



# RESEARCHING AND PRESENTING

LEVEL 1 PROJECT



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Introduction
3	Your Assignment
4	Assess Your Skills
5	Competencies
5	Selecting a Topic
6	How to Research a Topic
7	Interview an Expert
8	Citing Sources
10	Organizing Your Speech
14	Review and Apply
14	Complete Your Assignment
15	Resources

**TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL**

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# INTRODUCTION



As a Toastmaster, you will give many speeches. Assignments are always provided, but choosing the topic is often up to you. Once you select a topic that interests you, your job is to sift through information, find pieces that are relevant, and structure them into an engaging speech.

In this project you will learn strategies for selecting a topic, conducting successful research, and producing a well-organized speech. You will learn different organizational structures for speeches, how to create clear transitions between sections of your speech, and methods for citing research.

## YOUR ASSIGNMENT



**For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 15.**

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to learn or review basic research methods and present a well-organized, well-researched speech on any topic.

**Overview:** Select a topic that you are not already familiar with or that you wish to learn more about. Be sure your topic is narrow enough to be an effective 5- to 7-minute speech. Research the topic and begin organizing the information, as described in this project. Practice your speech and continue to refine its organization. Present your speech at a club meeting.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



**Video:** Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



**Interactive Activity:** Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



**Resource:** Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.

# ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.



Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

**5**  
EXEMPLARY

**4**  
EXCEL

**3**  
ACCOMPLISHED

**2**  
EMERGING

**1**  
DEVELOPING

Pre-Project					Statement	Post-Project				
5	4	3	2	1	I am comfortable selecting speech topics.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am comfortable researching unfamiliar topics and citing my research sources.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am confident in my ability to organize a presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am confident in my ability to create clear transitions.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am cognizant of the many different organizational styles used to present information to audiences.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5	4	3	2	1

# COMPETENCIES

**The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.**

- Research and present an unfamiliar topic.
- Organize the speech clearly to maximize audience understanding.
- Craft clear and engaging transitions between main sections of your speech.
- Use and cite sources to support speech content and make source list available to audience members.

## SELECTING A TOPIC

### YOUR INTERESTS AND KNOWLEDGE

When you are choosing a speech topic, think about your goals for the project. For instance, you're tasked with delivering a 5- to 7-minute speech. You may have a passion for tropical fish, and you want to learn more and share your knowledge. Be sure your topic is narrow enough to fit the speech length. Too much information or too little can cause your speech to seem disorganized or overly broad. In this example, it might be more effective to focus on a single type of fish.

Your hobbies, personal interests, or family life can provide numerous speech topics. If you are knowledgeable about a particular topic, give a presentation about an aspect that interests you most. Speeches can be opportunities to satisfy your curiosity and learn more about a topic of interest.

Use the Research Worksheet on page 20 and the Speech Outline Worksheet on page 22 to help organize your ideas and sources.



# HOW TO RESEARCH A TOPIC

Research is the collection and analysis of information that pertains to your topic. When you research, begin with a broad idea and narrow your focus to a level appropriate for your 5- to 7-minute speech.

## START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW

List what you already know about your topic, and generate questions you want answered to determine areas to research. For example, you know that Toastmasters is an international organization, but you don't know the number of countries where clubs can be found.

## CREDIBLE SOURCES

The reliability of your sources is critical. Find a reliable source that's an authority on the subject. For example, consider the validity of a research study published in a scientific journal versus the results of an informal poll answered by 10 people and posted on an individual's blog. Scientific and professional journals tend to be associated with reputable institutions and professionals adhering to a code of ethics. An individual's blog, while it may prove useful in some ways, is merely opinion.

Consider the author of the research, whether or not additional sources are cited, and the reputation of the publication for any source you choose. Investigate all authors to determine if they are experts associated with an academic, scientific, or other recognized institution.

Once you have chosen a subject, start a broad search for information on your topic. Libraries have many resources and services you may not be able to access in another way. Many libraries will have staff who can help you.

After establishing the initial collection of resources, narrow it down to the strongest examples and facts that support your topic. Make note of important passages and quotes. Keep a list of your sources available to reference when you write your speech.

Specificity is necessary for the most relevant results while searching the internet. Searching for "Toastmasters International" returns better results than searching for "Toastmasters." This narrows the search and enables you to locate the Toastmasters International website.

# INTERVIEW AN EXPERT



If you have the opportunity, interview an expert in your field of research.

## **Credibility**

When you cite an interview with an expert, you enhance the credibility of your research.

## **Sources**

You may supplement an expert's response with additional sources found in publications.

## **Perspectives**

Using multiple sources gives you the opportunity to compare perspectives, and write a better, more well-rounded speech.

## **Questions**

Creating a list of questions helps guide your interview.



## CITING SOURCES

Acknowledge your sources during your speech by mentioning the name of the writer or study and the publication in which it appears, or by providing a link or handout that includes the information.

When you cite a reliable source and give audience members a means of accessing the information themselves, you improve your credibility. Supporting your facts well adds impact to your speech and your point of view.

A general guideline for citing sources is to provide enough information that audience members can conduct their own research if the topic or subject matter interests them.

### CITATION GUIDELINES

For articles from magazines, journals, newspapers, and the internet, state the author of the piece, the publication in which it can be found, and the publication date. For example, "In a 2005 article in *Asia Pacific View Point*, Goh Beng Lan argues..."

If your source is a book, you may state just the title and the author. For example, "In his book, *Psychological Science Around the World: Latin America*, Ezequiel Benito writes..."

For interviews, share the name and credentials of your expert. For example, "Dr. Monica Turner, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, says..."

Tell your audience if the author of an article is an expert in a given field. For example, "David Chen, a marine biologist at Florida State University, says that..."

Which of these resources is considered to be reliable?



- Article from *The New York Times*
- Online message board
- Wikipedia page
- Blog post
- Interview with expert
- Magazine article
- Tabloid article
- Editorial
- Encyclopedia entry
- University webpage



Answer: An article from *The New York Times*, an interview with an expert, an encyclopedia entry, a magazine article, and a university webpage are all considered reliable sources.

# ORGANIZING YOUR SPEECH

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

A well-organized speech enhances the audience's understanding of your topic. When your speech is well-structured and easy to follow, it is more effective. Review some of the organizational structures that may help you during the writing process.

### Chronological

Chronologically organized speeches follow a sequence of events.

### Topical

A topical structure organizes speeches by topics and subtopics. Break your speech into sections that explain major concepts related to your topic, followed by smaller and smaller subtopics.

### Spatial

A spatial structure organizes a speech by geography or the physical structure of the topic. Construct a speech that discusses the impact of your topic upon a region or the world. Spatial also refers to content that covers the physical landscape of a specific location. For example, if you are giving a speech about Germany, you may organize your presentation in a way that implies movement across the country. Your content could begin in the south at the Alps and then travel northward towards the Baltic Sea.

### Causal

A causal structure organizes speeches to link a cause to an effect, or an effect to its cause.

### Comparative

A comparative structure organizes speeches by describing two or more objects and their shared and/or different attributes. Show how your topic compares to another by examining similarities and differences.

### Problem/Solution

Speeches organized by problem and solution are arranged in a particular sequence. First state the issue and explain its significance. Then propose a feasible and advantageous solution.

### Particular/General/Particular

A particular/general/particular structure organizes speeches by a specific example that frames broader content and illustrates the main or personal objective of the speech. The example given at the beginning of your speech is echoed in the conclusion to help clarify or elucidate your primary message.

For the following questions, select the best answer for each question.



- 1. Francesco wants to talk about climbing the world's tallest mountain. He'd like to talk about what happens to the body at different levels of elevation on a mountain. What is the best way for Francesco to structure his presentation?**

  - Comparative
  - Spatial
  - Problem/Solution
  - Particular/General/Particular
  
- 2. Zhang wants to tell his audience that regular exercise contributes to better overall health. What would be the best way to structure this speech?**

  - Causal
  - Topical
  - Problem/Solution
  - Chronological
  
- 3. Sonia is interested in the different economic structures of two countries. She would like to present the similarities and differences to her fellow Toastmasters. What is the best organizational structure for Sonia to use?**

  - Comparative
  - Spatial
  - Problem/Solution
  - Causal
  
- 4. Saif is passionate about trains. He has liked them since he was a child. He wants to share the history of the locomotive with his Toastmasters club—its invention, how it changed the world, and its modern-day role in the transportation industry. What is the best way for Saif to organize his speech?**

  - Causal
  - Topical
  - Problem/Solution
  - Chronological

5. Peter wants to present information about breeds of dogs from three different groups—hound, working, and sporting. He also wants to present examples from each group. What would be the best way to structure this speech?

- Causal
- Topical
- Chronological
- Particular/General/Particular

6. Marie feels that her Toastmasters club could be doing more to reach out to guests of the club. She wants to start an email list for new potential club members. What is the best way for Marie to present this idea in a speech for her club members?

- Comparative
- Spatial
- Problem/Solution
- Chronological

7. Tomasz is preparing a speech about the impact a positive attitude can have for everyone, and he wants to use an example of a day in his office when he worked with a colleague who approached a project positively. What would be the best way to structure this speech?

- Comparative
- Spatial
- Chronological
- Particular/General/Particular

Answers: 1. Spatial; 2. Causal; 3. Problem/Solution; 4. Chronological; 5. Topical; 6. Problem/Solution; 7. Particular/General/Particular



The basic structure of a speech is an introduction, a main body with transitions, and a conclusion.

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction grabs the audience's attention while stating your topic. You may address how a broad topic relates to your life, tell a funny story, or list a few interesting facts about your topic. Whatever method you choose, this is your chance to ready your audience for what they are about to hear.

## BODY

In the body of the speech, each section should pertain to a single idea with clear transitions to the next section. Transitions can be as simple as "First, I'd like to talk about..." or "Next, we'll turn our attention to..."

The description of a scene can be used as a transition. For instance, "Now, let me take you to a mid-century farm outside of Dublin."

Time in a speech organized chronologically (e.g., "11:30 a.m. on June 4") can work the same way. Whichever method you choose, the transition signals to your audience that you are moving to another part of the topic.

## CONCLUSION

A strong conclusion summarizes what you have told the audience and leaves them thinking about your speech long after it is over.

## REVIEW AND APPLY

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- Compile a list of your best research options for your topic.
- What is the value of writing a clearly organized speech?
- What is the value of an engaging transition between main sections of your speech?
- What format will you use to organize your sources and communicate them to your audience?
- Why is it important to share your sources with an audience?

## COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report.

**Review:** Return to page 3 to review your assignment.



**Organize:** Use the Project Checklist on page 15 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.

**Schedule:** Work with the vice president education to schedule your speech.



**Prepare:** Prepare for your evaluation. Review the evaluation resources on pages 17–19 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.

# PROJECT CHECKLIST

## Researching and Presenting

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to learn or review basic research methods and present a well-organized, well-researched speech on any topic.

**Overview:** Select a topic that you are not already familiar with or that you wish to learn more about. Be sure your topic is narrow enough to be an effective 5- to 7-minute speech. Research the topic and begin organizing the information, as described in this project. Practice your speech and continue to refine its organization. Present your speech at a club meeting.

**This project includes:**

- Researching a topic
- The Research Worksheet
- The Speech Outline Worksheet
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

Select a topic for your speech that you are not already familiar with or that you wish to learn more about. Make sure it is narrow enough to cover in your speaking time. For example, the topic of “dogs” is so broad that a 5- to 7-minute speech would appear shallow. Narrowing your topic to “young Golden Retrievers” allows you to develop a speech that reflects thoughtful research.

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Research your topic and begin organizing the information.

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Schedule your speech with the vice president education.

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Write your speech.

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Rehearse your speech.

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After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speech, return to page 4 to rate your skills in the post-project section.

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**Additional Notes**

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# EVALUATION FORM

## Researching and Presenting

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

**Speech Title** \_\_\_\_\_

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project is for the member to learn or review basic research methods and present a well-organized, well-researched speech on any topic.

### Notes for the Evaluator

The member completing this project has spent time researching a topic. He or she may be speaking about a new topic or a known topic on a deeper level.

About this speech:

- The member will present a well-organized, well-delivered speech.
- The speech may be humorous, informational, or any style the member chooses. The speech content and style should work well together.
- This project is not a report on the content of the “Researching and Presenting” project.

### General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

# EVALUATION FORM – Researching and Presenting

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5 EXEMPLARY	4 EXCELS	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 EMERGING	1 DEVELOPING	
<b>Clarity:</b> Spoken language is clear and is easily understood					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Vocal Variety:</b> Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Eye Contact:</b> Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Gestures:</b> Uses physical gestures effectively					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Audience Awareness:</b> Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Comfort Level:</b> Appears comfortable with the audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Interest:</b> Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Well Researched:</b> Speech content is well-researched and sources are available if requested					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	

# EVALUATION CRITERIA

## Researching and Presenting

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

### Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

### Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

### Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

### Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

### Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively

- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

### Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

### Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

### Well Researched

- 5 – Delivers exemplary speech with content that is well-supported by research and makes sources readily available
- 4 – Speech content is excellent and supported by research, and sources are available if requested
- 3 – Speech content is well-researched and sources are available if requested
- 2 – Speech content appears to be researched though member struggles to recall sources
- 1 – Speech content may or may not be researched and sources are not available

# RESEARCH WORKSHEET

Use this outline to help you organize your ideas/sources into a speech.

**Topic (broad)**

## What You Know

What do you already know, and what additional questions do you have? This helps determine areas to research.

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## Research (broad)

Begin researching your topic on the Internet, in the library, etc. Note some of your initial credible sources below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Narrow Your Research

Narrow your initial research to the strongest examples and facts that support your topic.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Use this outline to keep track of resources used in your speech and how you'll acknowledge/cite them. Provide enough information so that members of your audience can find the resource themselves.

## Resource and Citation Examples

Resource	
Toastmasters International website	www.toastmasters.org
Book: <i>The Story of Toastmasters</i>	In the book, <i>The Story of Toastmasters</i> , it's noted on page 15 that ...
<i>Toastmaster</i> magazine	Ralph C. Smedley is quoted in the article "A Toast to Toastmasters" featured in the October 2014 issue of <i>Toastmaster</i> magazine.
Personal interview	In October 2014, I interviewed a Toastmaster on the subject of ...

Suggestions for how to incorporate your research into your speech are included in the outline provided. These are general guidelines only, and you may want to incorporate your research at other points than those indicated on the outline.

# SPEECH OUTLINE WORKSHEET

## Opening

### A. Greeting

You may thank the Toastmaster or person who introduced you and acknowledge fellow Toastmasters and guests.

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### B. Capture audience interest

Begin with information about your topic that will capture the attention of the audience, such as an interesting fact about your topic that you discovered in your research.

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### C. Introduce your topic

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### D. Transition

This is a statement or sentence designed to lead smoothly into your first main point.

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## Body

### A. Main point 1

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#### 1. Sub-point

Details and specifics about your main point.

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#### Support/evidence

Use examples, facts, or statistics from your research to illustrate your main point and sub-point.

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#### 2. Sub-point

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#### Support/evidence

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#### 3. Sub-point

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Support/evidence

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4. Transition

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B. Main point 2

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1. Sub-point

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Support/evidence

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2. Sub-point

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Support/evidence

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3. Transition

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C. Main point 3

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1. Sub-point

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Support/evidence

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2. Sub-point

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Support/evidence

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**3. Transition**

Signal that the conclusion of the speech is approaching.

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**Conclusion**

**A. Brief summary of your topic**

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**B. Review main points**

Main point 1

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Main point 2

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Main point 3

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**C. Close with impact**

Finish with a strong statement; consider mirroring your attention-grabbing opening.

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