

Suggestions for Writing Oral Communication Assignment Prompts

1. As with a written assignment, offer a summary of the assignment (subject, purpose, relevant course materials, 2-3 relevant skills students will practice in the assignment, specific time limit for the speech).
2. Identify the goal of the assignment:
 - Give information?
 - Make an argument?
 - Interpret an art piece?
 - Translate written assignment into oral presentation?
 - Other?
3. Offer suggestions for starting and staging the assignment:
 - Brainstorm the topic
 - Collect information/data
 - Outline the speech
 - If appropriate, translate a written work into oral presentation
4. Discuss oral style:
 - Listening audiences are different from reading audiences
 - Speech notes are written for the listener's ear and the speaker's eye
 - Repetition is vital (transitions, phrasing, key words, main points)
 - Simple syntax (as in a conversation)
 - Shorter sentences
 - Contractions are permitted
 - Personal pronouns are encouraged
 - Punchy statements
 - Colloquial language
 - Outline the basic structure of the speech
5. Manuscript speeches (word for word) are appropriate in some contexts but they require special effort with delivery:
 - Speaker must compensate for less eye contact with enhanced vocal expressiveness
 - Speaker should increase facial expressiveness and hand/arm gestures
 - Speaker must attend carefully to the pacing of the speech and audience response
6. Set a deadline for draft outline, with sources; provide either peer feedback or faculty feedback.

7. Set the dates for the speeches
 - Assign specific dates to specific students
 - Assign “engaged listening” exercise for students not speaking on a given speech day (written feedback from peers, questions from peers)
 - Assign timekeepers and facilitators (to support the students giving speeches)
8. Recommend (or require) that students make an appointment or appointments with the Center for Speech and Effective Advocacy for brainstorming a topic, developing an outline, translating a written work into oral style, and/or rehearsing their speech (including video recording and playback).
9. Remind students what they need to take with them to the Speech Center:
 - A copy of their assignment prompt
 - Notes
 - Research
 - Written work (to be translated into oral style)
 - Thumb drive, or ability to upload to their Puget Sound Google drive (if they are rehearsing)

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