

ADVOCACY GUIDE: RESOURCE 8

Basic Advocacy Speech Structures

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The purpose of an advocacy speech is to communicate passionately and clearly about a current, controversial subject that impacts your life and the lives of others. The content of the speech should carry social weight and should make us care and listen. It is also important for advocacy to be honest and full of integrity, rather than being delivered in a way that is purposefully inflammatory, emotionally manipulative, or unethical. You should always choose a topic that allows you to be fully committed to the ideas you are communicating.

Common Elements:

Regardless of how you structure the speech, always include the following:

1. Attention and Relevance—establish why the problem is relevant to your audience
2. Need—use evidence to show that there is a broader societal need for a solution
3. Satisfaction—show how you satisfy this need with a feasible, credible solution
4. Visualization—use language and stories to help us visualize the positive results
5. Action—outline the concrete steps that will/should be taken

Common Structures:

Advocacy speeches are all about contrasts – comparing one undesirable reality with another more desirable reality. This involves communicating a problem and a solution. Your speech time is likely to be structured as one of the following examples (often interspersed with stories):

- Type 1: Problem-Solution
- Type 2: Problem-Failed Solution-Proposed Solution
- Type 3: Cause-Effect-Solution

Self-Advocacy Example:

Sometimes, the topic is something that personally hits home. Here is a specific example of how you might structure a speech to tell a story that advocates for your individual needs.

Description
1. One sentence describing what we need in the world and what you personally need to feel safe participating in the conversation.
2. Describe the need and why it is important to you.
3. Tell a story about when that need was not fulfilled, using details about yourself, what you went through, and how it made you feel.
4. Describe an alternative reality and what you would have rather happened instead in that situation.
5. Explain why this need is important in this particular context.
6. Conclude by telling us what we should consider moving forward to best serve this need for you.

