

9. PREPARING AND DELIVERING SPEECHES

The following tips are intended to help you select appropriate material and prepare and deliver your speeches:-

1. Selection of material

(a) Sources:

- Any source you like, including the press, TV, radio, internet or your own personal or professional experience, but the subject should be relevant to today's world.
- Choose a subject that interests you, since you are then more likely to turn it into an interesting and engaging speech.
- You should also fully understand the ideas you are trying to convey- otherwise you may well sound confused.

(b) Progression:

- At the beginning of the course try to find simple, non-technical subjects which can be turned into easy-to-visualise ideas.
- After a few weeks you can move on to less rudimentary subjects of general, European and national interest (about your own country).
- You might be asked to talk about particular subjects and there may well be a schedule of topics covering all or part of the course. In that case, keep an eye out in advance for source material on the topics scheduled for future months so that you can produce speeches when these topics arise.
- You may also be asked to come up with speeches tailored to particular pedagogical requirements such as speeches containing figures or link words or speeches where you play the role of a politician or expert .

2. Preparing your speeches

- When preparing your speeches, even if your source material is a written text, you should turn it into an authentic oral speech containing a message that you wish to get across to your audience.
- In order for the students to be able to convey your message, you will need to be clear in the way you argue your case and you will want to make sure that your speech is self-explanatory with its own self-contained internal logic.

With all these points in mind, how should you go about turning your article into a speech?

- Read it through a number of times, digesting the basic ideas in it, and decide which parts to use and which to discard and in what order you wish to present the parts you are using.
- You can then reassemble these ideas to construct your own original speech with your own personal line and opinion binding them into a coherent message.
- Since your speech will almost certainly be different in form, length and style to the source article, you should write it out separately, preferably in note form, or even decide to deliver it without any notes at all.

3. Delivering your speech

- Explain the context: Just before you start delivering your speech you should announce the subject and the context.
- At the start of the course, you may wish to explain what sort of line you are going to take on the subject - even what sort of speech it is going to be (factual, descriptive, polemical, passionate etc.). --- You may wish to indicate one or two points of difficult vocabulary in advance.

Do not read: Never read out an article or other printed text.

- If you have prepared notes for your speech, do not read them mechanically. Glance at them as you proceed, but make sure you establish eye contact with your audience .
- use other techniques that aid successful oral communication e.g.
 - clear articulation
 - pauses and links between the various parts of your speech
 - repetition to underscore an important point
 - rhetorical devices such as questions thrown up and then answered
 - variations in intonation, voice, stress and speed
 - body language

Don't worry about the language you use being too difficult or too easy. Just speak naturally at a normal pace.

As for length, during the early part for listening and concentration exercises speeches should be no longer than 2-3 minutes, for consecutive with notes ranging from 3-7minutes, while speeches delivered towards the end of the course for simultaneous could range from 5-12 minutes.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS TO SPEAKERS

1. The ideal speech:

a) should be self-explanatory, self-contained and non-specialised, with its own internal logic : a candidate should be able to fully grasp its meaning (introduction, development of the argument and conclusion) without the need for additional explanations or terminological preparation.

b) should deal with a contemporary issue : it should afford the candidate the opportunity to mobilise his/her knowledge of *inter alia* current affairs or the major problems of society. However, "contemporary" does not necessarily mean that the subject chosen emerged only in the last few days, but that the issue in question remains relevant to today's world (e.g. end of the cold war, oil crises in the 70's, etc.).

c) should cover an issue likely to be discussed at European or international level : this would not preclude the possibility of broaching national issues, particularly where they transcend national borders (e.g. ETA in Spain, the peace process in Northern Ireland, the future of nuclear energy or the treatment of minorities in some Eastern European countries, etc.) or where they give rise to intense debate within that country, in which case a candidate familiar with the country will be aware of it.

d) should contain a reasoned argument rather than be purely descriptive (especially for consecutive): this is more in tune with the reality of EU meetings, which essentially consist of the exchange of argued opinions with a view to reaching a consensus. This type of speech is also easier for the speaker to assume as his/her own speech, thus making the ideas in it easier to understand and allowing the candidate to show his ability to identify and empathise with the speaker.

2. Tips for preparing speeches

a) source material :

the national and international press, the media, books, films, meetings, professional brochures, travel, personal experiences, etc.

b) collecting material :

get into the habit of looking out for useful source material and storing it for future reference rather than searching for subjects at the last minute (e.g. keep newspaper cuttings in a file, or, if you hear a well-argued statement in a meeting on an interesting subject which would be understood by a non-specialist, jot down its basic structure; or take a few quick notes summarising the ideas in a radio or TV programme).

c) transcribing your speech :

- before developing the details of your argument you might wish to draw up a short plan setting out the basic point of the speech, how the various parts are linked together and your conclusion ;
- if your source material is a text, make sure you turn it into an oral statement, which may mean having to completely restructure it;

- choose the sort of notes you feel most comfortable with : key words, outline plan, consecutive notes or full transcription ; the approach you opt for makes little difference provided you do not sound as if you are reading.

d) do not repeat the same speech during the same test :

to ensure a level playing field for all candidates the test panel will have to be "discovering the speech" for the first time together with each and every candidate, since a second or third candidate working from the same speech could well be judged more severely than the first candidate. You may, however, wish to use your speeches again at a different test, speech preparation being fairly time-consuming, particularly if your language is in great demand.

3. Tips on delivering speeches

a) ***announce the subject of the speech in advance*** : so that the candidate can quickly prepare himself mentally and ease himself into the appropriate situation.

b) ***DO NOT READ unless you have reworked and inwardly digested the reasoning in your head*** : if the exercise is too difficult (too dense or too fast) owing to its being read out mechanically, the test panel will be hard pressed to distinguish between the candidate's own shortcomings and those caused by the nature of the exercise and will thus find it difficult to judge the candidate, particularly in border-line cases. Speak at a normal comfortable speed for your audience, especially for consecutive testing.

c) ***address your public (the test panel members) rather than the candidate.***

d) ***make it your own speech by including your own personal viewpoint :***

put some conviction into what you are saying by expressing your own ideas alongside your account of the facts (switching from factual description to a statement of one's personal position and back again to the facts is typical of meetings involving negotiations and should be picked up by a candidate in both consecutive and simultaneous modes). Feel free to indulge in a bit of verbal redundancy when you are trying to get your own ideas across or to use any other appropriate rhetorical device to attract or maintain the attention of your audience.

e) ***know how to finish off quickly when your time is up*** : by winding up the last part of your argument and bringing forward your conclusion rather than by speeding up your delivery; this means you will need to keep an eye out for signs to this effect from the panel chairperson or the person timing your speech.

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