeps near the tune, but it is not the tune. When a person has a poor ear for words, the result is a literary flattening and sharpening; you perceive what he is intending to say, but you also perceive that he doesn't say it.

This is Cooper. He was not a word-musician. His ear was satisfied with the approximate word.

—Marilyn Chandler
McEntyre

The most honorable of men is he who thinks best and acts best, but the most powerful is he who is best able to talk and write.

—George Sand

It is impossible to speak in such a way that you cannot be misunderstood: there will always be some who misunderstand you.

—Karl Popper

It's normal to be terrified of public speaking, but don't let this fear stand in your way. Start small and contact your local libraries, chambers of commerce, and places of worship—this will give you low-stakes engagements to get used to speaking.

—Dima Ghawi

Since light travels faster than sound, some people may appear bright until you hear them speak.

—Internet Meme

Is it possible to make a sharp distinction between the content and the the form, between the personality of the Texas auctioneer and the language that he uses? Are not our attitudes toward people and events in great part shaped by the very language in which we describe them? When we try to describe one person to another or to a group, what do we say? Not usually how or what that person ate, rarely what he wore, only occasionally how he managed his job—no, what we tell is what he said and, if we are good mimics, how he said it. We apparently consider a person's spoken words the true essence of his being.

—Cleanth Brooks

The written word remains. The spoken word takes wing and cannot be recalled.

—Horace

Competence in the use of language—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—is the basis for all other learning. A subject is not fully known until the learner can talk or write about it in his or her own words. A principal cause of failure of college students or young people in the workplace is inability to handle language effectively... It follows that all teachers of all subjects have a major responsibility to foster growth in language skills...[and] Studies have shown that, outside of English classes, most teachers are not fulfilling their responsibility to foster growth in language skill.

—*National Council of
Teachers of
English*

The spoken word is perhaps the least effective way of reaching the heart; one must constantly pay attention with one's mind. The spoken word tends to go to our heads, not our hearts.

—Marcus J. Borg

The specific American idiom 'to take to the stump' grew directly from the American way of life in the mid 19th century, a time of great felling of trees to clear fields and township sites. For at least two generations, then, the commonest article in any landscape was a stump. One was never more than a few feet from one. Any man moved to make a speech could easily take to the nearest stump as his rostrum.

—John Ciardi

Radio and television speech becomes standardized, perhaps better English than we have ever used. Just as our bread, mixed and baked, packaged and sold without benefit of accident of human frailty, is uniformly good and uniformly tasteless, so will our speech become one speech.

—John Steinbeck

The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as if it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink.

—George Orwell

THREE STEPS TO SILENCING CRUTCH WORDS

To identify your crutch words, videotape or review a transcript of your most recent talk, and determine what vocal fillers you rely on most....Pair your crutch words with small actions. Every time you catch yourself saying 'like,' for example, tap your leg. Or have a family member or close friend monitor your filler words and bring your attention to them with a clap or snap.

Next...set up a video to record, and talk about what you did from the beginning to the end of the day. Practice using pauses instead of filler words as you recall the events.

Finally, nerves are one of the biggest reasons people overuse vocal fillers. The less prepared you are, the more nervous you'll be, which will likely cause you to speak too quickly, trip over your words, and forget what's next. So practice.

—Noah Zandan

When you wish to instruct, be brief; that men's [children's] minds take in quickly what you say, learn its lesson, and retain it faithfully. Every word that is unnecessary only pours over the side of a brimming mind.

—Cicero

There was no crime in unconscious plagiarism; that I committed it everyday, that he committed it everyday, that every man alive on earth who writes or speaks commits it every day and not merely once or twice but every time he open his mouth... there is nothing of our own in it except some slight change born of our temperament, character, environment, teachings and associations.

—Mark Twain

If you can give a decent speech in public or cut any kind of figure on the podium, then you never need dine...alone.

—Christopher Hitchens

If you're talking to a group, don't pace up and down the aisle or back and forth across the stage. You'll make everyone nervous and give the impression that you're 'working' the audience rather than delivering your message. It's also important not to cling to the lectern or appear to be chained to one spot on the floor. Rather, use the lectern as a base of power, authority, and control—not a crutch to hide behind or lean on. It is, without question, important to physically move around from time to time as you speak. However, remember that moving does not mean pacing or running from one end of the stage or room to another.

—Robert L. DeBruyn

Make sure to check and double-check how to pronounce the name of any person you intend quote in a meeting. If you mispronounce the name, you'll lose credibility immediately. You may also be the butt of a negative joke for a long, long time.

Whether it's Goethe, Camus, or Zukowski, make sure you have it right—and can say the name aloud with ease before saying it publicly. If you can't pronounce the name easily, don't use it. It's too big a risk.

—Robert L. DeBruyn

Learning how to discipline your speech is a way of preventing your energies from spilling out of you through the rupture of your mouth, exhausting you and filling the world with words, words, words instead of serenity, peace and bliss.

—Elizabeth Gilbert

Nobody is capable of free speech unless he knows how to use language, and such knowledge is not a gift: it has to be learned and worked at.

—Northrop Frye

To argue with a man who has renounced the use and authority of reason, and whose philosophy consists in holding humanity in contempt, is like administering medicine to the dead, or endeavoring to convert an atheist by scripture.

—Thomas Paine

A lecture has been well described as the process whereby the notes of the teacher become the notes of the student without passing through the mind of either.

—Mortimer J. Adler

Fill your mind before you empty your mouth.

—Habeeb Akande

It is simplicity that makes the uneducated more effective than the educated when addressing popular audiences.

—Aristotle

It's illegal to bore people.

—Mo Siegel

When somebody shy is speaking, if you look at them and nod your head it encourages them to keep talking.

—*theChive*

Only 7%...when receiving a spoken message, primarily focused on the speaker's words; 38% focused on the verbal tone; and 55%, by far the largest group, focused on body language.

—Albert Mehrabian

You can sway a thousand men by appealing to their prejudices quicker than you can convince one man by logic.

—Robert A. Heinlein

Everything of importance has been said before by somebody who did not discover it.

--Alfred North
Whitehead

A professor is one who can speak on any subject—for precisely fifty minutes.

—Norbert Wiener

Whoso appears before the public should expect no consideration and demand none.

—Marie von
Ebner-Eschenbach