



WELCOME...

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the English-Speaking Union International Public Speaking Competition (IPSC) 2017.

The English-Speaking Union (ESU) is a unique global education charity and membership organisation that brings together and empowers people of different languages and cultures. With the support of our worldwide membership we seek to build skills and confidence in communication, and give individuals the opportunity to realise their full potential. These opportunities act as a platform to engage in an exchange of ideas and opinions on an international scale.

The IPSC, now in its 37th year, is the largest public speaking competition in the world. Administered by the International department at Dartmouth House, the IPSC involves 600,000 students in over 50 countries, and represents one of the clearest manifestations of the goals of the ESU. Not only does the IPSC provide students with an opportunity to develop the vital skills that enable them to speak with confidence in public, but through the international final in London, students from around the world have the opportunity to meet, engage, and form friendships and understanding that will last a lifetime.

I should like to take the opportunity to thank those without whose hard work and dedication this competition would not be possible: all international branches of the ESU and organisers of national competitions which feed into the international final.

Thank you again for all your support.

**JANE EASTON, DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION**





THEMES

There are two themes: the theme for national competitions and the theme for the international competition. This year's theme for national competitions is *"Peace is not an absence of war"* and may be used for national public speaking competitions. This year's theme for the prepared speech heats of the international competition is *"To define is to limit"*. Those advancing to the IPSC final will be asked to give the speech on *"Peace is not an absence of war"*.

DATES

The deadline for submitting preliminary registration forms is Friday 3 February 2017. The preliminary registration forms should be completed by national competition organisers. The deadline for submitting participant information forms and accompanying guest information forms is Friday 17 March 2017. Information forms should be completed by participants and accompanying guests. The deadline for paying the registration fee is Tuesday 2 May 2017.

The IPSC programme will run from Monday 8 May 2017 to the evening of Friday 12 May 2017.



THE PROGRAMME

The IPSC is part of a five-day programme of events (**Monday through to Friday**), including public speaking, debating and performance workshops, educational and cultural excursions, and a two-day public speaking competition.

Workshops

As part of the five-day programme, participants receive training in public speaking and debating skills from world-class ESU mentors at Dartmouth House. The training sessions are geared towards the competition. Training in expression, delivery, listening and response skills are designed to improve the participants' delivery of their prepared speeches and their ability to listen and respond to questions. Training in organisation and prioritisation of arguments, reasoning and analysis, as well as critical thinking skills are designed to improve the participants' ability to write and deliver an impromptu speech. In addition, participants receive training at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. The Globe workshops are delivered by experts in drama, theatre and performance, and are also designed to enhance the participants' expressive and persuasive abilities, as well as their improvisation skills and their self-confidence.

Excursions

As part of the IPSC programme, participants are taken on education and cultural excursions. In previous years, the programme has included tours of the House of Parliament, BBC TV studios, Hampton Court Palace, a trip to the theatre and more. The programme for IPSC 2017 will be made available in due course.

Heats and Grand Final

The competition takes place over two days of the IPSC programme. The prepared speech and impromptu speech heats are held on the Thursday, and the grand final takes place on Friday afternoon. There is a post-grand final reception at Dartmouth House on Friday evening.

Accompanying guests are welcome to attend the heats and final of the IPSC.

Accommodation

The participant registration fee covers bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in central London for five nights (**Monday 8 May to Friday 12 May 2017 inclusive, with check out on the morning of Saturday 13 May**).

The registration fee does not cover any extra accommodation which may be required by those who arrive early or leave late. Extra accommodation must be arranged with the hotel privately. **All participants will be required to stay in accommodation provided by the ESU and will be asked to share a room with a fellow participant based on gender and age.**

Accompanying Guests

Students who travel to London to participate in the IPSC are not required to be accompanied by an adult. However, participants are welcome to bring guests with them if they wish (usually a parent, guardian or public speaking coach).

"Accompanying guest" (for the purposes of the IPSC and this handbook) means a guest who has submitted the accompanying guest information form and paid the accompanying guest registration fee. Accompanying guests will not be accommodated for by the ESU. Registered accompanying guests will be guaranteed entry to the welcome reception, both sets of heats and the grand final. A maximum of two accompanying guests per participant may attend IPSC 2017. Accompanying guests will be responsible for sourcing their own accommodation. They may stay in the same hotel as participants at their own arrangement. Participants will be staying in either the Imperial or President Hotel, Russell Square, London (the Hotels are connected by a walkway).

Any person accompanying a participant who has not submitted the accompanying guest information form and has not paid the accompanying guest registration fee is not an "accompanying guest" (for the purposes of the IPSC and this handbook). Such persons will not be guaranteed entry to the welcome reception, either set of heats or the grand final.



COMPETITION RULES

Registration

The closing date for countries to register for the competition is Friday, 3 February 2017. This must be done using the preliminary registration form, found at esu.org/ipsc.

The closing date for participants or accompanying guests to submit their final information for the competition is Friday 17 March 2017. This must be done using the participant information form or the accompanying guest information form.

The closing date for organisers, participants or accompanying guests to pay their registration fee is Tuesday 2 May 2017. This must be done using the payment form. **The participant registration fee is £180. The accompanying guest registration fee is £25.**

All forms must be completed online here (www.esu.org/ipsc). If this is not possible please contact International Programmes Officer and IPSC convenor William Stileman (william.stileman@esu.org)

Organisers, participants or accompanying guests who are unable to submit their registration or information form and/or make their payment within the timeframe provided and/or in the manner provided, for whatever reason, must contact the IPSC convenor directly, prior to the deadline, to request an extension or exemption.

Eligibility

One participant per competing country is eligible to enter IPSC 2017.

Two accompanying guests per participant are eligible to attend IPSC 2017.

Participants must be winners of an ESU public speaking competition in their country or winners of another public speaking competition in their country, which is officially recognised by the ESU (e.g. that of a partner organisation).

Participants must be students aged between 16 and 20 at the time of the competition (i.e. the oldest possible participant would turn 21 the day after the competition ends).

Participants must be passport holders or permanent residents of the country they are representing.

Themes

Participants must write and deliver a speech, the title and content of which are connected with the theme for the competition. Participants may interpret the theme in any way they wish, but may not use the theme as the title of their speech.

This year's theme for national competitions is "Peace is not an absence of war" and may be used by competition organisers for their national public speaking competitions. This year's prepared speech heats theme for the international competition is "To define is to limit". All participants will be required to deliver a prepared speech on the prepared speech heats theme, as well as an impromptu speech.

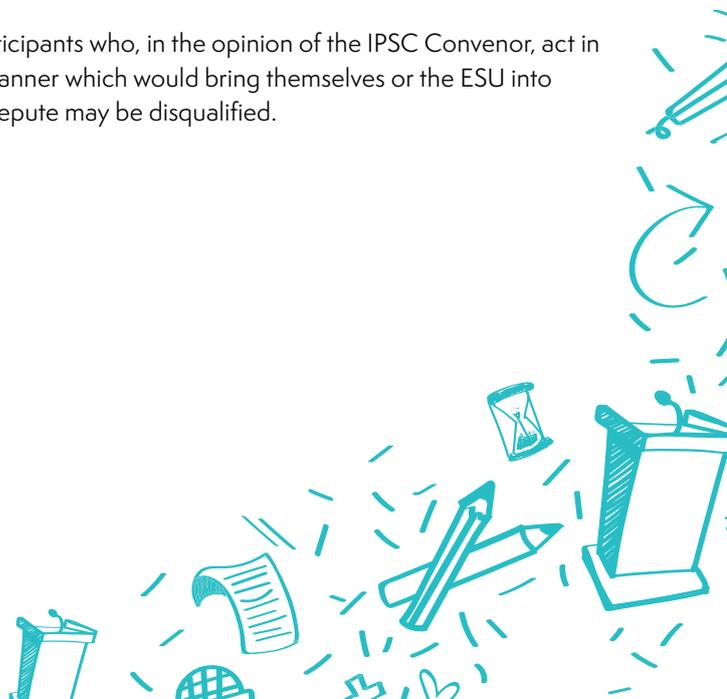
Conduct of Rounds

All the information pertaining to the heats and the grand final, explained separately on pages 7-9, forms part of the competition rules.

Disqualification

Participants who breach the rules relating to registration, eligibility, themes or the conduct of rounds may be disqualified.

Participants who, in the opinion of the IPSC Convenor, act in a manner which would bring themselves or the ESU into disrepute may be disqualified.



Participants who speak for fewer than 4 minutes and 30 seconds or more than 5 minutes and 30 seconds may be penalised by the adjudicators.

The speech is immediately followed by a 3-4-minute question period.

Questions may come from members of the audience or members of the adjudication panel and participants should respond to each question individually.

Audience members who are connected with a participant (e.g. a family member or an accompanying guest) may not ask questions of that participant.

No visual aids, props or amplifying microphones may be used (recording devices may be used with prior permission from the IPSC Convenor).

The adjudicators judge the participants in the heats in accordance with the adjudication guidelines and the marking scheme for prepared speeches, and the speaker scale, contained in this handbook.

Participants may seek feedback from the adjudicators, but only after the decision has been announced.

The adjudicators' decision is final.

A ranking will be given to each participant based on the speaker scale. This ranking, along with the impromptu heat ranking, will determine which speakers go on to perform in the grand final.

Heats – Impromptu speeches

The impromptu speeches are the second stage of the competition. Participants are assigned to one of six heats (determined by the IPSC Convenor).

Participants speak in a random order (determined by the IPSC Convenor).

Participants deliver a three-minute impromptu speech on a new topic. Participants choose their topic from a list of three, which they receive 15 minutes before they must deliver their speech.

During the 15-minute preparation period:

- participants are given a quiet room in which to choose their topic and prepare their speech;
- participants may not use any printed or electronic resources for the purpose of research;
- dictionaries and writing materials (blank paper, palm or cue cards, pens, pencils etc.) are made available to participants.

A timekeeper gives an audible signal at 2 minutes 30 seconds (to indicate that 30 seconds remain), at 3 minutes (to indicate that the participant's time is up) and at 3 minutes and 30 seconds (at which point the participant must conclude their speech immediately).

Participants who speak for fewer than 2 minutes 30 seconds or more than 3 minutes 30 seconds may be penalised by the adjudicators.

The impromptu speech is not followed by a question period.

No visual aids, props or amplifying microphones may be used (recording devices may be used with prior permission from the IPSC Convenor).

The adjudicators judge the participants in the impromptu speech heats in accordance with the adjudication guidelines and the marking scheme for impromptu speeches, and the speaker scale, contained in this handbook.

Participants may seek feedback from the adjudicators, but only after the decision has been announced.

The adjudicators' decision is final. A ranking will be given to each participant based on the speaker scale. This ranking, along with the prepared speech heat ranking, will determine which speakers go on to perform in the grand final.



Grand Final

Participants speak in a random order (determined by the IPSC Convenor).

Participants deliver their five-minute prepared speech (on the theme of "Peace is not an absence of war").

The rules relating to timing, questioning and adjudication apply to the grand final exactly as they apply to the prepared speech heats (see above).

No visual aids or props may be used. Amplifying and/or recording microphones may be used at the discretion of the IPSC Convenor (other recording devices may be used with prior permission from with IPSC Convenor).

The adjudicators select a winner and a runner up, both of whom receive an award.

Fig. 1

- The chairperson introduces the speaker, giving their name, country and the title of their speech. After the speech, the chairperson invites questions from the audience and the adjudicators. Questions must be addressed to the chairperson.
- The timekeeper records the length of each speech for the adjudicators and gives audible signals indicating how much time has elapsed for each speech.
- The chairperson and the timekeeper sit together at the front or at the side of the room in view of the speaker, the adjudicators and the audience. The speaker stands at the front of the room, in view of the adjudicators and the audience.
- The adjudicators (adjudication panel) sit at the back of the room, behind the audience.

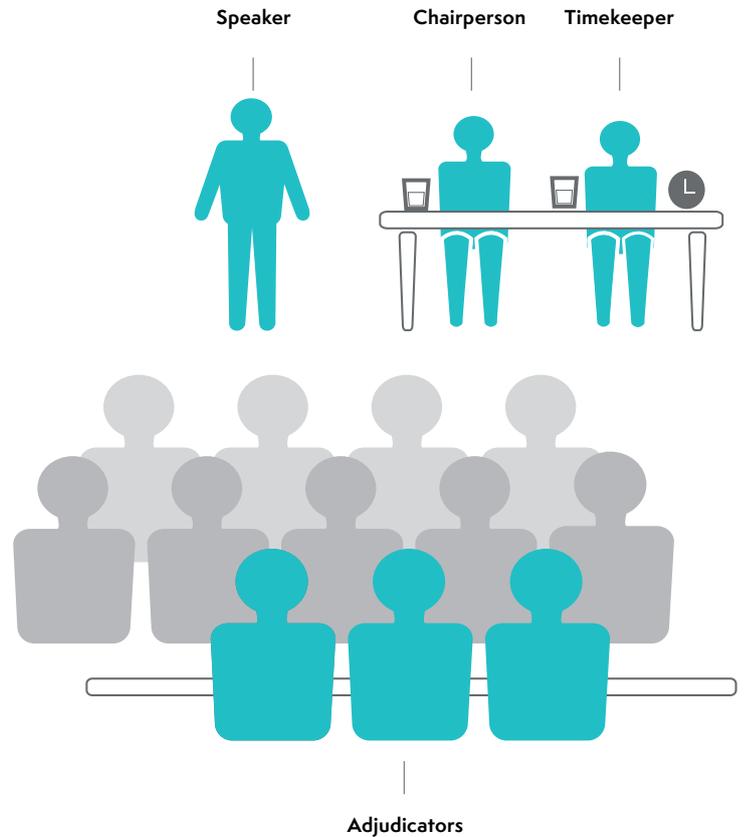


Fig 2. How participants can reach final of IPSC

ROUTE 1: MAIN ROUTE TO FINAL



Prepared speech heat: Finish in the top 5



Finish top in the impromptu speech heat (or highest of those not open to wild card route)



ROUTE 2: WILD CARD ROUTE TO FINAL



Prepared speech heat: Finish outside the top 5



Finish top in impromptu speech heat



PLACE IN IPSC FINAL



GUIDANCE FOR SPEAKERS

Prepared speeches

GETTING STARTED

Interpreting the theme

Speakers may interpret the theme in any way they wish, but may not use the theme as the title of their speech. Themes for the IPSC are deliberately broad and do not suggest any specific subject area. Speakers should avoid trying to second guess any notional 'intention' behind the theme (there is none!), and should choose a topic they want to speak on, rather than a topic they feel they should speak on.

Finally, speakers should remember that the audience and the adjudicators will be hearing approximately 50 speeches based around the same theme, so an original or creative interpretation of the theme, with an interesting or memorable speech title, is likely to be rewarded.

Choosing a topic and a title

Many speakers attempt to think of a title that is connected with the theme and then try to construct a speech around that title. It is usually much more effective to choose a topic that they want to write a speech about first (either something they already know a lot about or something they would like to learn more about), and then find a connection between that subject area and the theme. An interesting title is very often something that simply comes to the writer during the researching or writing process (or indeed after the speech has been constructed in its entirety).

Speakers should consider the following when choosing a topic:

Am I interested in the topic? – Speakers should never write a speech on a topic or subject area that they are not interested in. Enthusiasm is difficult to fabricate and without it speakers can't hope to maximise their marks under Expression and Delivery. Conversely, many speakers also try to avoid writing a speech on a topic or subject area that they have very detailed knowledge of, as the inability to get all their knowledge into a five-minute speech can be quite frustrating. For those reasons, speakers often try to strike a balance between the two extremes; i.e. they choose a topic or subject area which they don't know a lot about but which they are interested in.

Will my topic capture the interest of the audience? –

The audience and the adjudicators do not necessarily have to be interested in the speaker's topic to be persuaded by the speech. Speakers should try to make their speech more engaging by demonstrating the relevance of their arguments to the audience and the adjudicators (e.g. The allocation of government resources may seem like a boring topic to some audience members until one considers that the topic could be linked to the availability of teachers or hospital beds. Similarly, intellectual property law may be something that few people are interested in until one considers its link to illegal downloading.).

Will I be able to research my topic effectively? –

Speakers will need a certain amount of evidence to support their arguments and persuade the audience. The speaker's topic must be one which they can research effectively using the resources available to them (the school or university library, the local library, the internet etc.). Researching the topic area is important; not only for the speech itself, but for the question period when the speaker's background or ancillary knowledge of the issues is put to the test.

Will I be able to discuss my topic in the limited time available? –

Some topics or subject areas are particularly obscure or otherwise unfamiliar and would require a significant amount of explanation to make the information accessible to the audience and the adjudicators.

For example, it would probably be impossible to convince an audience that 'The Meiji Restoration in Japan was unfair on the daimyos' in five minutes. The speaker would have to begin by outlining the state of Japan before the restoration, then explain what a daimyo is, and then present analysis of those two descriptions or explanations to prove that the daimyos suffered wrongly as a result of the restoration.

Any background, contextual or technical information required should not take up more than a few sentences of the speech. If such information requires elaborate explanation, speakers should consider refining their topic.

Brainstorming

Initial brainstorm – One way for speakers to decide on a topic is to write down as many words and ideas as they can think of that are connected with the theme in 60 seconds. Another method is to take individual words from the theme (or various different permutations), put them into a search engine (e.g. Google) and see what kind of results come back. A similar exercise involves taking individual words from the theme (or various different permutations) and putting them into an online dictionary or thesaurus. The resulting definitions, synonyms or antonyms may inspire an interesting idea for a speech.

Secondary brainstorm – Once the speaker has decided on a topic for the speech, it is useful to go back and brainstorm again; writing down all the words and ideas relating to that topic that come to mind in 5 minutes. This process will help the speaker to identify all the possible arguments which they may want to use in their speech. It will also help the speaker to decide how best to group those arguments. Finally, it will help the speaker identify arguments which they may not be able to use in the speech, but which may be useful when answering questions.



Research

Once the speaker has decided on a topic for the speech and has taken the time to think about all the possible angles or arguments, they should begin researching in more depth. Even where the speaker has prior knowledge of the topic, it is important for them to broaden their perspective as much as possible, and to ensure that the evidence and information they use in their speech is reliable and up-to-date.

Speakers should bear the following points in mind when researching their topic:

Different types of sources – Speakers should aim to utilise fact-based resources (e.g. encyclopaedias), academic resources (e.g. journals or reports) and opinion-based resources (e.g. newspapers or news websites).

Up-to-date information – Speakers should ensure that the information they are relying on to support their arguments is up-to-date. The internet (e.g. Google) is invaluable for checking that the information already obtained (e.g. a journal or newspaper article) is the most up-to-date information available.

Multiple sources – Speakers should aim, where possible, to have more than one source of evidence, particularly where statistics are involved. It is generally unwise for a speaker to allow one piece of evidence, from one source, to underpin an entire argument in their speech.

Anecdotal evidence – Anecdotal evidence (personal stories, myths, memories etc.) is generally unpersuasive, as it usually lacks clarity, certainty and universal applicability. However, depending on the nature of the speech and the style of the speaker, anecdotal evidence can sometimes be used to great effect (particularly if the speaker's primary goal is to entertain or inspire empathy in the audience; anecdotal evidence can be used to demonstrate the human dimension of an issue).



Expression and Delivery

What is the purpose of the speech?

There are many different types of public speaker – politicians, school teachers, university professors, comedians, TV and radio presenters etc. It follows that there are many different types of public speech – a wedding speech, a business presentation, a protest speech; the list goes on.

The purpose of the speech (or the purpose of the speaker) is what distinguishes one type of public speech from another. A politician seeks to persuade the voters. A school teacher or a university professor seeks to inform and inspire their students. A comedian seeks to entertain the audience.

In a competitive context, speakers should always approach their task of speech writing with a clear purpose in mind. Good speeches should attempt to do all four – persuade, inform, inspire and entertain the audience and the adjudicators.

Make an impact from the start!

First impressions are important. The audience and the adjudicators are at their most attentive at the very beginning of the speech. It is crucial to grab their attention from the very start with a confident and flawless opening.

Compare the opening lines of this speech: “Ladies and Gentlemen, today I will speak to you about global warming, caused by carbon emissions. I will show how the rise in global temperatures will lead to floods, droughts and food shortages in certain areas, as well as disruption to the ecosystem and civil unrest. I will then go on to tell you what can be done to prevent these effects from occurring.”

With the opening lines of this speech: “Floods. Plagues. Famine. Death. War. Destruction on a global scale. No, Ladies and Gentlemen, not biblical prophecies, not scenes from a Hollywood disaster movie; but predictions for the real world in our lifetime if we continue to pump poisonous carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. By the end of this speech, I will have proven to you how crucial a role we all have to play in avoiding this doomsday scenario. Because this time, it’s fact. Not fiction.”

The two opening paragraphs convey the same basic information (the audience and the adjudicators know the general theme of the speech, and that a problem is going to be outlined and a solution proposed). However, whereas the former paragraph is measured and dispassionate, the latter is dramatic and conveys a sense of urgency. An excellent way to grab the attention of an audience or an adjudication panel is to make the speech relevant to them (i.e. “how crucial a role we all have to play”). The use of single words or very short sentences at the start of a speech (i.e. “Death. War. Destruction on a global scale.”) makes for a dramatic opening (a shocking statistic or quote can have a similar effect). Note also the use of alliteration for emphasis (i.e. pump/poisonous and fact/fiction), the use of powerful or dramatic language (e.g. doomsday scenario), and the contrast between long and short sentences (i.e. the short sentence fragments at the start of the paragraph, then two long sentences, then two short sentences at the end; punctuating the end of a dramatic opening).

An opening that conveys a sense of humour or sorrow (or another emotion) can also be effective. The most effective type of opening will be determined by the subject matter of the speech and the speaking style of the speaker.

Similar emphasis should be put on the conclusion of the speech. It should link back to the opening of the speech (e.g. the problems that were identified, the questions that were posed etc.). All the techniques identified above (and much, much more) may be used to help a speaker to achieve a dramatic or otherwise memorable conclusion. It is often effective, at the end of a speech, to finish with a rhetorical question (something for the audience to ponder during the applause!).

Verbal skills

Speakers should remember that delivering a speech is not like reading an essay. If the reader of an essay misses a line or misunderstands a phrase, they can go back and re-read it. If a person listening to a speech misses a line or a phrase, they don’t get an opportunity to hear it a second time (often resulting in a loss of continuity for that listener and the loss of that listener’s attention for the speaker). For that reason, when giving a public speech, it is imperative that speakers speak slowly, clearly and loudly. This will help to ensure that the audience and the adjudicators hear every word, and can comprehend what is being said as they are listening.





Speakers who have spent a lot of time researching for their speech will probably be very familiar with the surrounding issues, as well as background or ancillary subject matter. However, speakers should bear in mind that most audience members will not have their level of specialist knowledge on the issue and should therefore avoid the use of technical, specialist or abbreviated jargon or other unfamiliar terminology (without explanation).

Finally, the IPSC is a public speaking competition which is conducted through the medium of the English language. However, it is not an English language exam. Speakers are not penalised under Expression and Delivery (or under any other section of the marking scheme) for occasional grammatical errors, mispronunciations etc.

Confidence and style

Confidence and style are at the core of effective expression and delivery. Speakers feel more confident, and exude that confidence when delivering their speeches, by following the tips discussed above (having a clear purpose or goal, making an impact from the start with a dramatic or otherwise memorable opening, and using verbal, non-verbal and linguistic skills or techniques effectively).

A good way to practice projecting confidence is for public speakers to record themselves delivering their speech (audio-visual recording and in front of an audience, if possible). This allows speakers to go back and assess their own strengths and weaknesses under the sub-categories identified above. It also allows the speaker to assess the sections of the speech to which the audience reacted positively, and those they did not (and the effect that those reactions had on the speaker's performance and confidence during the speech).

Once speakers have mastered the art of projecting confidence when speaking in public, developing a speaking style comes next. A compelling speaking style is what makes a speaker unique (and what maximises their marks under Expression and Delivery!). Some speakers have an emotive speaking style, and feel most comfortable persuading the audience of important social, economic or global issues (e.g. environmental issues, political issues, humanitarian issues etc.). For such speakers, an ability to convey passion and emotion is a huge strength. Other speakers have a witty, light-hearted or humorous speaking style and feel most comfortable when entertaining the audience; often delving into satire and using rhetorical devices such as sarcasm and irony to great effect. Light-hearted speakers often prefer to use narratives to communicate their ideas, rather than structured arguments supported empirical evidence. Both methods of illustration can be effective, depending on the subject matter of the speech and the natural style of the speaker.



Reasoning and Evidence

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Statement of intent

Providing the audience and the adjudicators with a statement of intent at the start of the speech lets them know what the speaker is trying to achieve with their speech, what the targets are etc. The statement of intent also gives the audience and the adjudicators a glimpse of the content or subject matter of each section of the speech.

For example, consider the following statement of intent: "Ladies and gentlemen, by the end of my speech I hope to have convinced you, not only that global poverty must be eradicated, but that it is a goal which is achievable in our life time, and that we have a responsibility to strive for the achievement of that goal."



Note the three targets outlined in the statement of intent: (1) to prove that global poverty must be eradicated, (2) to prove that global poverty can be eradicated in our lifetime and (3) to prove that we have a responsibility to eradicate global poverty. Note also the insight into the content of the three sections of the speech provided by the speaker (e.g. in the first section the speaker will provide some evidence that demonstrates the extent of the problem, in the second section the speaker will propose solutions to the problem, and in the third section the speaker will discuss the principled and practical reasons why we must solve the problem).

Using empirical evidence

There are various different types of evidence which a speaker may use in support of an argument in their speech – statistics from academic or scientific reports, statistics from newspapers or websites, quotations from academic journals or reports, quotations from newspapers or websites etc.

However, any empirical evidence used in support of an argument should (1) have a reliable source, (2) be up-to-date and (3) be relevant to the speech. Irrelevant evidence, evidence that comes from an unreliable source, or evidence that is out-of-date will inevitably undermine the credibility of the argument and the speaker.

Speakers should avoid using too much empirical evidence. Speeches that contain large amounts of facts and figures or lengthy quotations are unlikely to be particularly persuasive, because the audience and the adjudicators are unable to absorb large amounts of statistics, large excerpts from reports etc.

Speakers should also remember that simply stating the evidence is not a substitute for explaining their arguments logically, providing the audience with certain pieces of evidence in support of those arguments, and analyse the evidence to demonstrate how or why it supports the overall thesis of the speech. Ultimately, any empirical evidence used should support or complement an argument in the speech, not dominate it.





Using examples and analogies

An argument does not always have to be supported by facts, figures, quotations etc. Arguments can also be supported by analogies or examples of things which people know to be true under the status quo (i.e. without reference to statistics or quotations from credible sources to demonstrate or prove the truth of the example).

For example, in a speech proposing to legalise the sale, distribution and consumption of marijuana (in a country where it was previously illegal), rather than citing statistics from scientific reports or quotations from academic articles, the speaker could support their arguments by reference to another country where the sale, distribution and consumption of marijuana is already legal (e.g. the Netherlands). Similarly, rather than spending a lot of time justifying age limits or explaining an intricate licensing system, the speaker could simply support their arguments by reference to an analogous system in the same country (i.e. the age limits and licensing system applicable to the sale of tobacco in that country).

Arguments supported by analogies or examples, which most people accept as true under the status quo, are often even more persuasive than arguments supported by statistics or quotations, the sources of which many people may be unfamiliar with.

Using reasoned analysis and logic

Whether or not an argument is supported by evidence, examples or analogies, the audience and the adjudicators must be given some analysis explaining why what the speaker is saying is true and why what the speaker is saying supports the overall thesis of the speech.

When making an argument, speakers should try to avoid making assertions, assumptions or other errors in logic. Evidence, analogies, examples or other facts should be presented in a logical order such that they support the argument being made and lead to an obvious or logical conclusion. Crucially, each statement of fact or opinion should follow logically from the previous one and support the overall argument. Speakers should avoid presenting a series of seemingly disconnected statements.

For example, a good deductive argument goes:

1. All men are mortal.
2. Socrates was a man.
3. Therefore, Socrates was mortal.

Whereas, a bad deductive argument goes:

1. All men are mortal.
2. Socrates was a man.
3. Therefore, all men are like Socrates.

Dealing with conflicting evidence and opinions

Most speakers try to give speeches on issues which are topical and interesting. Many of those issues will be unresolved or debatable. There will be arguments on both sides. During research, speakers will discover evidence or other information which does not support the conclusion of their speech or with which they disagree.

This evidence or information should not be ignored! An interesting speaker will invariably make statements which are bold or controversial. A brave speaker will acknowledge the existence of evidence or opinion contrary to the conclusion of their own speech and utilise their persuasive skills and their own evidence to persuade the audience of their credibility and the truth of their own arguments.

There are a number of ways to challenge or undermine pieces of evidence or information which support a conclusion contrary to that presented in the speech. The speaker may argue that the evidence is out-of-date or that the source of the evidence is unreliable (e.g. blogs by unknown persons are usually unreliable, as is anecdotal evidence generally). The speaker may argue that the evidence is irrelevant (e.g. because it relates to a specific country or a specific set of circumstances not applicable to the speech). The speaker may also argue that the evidence fails to take account of other issues (e.g. unavoidable practical obstacles may negate the possibility of implementing a solution to a problem which is sound in principle).

It is important to remember that audiences aren't passive. They are made up of people who also have opinions about the things they see and hear in the world around them. Ultimately, an audience is more likely to be persuaded by a speaker who understands and has engaged with both sides of an argument, but can still justify their stance on one side or the other.



Credibility is key!

Credibility is an important part of public speaking. This doesn't mean being the most knowledgeable or qualified person in the room; it means presenting strong, logical arguments in support of your position (remember that the audience and the adjudicators probably won't have detailed knowledge or experience of the issues relevant to the speech either).

Just as mastering all the elements of Expression and Delivery leads to a confident speaker; mastering all the elements of Reasoning and Evidence leads to a credible speaker.



Impromptu speeches

GETTING STARTED

Choosing a topic

At the impromptu heats stage of the competition, speakers only have 15 minutes in which to choose their topic and prepare their speech. All the topics will be relatively broad and specialist knowledge will not be expected by the adjudicators. Speakers can interpret the topic as narrowly or as broadly as they wish and can speak for or against the topic. Speakers should choose the topic that they know the most about, and the topic with which they think they can do something interesting or original.

Brainstorming

During the 15 minute preparation period, speakers will not have the time to engage in the same level of detailed brainstorming or research as that describe above (in the Prepared Speeches section). However, speakers should take 1-2 minutes at the start of the preparation period, after they have selected their topic, to write down as many words and ideas as they can think of which relate to their chosen topic.

This will help inspire ideas regarding how best to group or categorise points (bearing in mind that in three minutes the speaker will probably only have time to make one or two points), and how best to approach the topic (e.g. using the narrative as a method of illustration, taking a satirical approach to the issue, giving a hard-hitting, critical or passionate account of a serious issue etc.).



KEY ELEMENTS

Expression and Delivery

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All of the above

All the guidelines and tips outlined above under Expression and Delivery (having a clear purpose, making an impact from the start with an interesting opening, making use of verbal, non-verbal and linguistic skills, and demonstrating a sense of confidence and style) all apply to impromptu speeches exactly as they apply to prepared speeches.

Speakers should also remember that, with only 15 minutes to prepare, they are not expected to have a fully written out speech and should not spend their preparation time attempting to write out a speech in full. However, speakers should make some notes for reference during their speech. They should focus on having a good introduction and conclusion (and thinking about how best to deliver those sections), and they should think about the one or two main points that are going to form that main section of the speech (bearing in mind that if the introduction takes 30 seconds and the conclusion takes 30 seconds, that only leaves approximately 2 minutes for the main section of the speech).

Confidence is key!

The most important thing to remember about the impromptu heats stage of the competition is that it is not a test of the speaker's knowledge and it is not an English language exam. The adjudicators are looking for the speaker who can take a broad, general topic and do something original or interesting with it. Speakers who give an engaging speech, the content of which is somehow related to the topic, with confidence and style are likely to score highly under Expression and Delivery.





Feedback

The IPSC is an invaluable opportunity for participants to be exposed to a range of world-class speakers and adjudicators, providing them with the chance to learn new skills and improve their public speaking techniques. Adjudicators play an integral part in that educational process, by providing constructive feedback to speakers after the competition.

When giving feedback, adjudicators should bear in mind that each speaker is a national champion and has therefore achieved huge success already by earning their place in the competition. Adjudicators should also bear in mind that, even though there is a certain extent to which adjudication is subjective and intuitive, decisions are more likely to be understood by speakers and coaches if they are justifiable by reference to the objective criteria laid out in this handbook. This also allows speakers to focus on the specific area(s) where there is room for improvement.

Adjudicating is also a valuable learning experience for public speaking and debating coaches in particular. It gives them an insight into how their own speakers can be successful from an adjudicator's point of view. It also hones their skills as coaches and enhances their ability to deconstruct and critique a speech, and give constructive feedback.



NOTES

