

No Notes

Problems with using notes

Speaker loses normal voice inflection because they lose touch with the ideas behind the words. Listen for normal pauses. Natural speech is filled with those; unnatural speech is not.

There is no or little eye contact – any eye contact is with the text, not the audience.

One of the biggest problems speakers face when reading text is that we often forget to use gestures. We are so busy making sure that we read the text we fail to communicate effectively with our entire body. If you do use notes one thing you can do to help this is to double space your typed text to leave room to add notes or cues about gestures and other reminder type clues.

MEMORIZING

Write out your speech by hand. The act of writing out words provides a very strong reinforcement.

Break it down. Put it in small sections then memorize one section at a time. Moving from one section to another as you memorize each section.

Cut out very small sections and put them back in order by memory.

Write or type out different sections in different colors and styles.

Don't memorize when you are tired or hungry.

Rhythm and rhymes.

Using Humor in Your Speech

People often say that they don't use humor in their speeches because they feel they aren't funny. Humor can and should be used by everyone. There are many reasons why humor can be very beneficial in a speech.

It can relax an audience and make them feel more comfortable with you.

It can help reiterate or bring attention to the point you are trying to make in your speech.

It can help your audience remember the point you are making.

It can break down fences with your audience and help make them more receptive to your ideas.

I have read and believe it is true that humor and jokes are not the same thing. Humor is found within the context of your speech and jokes invite an on-demand response from your audience.

That is the great thing about humor. You don't need to be a comedian to use humor effectively. Heck, you don't even have to be good at telling jokes. You just need a sense of humor and all of us have one of those whether we know it or not.

The really cool thing about humor is it can be used in lots of different ways so that gives you the freedom to adapt it to your personality.

Let's look at some of the keys in using humor in your speech.

Make sure the humor is funny to you

If the anecdote, one-liner, pun or whatever you use is not funny to you then you certainly can't expect it to be funny to your audience. Make sure you only use humor that makes you laugh or smile. If it is funny to you it will be much easier to sell it to your audience as well.

Make it relevant

Use humor to make a point, one that advances your overall speech objective. If you do, your audience – even if they don't fully get the humor – will get the point and appreciate that. Make the humor relevant to your audience as well. That means doing your homework and knowing your audience.

Before using humor in your speech try it out on a small group such as your family or a close group of friends. Even if they don't laugh or at least smile don't give up. The problem just might be in the delivery and not the humor itself. That is something that you can fix by practicing.

Where to get the humor

Anecdotes – This is any interesting story based on a real incident. It can be your own experience or you can relate a story from someone else's experience or you can use those of well known people.

Analogy – a comparison that allows you make a point quickly, such as “ I feel like the deceased at a wake. I'm not expected to say much, but you can't start the meeting without me. So I'll be brief”.

An aside – a thought that's seemingly thrown in as if something you've just said reminds you of a related thought. An aside must be short, allowing you to jump back into your original train of thought.

And of course there is always the reliable **quote**.

While not everyone can tell a joke, anyone with a little practice can tell an anecdote, or use an analogy, an aside or a quote.

Don't be afraid to occasionally do something a little off the wall. Sing a little rap (even if you can't rap). Do a little dance (even if you don't dance). People really enjoy those that aren't afraid to be a little foolish. I think deep down even the most serious people want to act a little foolish sometimes.