

**Power of Three and an Easier Speech**  
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How would you like to quickly develop a speech that is easy for you to deliver and is easy for your audience to listen to and remember? Read on. It's as easy as one, two, three.

I've been a Toastmaster since early 2004 and have completed six advanced manuals on the way to earning Advanced Communicator Gold. Since the beginning of 2010, I have completed my ninth and tenth CC manuals.

In this article I write about how the power of three makes it easier for me to prepare and give a speech.

In Project #4 of the CC manual, Triads are mentioned along with an example. Whether you call it the power of three or triads, you are talking about a rhetorical device to emphasize a phrase or make it memorable by the use of three similar words. Sometimes this is enhanced by the use of alliteration as in the political slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too".

But why limit the power of three to a rhetorical device? As we will see, the use of threes is something most of us do when we begin to structure our speech.

Most of us learned at the beginning of our Toastmaster journey that a speech should have three sections. It should have an introduction followed by a body and should end with a conclusion. Another way this is sometimes taught is "Tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them; tell them what you told them". Note that regardless of how it is expressed there are three sections. Not two, not four – only three.

Let's talk about the body. Ever wonder if there is a way to ensure that your five to seven minute speech will be done in five to seven minutes? Try this: Limit your body to a maximum of three points. I think we've all heard the 9 point (or was it 10 points?) speech that dragged on and on. After the fourth point the speaker has probably lost his/her audience. If you want your speech to be remembered by your audience, only give them three points. If you are trying to give a speech you have memorized, limit the body to three points and you'll find it easier to remember. Also, you don't have to say this is my first, second, and third point or A, B, C. Your audience will most likely determine this even without your making it absolutely clear. Consider also that your audience probably won't mind that you don't tell them everything you know about your subject. If, while you are building your speech, you find that you have several points, try to group similar points and condense until you get it down to three points.

Let's talk about your title. In one sentence can you say what the speech is about? If not, you probably are not ready to give your speech. If you can, you should be able to get your title from this sentence. I believe that it is a good habit to prepare an introduction for the toastmaster to read about you and/or the subject of your speech prior to your speaking. The last line you write in the introduction your Toastmaster will say prior to the start of your speech will be the title you developed from your sentence. It could be like this: "Today Justin will be speaking on 'The Joy of Reading'".

**Specific Purpose Statement.** After you give the introduction to your speech and before you start your body, repeat (perhaps rephrased) the title statement of your speech. I've heard this referred to as a specific purpose statement or SPS. This helps your audience know where you are going. Or in the words of Lewis Carroll: "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." The SPS between the introduction and body succinctly let's your audience know where you are going. "Today, I'd like to talk to you about the everyday pleasure I get from reading. "

**Next :** your body. Here you would talk about your three points. You may or may not want to number your points. Regardless, the number of points should be three.

1. What I enjoy most about my daily newspaper.
2. Why Vince Flynn is my favorite author.
3. My favorite poem.

After the body and before the conclusion, repeat the title or SPS prior to concluding your speech. "Today I've talked about the reading I enjoy most". Then conclude by restating what you told then in the body.

Is this the only structure you can use? Is this the Holy Grail? Is this a panacea? No, but if you are new to Toastmasters or need some place to begin to work on your next speech, this is certainly something to try. If you have an SPS and three points, you are probably 60% into your speech.

The following is the structure I usually use, or at least start with:

- . Introduction of you and your presentation by the Toastmaster ending with the Title of your speech
- . Your Introduction to your speech
- . Specific Purpose Statement (SPS)
- . Body
  - . Point 1
  - . Point 2
  - . Point 3
- . Rephrase SPS and use it to transition from body to conclusion
- . Conclusion

Introduction, Body Conclusion – 1, 2, 3

Title, SPS, Transition between body and conclusion 1, 2, 3

Points in Body – 1, 2, 3

Use the power of three to easily structure your next speech. Doing so should make it easier to prepare, easier to give, and most important – easier for your audience to both listen to and remember.