**Structure**

**Timings:** Make sure you will stick to your time allocation by practising reading aloud and timing yourself. You could even do a word count of a document you read aloud, to be precise!

**Introduction and conclusion:** Set some time aside for both your introduction and conclusion, and then divide the balance of time amongst the ideas you must address.

**Your main points:** Write the body of your speech first of all, using a topic sentence, evidence and then link your evidence to your main point for each of your ideas.

**Language**

Here are some rhetorical devices you might use. Tick the techniques when you have included them in your speech.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rhetorical device** | **Have I used it?** | **Rhetorical device** | **Have I used it?** |
| Quote a reliable source |  | Slogans, mottoes, aphorisms |  |
| Statistics |  | Alliteration |  |
| Emotive words |  | Rhetorical questions |  |
| Forceful phrases |  | Hypophora (raising a question and answering it immediately) |  |
| Figurative imagery |  | Anaphora (repetition of a word or series of words in successive clauses) |  |
| Hyperbole |  | Anadiplosis (the repetition of a word or phrase that ends one clause and is used to begin the next)  |  |
| Shock tactics |  | Analogy |  |
| First-person singular |  | Metonymy (using a word to suggest an abstract meaning, e.g. use of the word ‘plastic’ to mean credit cards) |  |
| Second-person |  | Neologism (a new word) |  |
| Humour |  | Parallelism (repetition of a grammatical form successively, e.g. ‘I came. I saw. I …) |  |
| Anecdotes |  | Satire (irony, ridicule, sarcasm, caricature) |  |

**Content**

**Introduction:**

Establish a clear structure and topic. You must make it clear to your audience what they can expect from you and the order in which to expect it, as well as being passionate about what you are talking about.

Consider beginning with an anecdote to establish the relevance of your topic.

To create empathy with your audience, acknowledge other thoughts and feelings on the topic and make them want to know more or even reconsider what they know. If the audience senses that you understand them, they will be motivated to listen to you as they expect to hear something that is relevant to them.

Your speech is a bridge from the known to the unknown for your audience and your task is to make them want to cross it with you. Admitting your own past reluctance to do so can be a powerful tool in dissolving scepticism and building trust with your audience. Admissions of vulnerability will increase your credibility just as self-righteous assertions will alienate your audience.

**Your main argument:**

Use an analogy drawn from ordinary life that expounds upon and anchors the central idea. The reference to crossing a bridge in the previous point is an example of an analogy. A good analogy is one which is instantly recognisable to your audience and has clear parallels to your idea. A good time in which to introduce your analogy is after you have finished introducing your first point. The analogy can then be reused after each of your other points to create cohesion.

Each of the points you raise must be consistent with your introduction, be supported with evidence and linked back to your central thesis.

Conclude your speech so your audience will be left to think, wonder, and feel inspired.

**Delivery**

Don’t make the mistake of allocating all your preparation time to writing the speech and insufficient time to deciding how you will deliver it.

**Breathing:** Take a breath before each sentence and exhale as you speak to maximise the resonance in your voice. Adjust the length of your sentences to match the length of your breaths.

**Diction:** Accentuate the last hard sound of each of your words to ensure clarity. Many words begin with similar sounds and it is their final sound that distinguishes them. Don’t rush your delivery and allow each word to be heard clearly. If your audience can’t hear what you say, they will lose interest. This is particularly the case if you are addressing a room full of people as their bodies absorb the sound and disrupt the clarity of your words.

**Rehearsal:** You should rehearse your speech standing up and using the correct breathing. This is the time to experiment with variations in tone, pitch, pace, pauses, stance, and gestures to discover what seems to suit your speech the best. Avoid a rigid posture and instead use a slight transfer of weight between your feet to create a more relaxed and natural feel to your delivery. Aim for a conversational rhythm to your delivery and avoid the flat style used for example, in

news broadcasts. At various points in your rehearsal you should do a time check. You could even record yourself to find out how you are getting on.

**Eye contact:** Rehearsing in front of several dolls or stuffed animal toys to represent your audience can be useful in practising eye contact with all of your audience and avoid the mistake of staring at the same person, the back wall or at the floor. Many speakers find eye contact difficult but without it you won’t seem genuine. Building eye contact into your rehearsal will help you overcome this obstacle.

**Supporting notes:** Use prompt cards, with a highlighter or different coloured fonts to help you when you speak to your audience. This will help you find your place quickly should that be necessary. Allocate some of your rehearsal time to using your cards and practise changing them as you speak.