CENGAGE

the

Speaker's
HANDBOOK

JO SPRAGUE

DOUGLAS STUART

DAVID BODARY

12th Edition

Speaker's *Quick Start* Guide

The Quick Start Guide is designed to help you find the specific public speaking information you're looking for as quickly as possible.

Basic Content Information, Color-Coded

This guide provides only the most basic information about the **handbook's contents**:

◗ Part numbers and titles

◗ Chapter numbers and titles within each part

◗ Page range for each part (identifying first and last pages)

The handiest feature of this guide is that it is **color-coded**: The color applied to each part in the guide corresponds to the color used for the actual part's tabbed section divider and introductory pages as well as the thumb tabs you'll find at the top of each page.

Where You'll Find More Detailed Content Information

The handbook's **full table of contents** begins on page v. Additionally, each part's **tabbed section divider** includes a detailed listing of each chapter and the chapter's subsections within the part. At the back of the book, on its last pages and inside back cover, you'll find **listings of the handbook's boxes, tables, and figures**. A detailed **index** begins on page 481.

Mapping Your Skill-Development Plan

To help orient you so that this book is as useful as possible, we offer these key suggestions:

◗ **Read Chapter 1**. This chapter introduces the five steps of public speaking that will help you prepare and deliver an effective speech. It will also help you diagnose your skill level and give you an approach to mapping out a skill-development plan for yourself.

◗ **Prepare a skill-development plan.** There are many steps to preparing an effective speech, but if you try to master every step simultaneously, you'll become frustrated and find it harder to build skills. That's why the secret of public speaking success lies in having a clear idea of what your priorities are and in deciding on a limited number of goals to pursue at any one time. This text's handbook format lets you pick one or two important skills to work on and once mastered, you can move on to other skills. Take the time to write down a skill-development plan and refer to it. Even if you revise it as you go, we guarantee that it will help you succeed.

Online Resources for *The Speaker's Handbook,* Twelfth Edition

MindTap is a personalized teaching experience with relevant assignments that guide students to analyze, apply, and improve thinking, allowing you to measure skills and outcomes with ease.

◗ **Personalized Teaching:** Becomes yours with a Learning Path that is built with key student objectives. Control what students see and when they see it. Use it as-is or match to your syllabus exactly—hide, rearrange, add, and create your own content.

◗ **Guide Students:** A unique Learning Path of relevant readings, activities such as collaborative and interactive video activities, outlining and preparation activities, and Practice and Present speech activities that move students up the learning taxonomy from basic knowledge and comprehension to analysis and application.

◗ **Promote Better Outcomes:** Empower instructors and motivate students with analytics and reports that provide a snapshot of class progress, time in course, and engagement and completion rates.

12e

the
Speaker's
Handbook

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Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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Preface

The Speaker's Handbook is, like its earlier editions, both a reference guide for individual speakers and a textbook for use in public speaking courses. What distinguishes *The Speaker's Handbook* from other books on public speaking, though, is not just that it was the first handbook of public speaking, but that it was originally conceived and written as one, too. From the start, each of its chapters was designed by Jo Sprague and Doug Stuart to stand by itself so that speakers may directly consult only those sections of the book that present the specific help they need. In coauthor David Bodary's last four revisions this text's origins are still evident, offering flexibility and ease of use for all kinds of public speakers.

Why *The Speaker's Handbook* Was Written

Public speaking is a lived, performed, embodied event that draws its special qualities from the immediate context, the personality of a particular speaker, the response of a certain audience and delivered in a time and place that will not be the same again. Is there really any useful general advice about so specific an act?

Apparently so. For as long as people have felt the need to speak in public, they have turned to others for advice on how to do so more effectively. Early evidence from Egyptian tombs shows that leaders gave serious thought to the choices they faced in speaking to their followers. The oral tradition captured in Homeric legend hints that the giving and taking of this advice predated the written word. The increasing supply of information about the ancient cultures of China, India, and the Americas shows that these peoples had culturally distinctive ways of speaking, which some analyzed and discussed. These observers then formulated advice for others in their culture. Such advice usually came in two forms: Those who had vast experience as speakers told stories about what worked for them; others looked beyond what worked and theorized about why it worked.

Both forms of guidance are still present. The popularity of such books year after year suggests that people find benefits in the personal and experiential approach. At the same time, university libraries continue to accumulate academic works on rhetoric and communication. Here, too, the vitality of these lines of research after thousands of years suggests that much is left to be said and investigated.

There is a third form of guidance, one that we differentiate from both those kinds of books and place within another venerable tradition that is over 2,000 years old. It is the handbook. In any field, a handbook represents a particular blending of theory and

practice displayed in a concise format. The first written handbooks for speakers were probably produced by the Sophists in the Greece of 200 BCE. There are scouting handbooks, birding handbooks, management handbooks, and meditation handbooks. In all these cases, a handbook is a distillation of the experience and theory of many people and many eras. The particular usefulness of handbooks can be found in their distinctive characteristics, and the value of this handbook can be found in its unique features.

Handbooks Are Brief

The Speaker's Handbook attempts to distill the most meaningful advice and provide the most useful examples without expanding the size of the book. However, sample speeches abound: This edition, like those before it, includes annotated sample speeches by both student speakers and public figures in Part 7. Many are accompanied by speech videos and interactive activities available among the book's online resources. We refer to these sample outlines, transcripts, manuscripts, and videos throughout the text in both examples and exercises. Interspersing sample speeches throughout the body of the book, as is usual in standard textbooks, would defeat the advantages offered by the handbook format. Cartoons and multiple photographs would likewise have taken up needless space.

Handbooks Are Reference Books

The Speaker's Handbook proceeds from the premise that people like to focus first on the area of greatest concern and then design their own learning experience outward from that point. I believe that there are and ought to be many "right ways" to approach a course in public speaking. As such, the contents of a handbook are meant to be used in any order. The progression of this handbook's chapters is not random, but a reader or a teacher does not necessarily have to follow that order. The chapters are intended to be as self-contained as possible so that the book is adaptable to the differing needs of its various users.

As a reference, this book seeks to meet the needs of adult learners who have their own learning preferences, whether they are playing with their new smartphone or understanding a new job. People don't desire a course in how to use their smartphone. Instead, they try a few things, glance at the manual, ask a friend, and work until they get into trouble. Then they seek assistance again but only for the specific information they need to get beyond the current problem. In effect, they don't worry about the things they don't need yet, and they often don't know that a thing to worry about exists until it becomes a problem for them. Public speaking is like that. Until people start speaking, they cannot be sure of all the areas in which they may need improvement.

Therefore, students and individual users should take what they need from this book in the order they need it.

Likewise, teachers—who bring to the classroom different experience and an understanding of the values, needs, and capabilities of their specific students—may choose to assign chapters in any order that fits their perceptions of the best way to increase the skills of their students. There's some benefit for everyone in every chapter of this handbook; by using it you will find the order that suits you best.

Handbooks Are Handy

When people open the documentation that comes with their smartphone, they want to find the section on storing phone numbers, not read about taking photographs or how to clear the screen. We have included aids to help users get to where they want to be as quickly as possible, from elements such as the Quick Start Guide on the inside front cover to the tabbed part openers that include directories of each part's content, and from the checklists to the tables, figures, and straightforward cross-references provided throughout the book.

With this compartmentalization, users do not have to read everything at once. A student may be preparing to give an informative speech for a class and is thinking of including some humor. The student is encouraged to jump ahead and read the section in Chapter **18** on using appropriate humor. A businessperson may be giving a presentation to the board on the introduction of a new product but may feel uncertain about whether he or she has covered everything and in the most effective order. That person could read Chapter **9** on transforming ideas into speech points and Chapters **21** and **22** on informative and persuasive strategies.

About the Twelfth Edition

I have been gratified to be invited to work on the last three revisions of *The Speaker's Handbook* and am pleased that the handbook format has worked for so many students and their instructors, as well as for people who give presentations in their business or community. In this edition, I have worked once again to respond to user suggestions on how to make the information even more timely and accessible.

▸ I have focused my revisions in this latest edition on preserving the tradition and strength of *The Speaker's Handbook* originated by Jo Sprague and Douglas Stuart, while infusing it with examples and connections to the challenges and questions that I encounter with students in the classroom. I enjoy teaching immensely and have used my experience teaching community college students of all ages to improve the usefulness of this resource by including many practical tips and advice for students. In addition, I believe deeply in civic engagement and hope that comes through in the focus on effective public speaking skills in many contexts, including the workplace and the community.

◗ Graphics help to illustrate important concepts, including public speaking anxiety, audience analysis, and generational culture.

◗ New full speech examples from students and public figures provide speech models and opportunities for analysis. Videos for all *student* speeches are provided in your MindTap for *The Speaker's Handbook* along with critical-thinking questions, transcripts, and full-sentence and keyword outlines. New speeches from students and public figures include a new invitational speech addressing the use of memory drugs to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), President George W. Bush's commemorative speech at the dedication of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a similar speech by "Freedom Fighter" and Congressman John Lewis at that same dedication, and Eboo Patel's address on "The Only Shame Is in Stagnation," his address to the graduates of Wake Forest University. I spent considerable time selecting speeches that provide examples on topics of significance, which are both timely and timeless, and authentic in substance and style. Speeches by public figures reflect the diversity of voices that define the current age. Included in this edition are heads of state, popular artists, environmentalists, and interfaith leaders.

◗ The For Your Benefit boxes provide practical speech advice while also offering insights for speaking in the classroom and in the boardroom. Updated content provides students with tips for

◗ learning the listening stance.

◗ listening takes work.

◗ selecting a speech title.

◗ limitations of demographic generalizations.

◗ being aware of urban legends.

◗ conducting interviews.

◗ standpoint and bias.

◗ using clickers and cell phones.

◗ avoiding common attention pitfalls.

◗ being your own personal brand.

◗ placing strongest points first or last.

◗ impromptu speaking.

◗ when to use a manuscript.

◗ your voice; your brand.

◗ smiling.

◗ deciding whether to use video clips.

◗ More Checklists throughout the text provide students with frequent opportunities to check their knowledge. New and/or updated content includes:

◗ Questions for Assessing a Speaker's Claims

◗ Finding a Balance in Ethical Decisions

◗ Reducing Your Anxiety

◗ Describing Your Audiences

◗ Attention-Getting Techniques

◗ Assessing Your Speaking Image

◗ Helpful Strategies for Informative Speaking

◗ Checklist for a Positive, Neutral, and Negative Audience

◗ Assessing and Modifying Vocal Behavior

The revised **MindTap for** *The Speaker's Handbook* is a personalized teaching experience with relevant assignments that guide students to analyze, apply, and improve thinking, allowing you to measure skills and outcomes with ease. Activities, powered by MindApps developed specifically for this discipline, guide students through the process of analyzing sample speeches, topic creation, outline building, and practicing and presenting their speech.

Hallmarks of *The Speaker's Handbook*

The great strength of oral communication is that its many dimensions offer people ways to seek out connections in the midst of differences; its immediacy allows for on-the-spot adjustments. The following features of the text have therefore been retained.

◗ **Skill-building pedagogy and study tools.** Checklist boxes help readers better understand—and apply—chapter concepts. Speaker's Workshop boxes provide activities that help students prepare effective, well-structured speeches. In addition, Part **7** provides resources that speakers and users of the handbook will find practical and helpful: a guide to common pronunciation and usage errors for native and nonnative speakers of English, and a glossary of key terms.

◗ **Communicative approach.** Public speaking is consistently presented as a blend of communicative resources: writing, performance, and conversation.

◗ **Distinctive coverage of audience analysis.** Not just audience members' traits and characteristics are analyzed but also the processes by which they make sense of messages (Chapter **7**).

◗ **Consistent attention paid to social and cultural diversity.** We strive to continue attuning the handbook to the diversity of contemporary life. In our treatment of language, reasoning, and vocal and physical delivery, we attempt to show how social forces shape—and are shaped by—speech. What is appropriate or clear or persuasive constantly changes as society changes, and we emphasize that effective speakers are open to the subtle cultural variations in speech situations. If there were no differences between people, communication would be unnecessary. If there were no similarities, it would be impossible.

◗ **Extensive coverage of reasoning.** Reasoning (Chapter **16**) is discussed through an examination of the links people draw between data and conclusions. The text discusses how people can logically reach opposite conclusions from the same evidence, emphasizing the need to spell out and justify the links in one's reasoning.

◗ **Emphasis on language.** Language (Chapter **17**) is presented as a powerful communicative element (rather than an adornment or frill) in order to emphasize the need for thoughtful, sensitive, and appropriate use of words and symbols.

◗ **Full chapter on ethics.** "Speaking Ethics" (Chapter **3**) draws together key points and provides guidelines for responsible speaking. The ethical decisions speakers make are treated as a series of careful compromises, not as clear-cut do's and don'ts.

◗   **Full chapter on practicing speeches.** Chapter **24** provides detailed guidelines for practicing speech presentations, including concrete suggestions and timetables for this important dimension of speech preparation.

Resources for Students and Instructors

Accompanying this book is an integrated suite of resources to support both students and instructors.

MindTap

MindTap represents a new approach to a customizable, online, user-focused learning platform. MindTap combines all of a user's learning tools—readings, multimedia, activities, and assessments—into a singular learning unit that guides students through the curriculum based on learning objectives and outcomes. Instructors personalize the experience by customizing the presentation of these learning tools to their students, even seamlessly introducing their own content into the learning unit via "apps" that integrate into the MindTap platform.

Students and other individuals have the option of utilizing a rich array of resources to enhance and extend their learning while using *The Speaker's Handbook*. **Note to instructors:** If you want your students to have access to MindTap for *The Speaker's Handbook*, please be sure to order them for your course—if you do not order them, your students will not have access to them on the first day of class. These resources can be bundled with every new copy of the text or ordered separately. Students whose instructors do not order these resources as a package with the text may purchase them or access them at **www.cengagebrain.com**. *Contact your local Cengage Learning consultant for more details.*

Through the use of assignable and gradable interactive video activities, polling assignments, and study and exam preparation tools, MindTap brings the printed textbook to life. Students respond enthusiastically to the readspeak, highlighting, search, and dictionary features available on MindTap. Student comprehension is enhanced with the integrated e-Book and the interactive teaching and learning tools that include:

YouSeeU

With *YouSeeU*, students can upload video files of practice speeches or final performances, comment on their peers' speeches, and review their grades and instructor feedback. Instructors create courses and assignments, comment on and grade student speeches, and allow peer review. Grades flow into a gradebook that allows instructors to easily manage their course from within MindTap. Grades also can be exported for use in learning-management systems. YouSeeU's flexibility lends itself to use in traditional, hybrid, and online courses.

Outline Builder

Outline Builder breaks down the speech preparation process into manageable steps and can help alleviate speech-related anxiety. The "wizard format" provides relevant prompts and resources to guide students through the outlining process. Students are guided through topic definition, research and source citation, organizational structure outlining, and drafting note cards for speech day. The outline is assignable and gradable through MindTap.

Speech Video Library

Speech Video Library gives students a chance to watch videos of real speeches that correspond to the topics in *The Speaker's Handbook*. Each video is accompanied by a speech activity that provides a full transcript so viewers can read along the speech outline—many in note card and full sentence form, and evaluation questions so students are guided through their assessment. While viewing each clip, students evaluate the speech or scenario by completing short-answer questions and submitting their results directly to their instructor.

Additional Student Resources

▶ **CengageBrain Online Store.** CengageBrain.com is a single destination for more than 15,000 new print textbooks, textbook rentals, e-Books, single eChapters, and print, digital, and audio study tools. CengageBrain.com provides the freedom to purchase Cengage Learning products à-la-carte—exactly what you need, when you need it. Visit **www.cengagebrain.com** for details.

▶ *The Art and Strategy of Service-Learning Presentations,* **Fourth Edition.** Written by Rick Isaacson and Jeff Saperstein of San Francisco State University, this handbook provides guidelines for connecting service-learning work with classroom concepts and advice for working effectively with agencies and organizations.

▶ **A Guide to the Basic Course for ESL Students.** Specifically for communicators whose first language is not English, it features FAQs, helpful URLs, and strategies for managing communication anxiety.

Instructor Resources

Instructors who adopt this book may request a number of resources to support their teaching. These resources are available to qualified adopters, and ordering options for supplements are flexible. Please consult your local Cengage Learning consultant for more information, to evaluate examination copies of any of these instructor or student resources, or to request product demonstrations.

▶ **Instructor's Resource Manual.** Written by Tina Lim of San José State University, this manual offers guidelines for setting up your course, sample syllabi, chapter-by-chapter outlines of content, suggested topics for lectures and discussion, and a wealth of

class-tested exercises and assignments. It also includes a test bank with questions marked according to varying levels of difficulty.

◗ **Instructor's Website.** Computerized testing via Cognero®, ready-to-use Power-Point® presentations (with text and images that can also be customized to suit your course needs), and an electronic version of the Instructor's Manual. Visit the Instructor's Website by accessing http://login.cengage.com or by contacting your local learning consultant.

◗ **The Teaching Assistant's Guide to the Basic Course.** Katherine G. Hendrix, who is on the faculty at the University of Memphis, prepared this resource specifically for new instructors. Based on leading communication teacher training programs, this guide discusses some of the general issues that accompany a teaching role and offers specific strategies for managing the first week of classes, leading productive discussions, managing sensitive topics in the classroom, and grading students' written and oral work.

◗ **Instructor Workbooks.** *Public Speaking: An Online Approach, Public Speaking: A Problem Based Learning Approach*, and *Public Speaking: A Service-Learning Approach for Instructors.* Written by Deanna Sellnow, University of Kentucky, these instructor workbooks include a course syllabus and icebreakers; public speaking basics such as coping with anxiety, learning cycle, and learning styles; outlining; ethics; and informative, persuasive, and ceremonial (special occasion) speeches.

◗ **Guide to Teaching Public Speaking Online.** Written by Todd Brand of Meridian Community College, this helpful online guide provides instructors who teach public speaking online with tips for establishing "classroom" norms with students, utilizing course management software and other eResources, managing logistics such as delivering and submitting speeches and making up work, discussing how peer feedback is different online, strategies for assessment, and tools such as sample syllabi and critique and evaluation forms tailored to the online course.

◗ **Service Learning in Communication Studies: A Handbook.** Written by Rick Isaacson and Jeff Saperstein, this is an invaluable resource for students in the basic course that integrates or will soon integrate a service-learning component. This handbook provides guidelines for connecting service-learning work with classroom concepts and advice for working effectively with agencies and organizations. It also provides model forms and reports and a directory of online resources.

◗ **Digital Course Support.** Get trained, get connected, and get the support you need for the seamless integration of digital resources into your course. This unparalleled technology service and training program provide robust online resources, peer-to-peer instruction, personalized training, and a customizable program you can count on. Visit **http://www .cengage.com/dcs** to sign up for online seminars, first days of class services, technical support, or personalized, face-to-face training. Our online and onsite trainings are frequently led by one of our lead teachers, faculty members who are experts in using Cengage Learning technology and can provide best practices and teaching tips.

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I am indebted to Jo Sprague and Douglas Stuart, whose foundational text remains the bedrock of this edition, as well as the many loyal users of *The Speaker's Handbook* who have generously shared their comments with me and who, along with our reviewers, ensure that I continually consider how the text is best used in classrooms and conference rooms alike. I am grateful to the reviewers who took the time to help us further improve this edition: Dawn Bartlett, SUNY Jefferson Community College; Nathan Carroll, College of St. Scholastica; Diana M. Cooley, Lone Star College—North Harris; Jamie Matson, Winona State University; Shellie Michael, Volunteer State Community College; Robert Schwing, Benedictine University; and Clayton Whitson, Fort Scott Community College**.** In addition, I remain appreciative of reviewers of previous editions who have also helped to shape this text throughout the years.

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David Bodary

1

Foundation

The Value of Public Speaking Skills

The Value of Public Speaking Skills

Whether you desire to improve your situation at work, school, or community, chances are good that doing so will require that you speak up for yourself, your colleagues, classmates, family members, or community. That may mean that you need to speak publicly. Whatever the context, this *is* an opportunity and this *is* a good thing.

For some, the idea of having "an opportunity to give a public speech" may sound a bit ominous. Most people we've met acknowledge some nervousness about speaking up publicly. Your feelings might range from mild apprehension to severe panic. But there is one thing worse than being called on to give a public speech when you *don't* want to—that is not being *able* to give a public speech when you *do* want to.

Do any of the following scenarios sound familiar?

◗ You listen to your acquaintances telling stories of funny things that have happened to them, and you would like to share your own experiences, but you are too shy to speak up.

◗ You sit in class, knowing the answer to the instructor's question, but you lack the confidence to raise your hand.

◗ You begin a presentation on a topic you know well, but you soon forget your key ideas and hastily finish your speech.

◗ You attend a business meeting to discuss a problem. You think you have some insights that could be part of the solution, but others don't seem to hear or understand what you are trying to say.

◗ You would like to take on a leadership role in a work or social group, but hesitate to share your views or struggle to persuade others to follow you.

◗ You are being interviewed for a job you really want and think you are qualified for, but your ideas come out jumbled and lack clarity, confidence, and detail.

◗ You attend a public meeting on an issue crucial to your family. You believe you have a valid concern that is being overlooked, but aren't sure how to phrase your opposition.

Social and Societal Benefits of Public Speaking

A democratic society requires the free exchange of ideas so people can listen to each other's views, understand the implications of policies, and select the best courses of collective action. In the words of historian Daniel J. Boorstin, "Disagreement is the life blood of democracy."[1] Likewise, U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright noted, "The citizen who criticizes his country is paying it an implied tribute."[2] All citizens must be willing to contribute positively to their democracy and be able to speak up to protect their own rights as well as the rights of others.

Not only are communication skills important to our democracy, but they are also important to business. Warren Buffett, famed investor and billionaire, says it this way, "If you can't communicate and talk to other people and get across your ideas, you're giving up your potential. You have to learn to communicate in life—it's enormously important."[3] Perhaps most of all, our families and communities need people who are sensitive to and skilled in communication, because it is through storytelling and personal sharing that we are able to form healthy family and community bonds.

Personal and Professional Benefits of Public Speaking

Experience with analyzing information and expressing your opinions through public speaking not only will increase your confidence in day-to-day activities, but will also help you get more out of your classes. Participating constructively in class discussions and applying the skills of preparation, organization, development, and presentation will enhance your learning experience.

Regarding professional benefits, a quick glance at job descriptions at websites such as indeed.com, LinkedIn.com, and SimplyHired.com reveals regular and frequent use of phrases like "strong communication skills," "excellent verbal and written skills," and "ability to motivate others." Clearly, the skills you develop as a public speaker not only will help you land a job, but will also help you succeed and advance in your profession. In a job interview, the candidate who offers concise responses, who expresses ideas in memorable ways, and who remains calm under pressure will make a stronger impression. Once you get the job, you can use these communication skills to improve your workplace and product, influence those around you, and gain personal satisfaction while being an effective and valued professional resource.

Improving Your Public Speaking Skills

For the most part, the factors that inhibit people from speaking in public can be overcome through education, practice, and coaching. Effective speaking is a skill you can learn.

Although it may seem that a great speaker was born that way, in truth great speakers are made. While Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., certainly was helped by being born into the family of a preacher, he also went to school where he learned both content and confidence, prepared himself through study, practiced extensively, and presented before audiences many times. Each of us can improve our speaking skills, regardless of our prior experiences.

As with any other skill (such as writing, playing guitar, meditation, or brain surgery), there are principles to be mastered with public speaking; there is a need for concentration and practice; and there are benefits to working with a skilled teacher and supportive co-learners. As classroom faculty and speech coaches, we have seen reticent speakers gain confidence and poise. We have observed people develop the ability to effectively analyze and create mutual understanding with their audience. We have watched people, who initially detested speech outlines, admit the improved clarity and structure afforded by outlining and the resulting improvement of their messages. Believe it or not, some of the most reluctant speakers have discovered that making a presentation can even be fun. They find it exhilarating to be heard, to be understood, and possibly even persuade their audience. More importantly, lives are improved and opportunities are expanded by our willingness and ability to speak.

Effective speaking and listening go hand in hand. If you master the techniques in this handbook, it's inevitable you will be more appreciative of good speaking when you hear it, recognizing the art and craft that come into play to create a satisfying and successful speaking event. You will also be a more critical listener of the speeches and reasoning you hear.

We all like to receive compliments and applause when our ideas resound with others. We enjoy a sense of satisfaction when our ideas are taken seriously and can contribute to improving understanding or advancing the public dialogue. In short, there is power and personal fulfillment in finding our voices in the public sphere.

Critical Thinking Questions

◗ What dollar value would you put on the ability to speak publicly with confidence?

◗ What will it take to improve your public speaking skills?

◗ How will you commit to the work of improving your public speaking skills?

1

Understanding Speaking

Understand that public speaking is the act of creating meaning with your listeners and that, by consciously combining communicative resources you already possess, you can speak successfully.

MindTap®   Read, highlight, and take notes online.

In the process of preparing a public speech, we make dozens of decisions. Delivering a speech involves a complex process coordinating mind, body, and voice from moment to moment. Giving a speech can never be made simple, but thinking about it can be greatly *simplified* if we understand the basics of communicating and speaking. Understanding some fundamental communication principles and the theoretical framework of public speaking can reduce complexity, bring clarity, and guide the choices we make in planning and presenting a speech.

1-1 Understand What It Means to Be a Public Speaker

When most people hear the words *public speaking*, they imagine a podium, a stage, and an auditorium with a large audience—the components of a classic "capital S" Speech. This handbook offers a broader picture of public speaking. We are speakers not only when we stand behind the podium at an awards banquet or when we approach the microphone at a planning commission meeting but also when we sit at a table with a few members of our work group and present a problem. We are speakers in class, at work, and among friends and family. In each of these situations, we are the same speakers working with the same set of communication skills, but we will apply those skills differently in each situation.

But let's not broaden the context too much. Not all oral communication in a group setting is public speaking. **Public speaking** is an event in which a group of people

PHOTO 1.1
Communication is similar to the give-and-take between dancers.

Dmitry Morgan/Shutterstock.com

agree that one person, the speaker, will direct the event. Because the speaker directs the event, it would be easy to assume that speakers and listeners are vastly different in the public speaking situation. However, there are probably more similarities than differences between these roles. In essence, speakers create **meaning** with listeners. Communication theorists stress that meaning is socially constructed in a mutual transaction between speakers and listeners. In a sense then, the speaker and listener are involved in what might be termed *co-creation*, a sort of dance, a give-and-take that unfolds over time into a meaningful exchange (Photo 1.1). Continuing with this metaphor, the more experience two dance partners have together, the more effectively each is able to anticipate the moves (intended meaning) of the other and respond appropriately. This **mutuality of concern** is central to the effective communication of any message.

This view of speaking as a mutual transaction does not relieve the speaker of certain basic responsibilities; nor does it mean every speaking situation is an improvisation. To uphold their end of the agreement, speakers are obliged to lead their audience partners and create an effective, efficient, perhaps even enjoyable event. To achieve this sort of event, speakers must follow certain guidelines, but like good dancers, they must also be creative and bring something that is uniquely theirs to the interaction. Just as we want our dance partner to know the basics but not follow the same pattern for every dance, each new speech situation calls for certain basic elements but allows for those elements to be arranged into countless combinations.

MindTap®   Visit the MindTap for *The Speaker's Handbook* and click on **Additional Resources** to visit a site that discusses the sender's and receiver's different realities, perceptions, and experiences as communicators. How will your audience member's perceptions of your or your topic impact your ability to communicate your intended message?

1-1a Common Public Speaking Misconceptions

There are many approaches to teaching public speaking and much folk wisdom about how speakers become effective. Mastery of speaking will come more quickly if you can avoid being affected by the four common misconceptions: (1) Good speakers are born, not made; (2) good speaking should be easy right away; (3) speaking will always be as difficult as it is when you are first learning it; and (4) there are simple formulas for effective speaking.

Misconception 1: Good Speakers Are Born, Not Made Though it may seem that some people are born better speakers, in fact they are people who have already learned a number of speech skills or who happen to learn speech-related skills quickly. No one is born an effective speaker any more than one is born a good dancer, an accomplished writer, or an expert guitar player. Although predispositions and early learning mean some people learn faster and move more smoothly, anyone who is moderately coordinated, is adequately motivated, and receives sound instruction can learn to dance, develop a short story, or play a tune on the guitar. Similarly, virtually anyone can learn to give a clear, effective public speech.

Misconception 2: Good Speaking Should Be Easy Right Away When we watch world-class figure skaters, we are fascinated by the apparent ease with which they perform what we know are extremely difficult moves. We appreciate the years of training, dedication, and discipline that have gone into making their movements seem so effortless. Not everyone figure skates—but everyone communicates. Skillful communicators can make public speaking look easy, but it takes work—and lots of it. While many of us have communicated for years, there's a difference between just communicating and communicating effectively. Effective communication takes regular practice, constant reflection, and improvement.

Misconception 3: Speaking Will Always Be as Difficult as It Is When You Are First Learning It Preparing an oral message on a substantial topic for a live audience is demanding. When, at least initially, you must spend hours preparing for a short presentation, there is a real temptation to say, "Forget this. I can't invest this much time and effort every time I give a speech." Remind yourself that learning a skill requires effort and attention, but it becomes easier once mastered. Recall the concentration required when you learned to drive a car. Now that you have mastered the skill, you simply think of the goal you want to achieve—the actions necessary to reach the

SPEAKER'S WORKSHOP 1.1

Which misconceptions about public speaking do you personally hold? Which do you think are most widespread? Are there other misconceptions that have not been mentioned here?

goal happen largely on their own. When you get discouraged with a speech outline that just won't come together or with phrasing that just won't flow, remember: It *will* get easier.

Misconception 4: There Are Simple Formulas for Effective Speaking

Communicating with an audience is an incredibly complex and sophisticated act. Every public speaking event is unique. Each speaker has a distinctive style and personality, the audience has idiosyncratic needs and preferences, and the situation differs from case to case. How these three factors interact creates the meaning in any speaking event. No one can give an all-purpose formula for preparing or delivering a speech. Be wary of programs that promise instant speaking success. When you want to learn a skill well enough for it to become habitual, you need time to develop good habits. The advice in this handbook is based not on what is easiest or fastest but on what has proved to be effective based on years of application. It takes longer to develop a full-sentence outline than to jot down points in the order they occur to you. It is harder to sound conversational and look poised standing and speaking from notes than it is to read while leaning on a table. But once you master these proven techniques, you will be flexible and effective and ready for any speaking situation.

SPEAKER'S WORKSHOP 1.2

Assess the resources you already have as a public speaker by thinking about your strengths and weaknesses as a conversationalist, a writer, and a performer. Which of these resources

- ▶ Will be the most transferable to your public speaking?
- ▶ Will be difficult for you to transfer to public speaking?
- ▶ Might you tend to draw too much from as a speaker?
- ▶ Offers you the most room for improvement?