

# Course Study Guide

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**ML111**

## ***Introduction to Public Speaking***

**By Dr. Haddon W. Robinson**

Updated 2014

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# Lesson 1 Study Guide

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**ML111**

## *Introduction to Public Speaking*

Do You Have Something  
Important to Say?

Updated 2014

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# Objectives

In Lesson One, Dr. Robinson will help you understand that speakers must have something important to say to their listeners. You will explore how to arrange your speaking material and the steps involved, how to grab your audience, and how to surface a need in your address.

When you complete this lesson, “Do You Have Something Important to Say?,” you should be able to:

- Have something important to say to your listeners.
- Arrange the material so listeners will receive it.
- Understand the theory behind speaking as listeners like it.
- Understand the first two steps in preparing a speech that listeners like.

# Transcript

## Course Title: Introduction to Public Speaking

### Lesson One: Do You Have Something Important To Say?

There will come a time when you'll get an invitation to speak. You'll be flattered. Somebody feels that you have enough to say to hold an audience's attention for 30-40 minutes. And so in the flattery of the moment, you'll agree to do it. And then, sheer terror will begin to strike, raising all kinds of questions—"What will I talk about? How will I say it?" It's no wonder that in the book of lists, "speaking" is at the top of the list of things people fear most. It's above cancer, above death. People who anticipate public speaking often do so with dread. But most folks get that opportunity whether they want it or not. Some who are pastors get it every week; others get it once a year; and maybe some others, once in a lifetime. If you get that opportunity, you'll want to make the most of it.

Now, what I'd like to talk with you about is a way of arranging your material so that the listener will receive it. There are all sorts of ways of arranging material, you know. If you've been in school, you know that you can arrange your material logically. You have an outline—you have Roman numerals, then "A" and "B," then "1" and "2" under the "A." That is an important thing to master.

A good outline gives you a flow of thought, a way of putting your ideas together. But what I'd like to do is to give you a psychological outline. Instead of concentrating on the content and putting it together, I'd like to give you a way of taking the content and relating it to your audience. In other words, when you get up to speak, how does that man sitting four seats in, in the seventh row, hear what you have to say?

If you could relate what you have to say to that person's way of thinking, then you have a much better chance of having an interesting talk and one that can make a difference in people's lives. So, what we'd like to talk about is speaking as listeners like it. We want to talk about how folks listen, as well as how you'll speak.

Now, before we get into it, let me lay a little bit of theory on you. If you begin to think about your task as a speaker, one of the things you have to do is to get and to hold people's attention. At the top level of what I want to talk about is "attention." Attention means that you get people to listen to you, and a good speaker will try to get and hold attention. In fact, there are some theorists in communication who argue that if you could hold people's attention, riveted on what you have to say for 30 or 40 minutes, then you could persuade that audience of almost anything.

Well, it's an interesting theory, but the difficulty is that it's very hard to test. How do you test riveting people's attention when most of us don't do that? Secondly, probably no speaker, even the most effective, can rivet people's attention for an entire 30 minutes. The person there in front of you, in the audience, can think about five times faster than you can speak. As a result, there is a lot of free time in there for the mind to wander.

But, certainly, at one level, you have to think about attention. But attention is fleeting. If you drive down the highway, the focus of your attention will change, probably 150-200 times in a minute. That's true for the folks who are there in your audience. They will listen, but it's very, very difficult for you as a speaker to just focus on people's attention. It goes away too quickly. But the first level, at least, is the level of attention.

But now there's a second level and that's the level of interest. That's a deeper level, and if you can speak to what people are interested in you've got a better chance of getting and holding their attention. Think of the speaker's situation for just a moment. You get up and people give you their attention. It's voluntary. But the trick is that you want to take voluntary attention and turn it into involuntary attention. That is, people listen because they should listen, but what you want to do is to get them to listen because they want to listen. The way you can do that is to talk about what interests the audience, because we tend to give our attention to what interests us.

For example, imagine two people making a trip around the United States. They cover essentially the same territory. One of the travelers is a geologist; he's interested in rocks. The other is a sociologist; he's interested in people and how they interact in groups. They get back home and they are showing their slides. The geologist will show you pictures of rock formations in Arizona, California, or the Pacific Northwest. The sociologist will show you groups of people, how folks assemble in a small town, or what happens in the inner city of San Francisco. Because they are interested in different things, they give their attention to different things. That's true of all of us. We tend to give our attention to the things we are interested in.

So, the first level we have to be concerned about is the level of attention. The second level is the level of interest. We give our attention to what we are interested in. Now, let me go down to a third level, the most basic level. That is the level of need, because we are most interested in what we feel we need most. Let's see how it works. We give our attention to what we're interested in, and we are most interested in what we need. Therefore, when you feel you need something, you will listen. You will give it your full attention. You've seen that.

Suppose you go down to an art museum and you know, love, and appreciate art. You're strolling through the art museum, looking at the Picassos and the Rembrandts, and then suddenly you realize that you need to find a restroom. Interesting isn't it? The only picture you're interested in seeing in that museum at that point is one that has a "little man" or "little woman," because that need has come to dominate you. You're interested in what you need, and you give your attention to what you're most interested in. Therefore, if we can arrange our talk or our sermon in a way that touches people's needs, then we know we have their interest, and we have a better chance of getting and holding their attention. That's the theory behind what I'd like to talk with you about when we talk about speaking as listeners like.

All right then, how do we do this? How do we put together an outline that relates to the person in the audience and speaks in the way that an audience thinks? Well, imagine you're getting up to speak. You've been at a dinner and you're the featured speaker. Folks have had their food, then there have been announcements and there have been introductions, and about an hour and a half

after the whole thing has begun you're going to be introduced to talk to this audience.

Let me tell you what's not going on. People are not sitting on the edges of their seats, eager to hear what you have to say. No! If you could survey that audience, by that time they're just a little bit bored, and they have a sneaking suspicion that you're going to make matters worse. If you were to survey that group, they would come up with a unanimous "Ho-hum." They aren't particularly eager to hear what the speaker has to say.

Now, that is the first step; that is, you have to think of the "Ho-hum" stage. The question is, How do you overcome that? What you need to do is to overcome the "Ho-hum" with an interesting statement. The opening statement of your speech or your sermon or your talk ought to be an interesting statement. It ought to be a statement that goes after people's attention.

I think you can sense that in the way you watch television. At our home we have cable TV. One of the cable TV stations shows old movies. I like to watch them because it takes me back to the long ago and far away of my youth. But the way those old movies started was that they would give you the title of the movie, then the major actors and the minor actors and actresses, then the names of the photographers. They would finally get to the producer and the director, and then the movie would begin.

You flip the channel and come up with a movie made today or a movie made for television. They start right off. In fact, they don't even give you a chance to wonder what the title is. They superimpose the title over the action. They're into it, and they hook you before they ever get to a commercial. Why? Because the people who put television together know that the folks watching the television set have a "clicker" in their hand. Unless you deliberately tune in to watch a particular program, you'll go channel surfing. They know they've got about 15-20 seconds to hook you, and if they don't, off you go with that instrument in your hand that enables you to look at 48 different channels.

Folks come to hear you speak, whether it's in church or at a dinner, and they sit there with clickers in their hands. They don't give you a lot of time to get their attention. In fact, there's some evidence that folks make up their minds about you in the first 30 seconds that you get up to speak. They decide whether they like or dislike you, whether the talk is going to be interesting or boring, whether you're going to be the kind of person that engages them, or whether they ought to tune out or tune in. You don't have a lot of time. Therefore, if you're going to overcome the "Ho-hum," you want to get an interesting statement. The first 25-30 words that you give ought to be interesting words, words that make people sit up and listen.

For example, if you began by saying, "The man who sat next to me on United flight #407 to Los Angeles was an interesting man. I never got his name, and after our conversation I was glad that I didn't." Well, folks don't quite know where you're going with that, but it does have a way of getting their attention. Or, if you said, "According to statistics, over 50% of men are unfaithful to their wives sometime in their marriage, and I expect that some of you would help make that statistic a reality."

I don't know what you would want to do with that, but I know there will be a lot of women who sit up and listen, and a lot of men who will not tune you out because they want to hear what you have to say. The point is that the opening sentence is an important sentence. It doesn't have to be startling, but it does have to be interesting.

So, the “Ho-hum” is the first stage, and you overcome the “Ho-hum” with an interesting statement. Look at it this way. Imagine that you as a speaker are on one island and your audience is on another island and there is a gulf between you. On your island, you're aware of everything you want to say. You've done the research, you've worked on your talk, you've given hours to it, but the audience—they're on another island. So what you need to do when you begin is to light a fire on your island; do something to get the attention of your audience. The way you light a fire is by starting with an interesting statement. That's the first stage—“Ho-hum.”

Let's suppose you have a good, interesting opening statement. What's the second thing that the audience asks? That man that we talked about out in the audience, a few seats in from the end, if you get his attention, the next question that comes to his mind is, “Why bring that up?” The way you answer that question is by surfacing a need. Think about those two islands I talked about just a moment ago. You're on your island, and hopefully with your opening sentence, you've lit a fire. Now what you want to do between those two islands is to build a bridge. To build a bridge between where your audience is and where you want them to be and what you want to do is to create a need.

Sometimes when people think about speaking, if you ask them, “Where do you apply your talk?” the answer is often, “You do that at the end.” But if you wait until the end of a talk to show people why this may be important to them, you will have lost the audience. You may all start out together, but that doesn't mean that you're all going to finish together. It's too late at the end of a talk to tell folks why this is important. So up front, right after you get their attention with an interesting statement, surface a need—build a bridge between their world and your world.

A while ago, I had a luncheon with a man who is a vice president of a publishing firm in New York City. It was his task, he told me, to help evaluate the manuscripts that his firm was going to publish in the year to come. You can imagine that a publishing house gets a large number of manuscripts. So I said to this man, “How many book manuscripts do you, personally, evaluate in the course of the year?” And he said, “Well, I suppose 300-350.”

I said to him, “I read rather rapidly, but there is no way you can read 300-350 manuscripts in a year. I don't see how you could do that.”

He said, “Well, the truth is that we don't read them all. There's a kind of a formula we follow. In the first paragraph, an author needs to grab an audience by the throat. Then in the next few paragraphs, he needs to get a hold of the windpipe and begin to squeeze. Then the first few pages, he takes this reader by the windpipe and slams him up against the wall and holds him there until the end of the book.”

He said, “Now, not every writer can do that on every page of the book. But if an author has gone through the first chapter and the whole thing is kind of a wide yawn, there really isn’t much hope that later on in the book it’s really going to become interesting. Now,” he said, “occasionally we make a misjudgment and somebody else picks up the book and it does pretty well, but as far as I’m concerned, that formula is good enough so that we measure our books against that.”

I thought, speeches aren’t as long as a book, but there’s some pretty good advice there, isn’t there? That is, what he is simply saying is that a good author, early in the book, tells you why you need what she has to say, and you are caught as a reader by the interest factor, the need factor that is woven into the book.

So, what you want to do is to surface a need. You answer the question, “Why bring this up?” You build a bridge between where you are and where the audience is. How would it work? Suppose a preacher began a sermon this way:

If you went to New York City, one of the things you’d want to see is the New York subway system. You ought to ride the subway before you leave the city. In the New York subways, there are advertisements on the wall, and one of the things you discover in New York is that there are a lot of budding artists. These are folks who love to work with graffiti.

On the 59th Street subway in New York a while ago, there was an ad. There were two people, a man and a woman, facing each other. Underneath, there was an ad for vodka. A graffiti artist came along and out of the mouth of the man, he drew a balloon, like a cartoon character, and in the balloon the man said, ‘I like girls,’ but he misspelled the word ‘girls.’ He spelled it g-r-i-l-s—‘I like grils.’ A little later, another graffiti artist came along and wrote next to that, ‘It’s girls, stupid! It’s girls you like!’ Then a while later, a third graffiti artist came along and commented on the previous comment, writing underneath that, ‘Well, it’s alright to like the girls, but what about us grils?’ When you think about it, that’s a question a lot of folks ask.

Here is a young woman who wants desperately to be married. She’s attractive enough, has a pleasant personality, but somehow she has never met the right man—never met many wrong men either. All of her friends are married. She goes to their weddings, and according to the myth, if you catch the bouquet then you’re the next person married. She knows it’s a myth because she has caught her share of bouquets but is not married. Now when girlfriends have a shower, she just sends a gift. Sometimes at night, she says, ‘Everybody loves the girls, but what about us grils?’

Here’s a couple, married now eleven years. Before they were married, they talked about having children. He said he’d like two, and she said she’d like four. Eleven years have now passed, and they don’t have any children though they desperately want a child. Again, this young woman goes to showers where friends of hers are having children—she has none. She reads statistics about abortion where unborns are murdered, where if they were able to come into life, they could be adopted by couples desperately wanting children. Mother’s Day is a tough, tough time in church because it reminds this couple of everything they don’t have. They lie in bed at night and hug each other with tears coming down their cheeks, and they say, ‘Well, everybody loves the girls, but what about us grils?’



Here's a boy, fifteen years of age. He wants to play football to make the high school team. If desire could do it, he'd be on the first string. All summer, he has gone out and run and he's lifted weights, and now he goes for the tryout. A few days after the tryouts, a list is posted of who made the team. Three of his friends are on the team, but he hasn't made the team. He'll sit in the grandstand and cheer the others on. That's tough when you're fifteen years of age. Sometimes as he goes home, he says, 'Everybody loves the girls, but what about us grils?'

Every one of us has been a 'gril' at some time or another. We feel that we have been losers in the battle, and we're frustrated.

"If that's your condition," the preacher says, "I'd like to introduce you to a man in the Bible who I'm sure in the middle of his life, must have said, 'Everybody loves the girls, but what about us grils?' The story of that 'gril' is found in ..."

The question is, would you like to turn in the Bible to find out who that person is? If you do, then the preacher has succeeded in that second step, answering the question, Why bring that up? He's built a bridge from where the audience is into his sermon.

Those are the first two stages of a well-planned speech. "Ho-hum": you have an interesting statement; and "Why bring that up?": you build a bridge by surfacing a need.

# Discussion Questions

What is the most effective speech you can remember? Did the content change your behavior? Why do you think the speaker had such a lasting effect on you?

Why is it important to surface a need for your audience right away? Can you think of an example of a speech or sermon you've heard that spoke to your needs? How did the speaker accomplish this?

How do you feel about public speaking? What are your biggest fears/concerns? Why do you think you feel that way?

# Quiz

1. Why is it difficult to get and hold a listener's attention for an entire 30 minutes?
  - A. Most people can think about five times faster than a speaker can speak.
  - B. It is impossible to provide that much useful information to the listeners.
  - C. Most people refuse to pay attention to any speaker.
  - D. None of the above
2. The lesson focuses primarily on:
  - A. People's fear of public speaking
  - B. Preparing a good outline
  - C. Speaking as listeners like it
  - D. Concluding a speech by relating it to the listeners
3. Dr. Robinson discusses three levels the speaker must be concerned about. They are:
  - A. Attention, Interest, and Need
  - B. Attention, Humor, and Need
  - C. Humor, Interest, and Need
  - D. Attention, Captivation, and Need
4. Why is "need" the most basic level a speaker must be concerned about?
  - A. Most people don't know what they need, so they will pay attention to a speaker who tells them what they need.
  - B. People pay attention to what they are most interested in, and they are most interested in what they need.
  - C. Everyone has the same needs.
  - D. All of the above
5. How does Dr. Robinson advise a speaker overcome the "Ho-hum" stage of the audience?
  - A. With loud music
  - B. By telling them what they need
  - C. With an interesting statement
  - D. All of the above
6. After the speaker overcomes the "Ho-hum" stage, he must:
  - A. Surface a need
  - B. Tell a story
  - C. "Light a fire" to get the audience's attention
  - D. None of the above

7. After the speaker has captured the audience's attention at the beginning of the speech, what is the next question she needs to answer for the audience?
  - A. "What are you talking about?"
  - B. "Why bring this up?"
  - C. "How long will the speech last?"
  - D. "What's the point?"
8. In the lesson, Dr. Robinson makes a comparison between speeches and:
  - A. Book manuscripts
  - B. Athletic games
  - C. Journal articles
  - D. None of the above
9. According to the lesson, some communication theorists believe that if a speaker could rivet people's attention for 30-40 minutes, he could persuade the audience of almost anything.
  - A. True
  - B. False
10. A speaker's goal should be to get the audience to:
  - A. Listen because they feel like they should listen
  - B. Listen because they feel scared
  - C. Listen because they want to listen
  - D. None of the above

Answers: 1. A 2. C 3 A. 4. B 5. C 6. A 7. B 8. A 9. A 10. C

# Lesson 2 Study Guide

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## *Introduction to Public Speaking*

What Are You Talking About?

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# Objectives

In Lesson Two, Dr. Robinson discusses the “big idea stage” and the “for instance” stage which will serve as guidelines in your speech development. You will learn the importance of clarifying points and the need to illustrate application.

When you complete this lesson, “What Are You Talking About?,” you should be able to:

- Arrange your material so listeners will be able to receive it.
- Explain the theory behind speaking as listeners like it.
- Define the third and fourth steps to preparing a speech that listeners like.

# Transcript

## Course Title: Introduction to Public Speaking

### Lesson Two: What Are You Talking About?

I don't know anyone who ever started out wanting to be dull. I doubt that there has been a person in history who said, "When I get up to speak, I want to be the most boring, dull speaker this audience has ever heard." No! When you get up to speak, you would like to be interesting. You would like folks to listen. You would like to be helpful. Nobody deliberately tries to be dull. But somehow, all of us have a way of being dull from time to time. We discover that even without any practice dullness comes easily.

What we have been talking about is a way to try to overcome that by taking the material you have for a talk and putting it together, not just according to a logical outline, but according to a psychological outline. In other words, we are not simply going to look at the content; we are going to look at the listener. We want to speak as a listener likes it. We said that if you are going to have an interesting talk, that talk will go through stages. The first stage we call the "Ho-hum" stage. The kind of reaction of an audience when people get up to speak in which they are a little bit bored and think the speaker will make matters worse. What we do to overcome that boredom phase, that "Ho-hum" stage, is to begin with an interesting statement.

The second stage through which an audience goes if you have gotten their attention is to ask the question, "Well, why bring that up?" What you do in response to that is surface a need. If you have been following this, you will remember the diagram. There are two islands: the island of your interest and the island of the audience's interest. According to the first stage, the "Ho-hum" stage, what you want to do is to light a fire and get their attention. In the second stage, you want to build a bridge, a bridge between the audience's interests and needs and what you're interested in as a speaker. That is where we've come thus far. But what is the third stage?

In the third stage, the question that the audience comes up with is, "Alright, I am convinced I have a need. What is your big idea?" That is, "If I have a need, what are you going to do to satisfy it?" If you can get the audience across that bridge to your island, then you have got to show them your treasure. Imagine that what you have to say is a treasure chest. What you do in response to the question, "What is your big idea?" is to state it. Tell them clearly what the major idea of your talk is all about. Now, that is an important principle in speaking. A good talk is the embodiment of a single, generative idea. A good talk is an idea expanded, or putting it another way, a talk can be shrunk down to its basic idea.

You need to know two things when you are coming up with an idea. One is, you have to answer the question, "What am I talking about?" That is the subject of your talk. This can never be a single word. You can't talk on free enterprise. You can't talk on forgiveness. You have to define it better than that. There is a bit of doggerel: "I have six faithful men who taught me all I knew. What and

where and when and why and how and who?” Now, you can usually define your subject, what you are talking about, by using one of those questions. You can use a what, a where, or when or why, how or who. When you look at the subject, and it is a broad subject like forgiveness, you can talk about what is forgiveness. You can talk about why we should forgive. You may talk about how we should forgive, but there will be one of those subjects that will dominate everything else you say. So a good idea is made up of the subject, and the clearer you can be about that subject, the better your talk will be. And then after the subject, you have a statement that completes it, and the two together become your idea. For instance, if I say, “What this country needs,” that’s a subject, not a complete idea. The complement and the answer to this question, “What this country needs,” that is your idea. For example: “What this country needs is a good, five-cent cigar.” Or, “What this country needs is a good, five-cent cigar that only costs a dollar.” Or, “What this country needs is a religious revival.” Or “What this country needs is to change the people who are in office.”

You see, all of those are the same subject, that is what you are talking about. But the complement completes the subject that makes up the idea. Look at it another way. The subject you are talking about can be stated as a question: “What is the test of a person’s character?” The complement is the answer to that question: “What is the test of a person’s character? The test of a person’s character is what they would do if they were absolutely certain that they would never be found out.” Or, “What is the test of a person’s character? The test of a person’s character is like a test of an oak. How strong is she at the roots?” The question: “What is the test of a person’s character?” The answer: “How they stand up to difficulties in their lives.” It is the question and the answer, the subject and the complement that give you the basic idea of what you are trying to get across. If you can take all of your content and express it in a single idea, then you will know what you are talking about, and there is a better chance that the audience will as well. It is hard to overemphasize that. Many people in putting together a talk get all caught up in the details, so the talk is like a brush pile. You are not really sure what it is all about.

Years ago, Calvin Coolidge, the President of the United States, went to church and, according to the story, when he came home, his wife said, “What did the preacher preach about?” He said, “Sin,” and she said, “Well, what did he say about it?” He said, “Well, I think he was against it.” Bad sermons are made up of a general subject like sin, not well defined, and you come away thinking, “Well, I guess he was against it.” An audience is asking, “What is your big idea?” That is, what is it that you are going to bring that will meet the need you have raised in your introduction? You need to state it. You need to “think” yourself clear. What in the world am I really talking about? What is it that I want to say about that? Now you may say a couple of things about the subject, that is, the subject can only have one of them in a talk, sermon, or a lecture.

You may have: What is the test of a person’s character? One of your points may be that the test of a person’s character is how strong they are at the roots. Another test of a person’s character is how they go through difficult times. You have one subject and you may have one, two, three complements. That is, three major points give the answer to your question. Is that clear? I hope so, because there is probably no failure in talks greater than that. That is, the speaker really doesn’t know what he is talking about. I mean, he has talked about a lot of things but he has never really nailed that down in his mind. I will tell you this: if it is a mist in the speaker’s stand, it is an



absolute fog in the audience. So, when people say, “What is your big idea?” they have a right to know the answer to two very simple questions: What is the speaker talking about?—the complete, direct answer to that question. And what is it that she, the speaker, is saying about what she is talking about? Some place, answer that. Answer it for yourself, and then, in your talk, answer it for your audience. So, that is the third stage through which you go.

The first, the “Ho-hum” stage: You start with an interesting statement. The second: Well, why bring that up? Then you surface a need. The third is: What is your big idea? And you state the idea for them. The first, you have two islands. Build the fire and get the attention. The second, you build a bridge and get the audience from their island of interest over to your island. And here, when they come over, you expose them to your treasure. That is the idea of your talk or of your sermon. Now, let’s take that a step further.

The fourth thing an audience asks as you are speaking is, “For instance?” What you want to do is to get down to specifics. That is, the audience has come over to your island and you have shown them your treasure chest. Now what you want to do is open that chest and show them in specific ways what is there. So the audience is always asking, “For instance?” and what you want to do is give them some specifics to back up what you are talking about. Poor speakers, boring speakers, will usually say “in other words” rather than “for instance.” I mean, they confused you enough with the first batch of words that they gave you, but they are going to give you another batch of words to try to clear up what they were not clear about when they began. But the audience is saying, “for instance,” or “for example, show me what it is that you are talking about.” The best speakers know that what Walter Lipman said years ago is true. That is, people think with pictures in their heads. And the best speakers are always talking about the stuff of life. They are always giving examples so that the audience says, “Oh, I see what you mean.” That is why they are constantly saying, “for instance?” or “for example?”

Anything that you need to do in a talk, you can do with a “for instance” or “for example.” Whenever you are developing a point in your talk or the whole talk itself, there are only three things you ever really want to do. One is to explain what you are saying, or another is to prove what you are saying, or the third is to show the implications of what you are saying. Let me put that into three questions. Whenever you make a statement, there is only one of three things you can do with it. One thing you can do with that statement is to answer the question, “What does that mean?” Another thing you could do with the statement is to answer the question, “Is that true? Do I really believe it?” The third thing you could do with the statement is to answer the question, “So what? What difference does it make?” Those three questions are the only things you can ever do with any statement that you make. You can explain it, you can prove it, and you can apply it. Take something as mundane and commonplace as someone saying, “We are going to have some bad weather tomorrow.” One response to that, if you are interested in the statement at all, is to say, “What does that mean? What do you mean by bad weather?” “Some parts of the country, so I understand, are going to have two feet of snow; it is going to be a blizzard.” Maybe some other person would say, “I understand the temperature is going to be 110 degrees tomorrow.”

What you are doing is simply explaining what you mean by bad weather. So you say, “It’s going to

be bad weather tomorrow,” and I think I know what you mean. We’re going to have a heavy snow. But I might say to you, “Is that true? How did you know that?” And you would say to me, “Well, I saw it on the weather channel. I noticed the forecast for tomorrow. We’re going to have a blizzard coming our way.”

Well, I know what you are talking about, and I think you are telling me the truth. I wondered why you were bringing it up now. And you might say, “Well, I am bringing it up because you might want to start for work earlier tomorrow. You may have to brush off your car and get the car warmed up before you start, or you may want to wear heavier clothes. After all, a blizzard can threaten you.”

The point is that whenever you make any statement, there is only one of three things you can do with it. You can explain it, you can prove it, or you can apply it. Illustrations, “for instances,” can be used to explain, to prove, to apply. For instance, let’s suppose that you wanted to talk about theology. You may or may not be interested in theology. C. S. Lewis, the gifted Christian writer, was talking about theology, and he was really talking about why theology is needed. He wanted to explain that. He said there was a time when he was speaking to a group of soldiers in the Royal Air Force. These were men who were battle-hardened veterans. He said as he was talking about some point of Christian truth, an old RAF sergeant got up and said, “Oh, I don’t have time for all of this. I know there is a God. I felt him out there alone at night, and all of this talk about God doesn’t impress me.”

C. S. Lewis said, “I can understand that man’s problem. In a way, he was right. That is, his experience of God was more real than talking about God.” Just as a person walking by the side of the ocean feels the spray of the ocean in his face and smells the salt water in his nostrils, he feels the reality of that. If he goes up to his office and sees a map of the Atlantic, that walk by the seashore is far more real than the map sprawled out across his desk. So Lewis said, “Your experience of God is more real than the theology about God, just as a walk by the side of the ocean is more real than looking at a map on your desk. But if you want to go anyplace across the Atlantic, the map is absolutely essential. And so,” Lewis said, “theology is like that map.”

You see what he did? He explained a fairly abstract concept in terms of a walk by the ocean and a map sprawled across the desk. It was concrete. It was specific. He painted a picture, and he explained what he had to say. So one of the things you want to do with the points in your talk is to explain it in illustrations, in analogies. It can be very helpful in doing that. Another thing you want to do is answer that question, “Is that true? Do I really believe it?” One way we can win belief is by giving people an illustration, a “for instance.”

Years ago, I read an article by Dorothy Sayers. Dorothy Sayers was a mystery writer from Britain, and she was also a committed follower of Jesus Christ. In one of her discussions, she talked about the moral law of God. What she meant by the moral law is that behind the universe there is a God and that the laws of God that govern our conduct are as immutable as the law of gravity. But then she said that a lot of folks feel that many of the laws of God could easily be changed. They are very arbitrary, like the entrance requirements for getting into a country club. So she went on to say there are really two kinds of laws: 1) there is the law of the stop sign, and 2) the law of the fire. The law of the stop sign says that in a given community with a lot of traffic going up and down an

avenue, and the city council meets and put up a stop sign, you stop. And if you don't, the fine will be \$100. But there can be a lot of folks running that stop sign, so the city council can come and raise the fee to \$200. On the other hand, a highway may come into the community and bypass the town so the traffic pattern changes. The city council can meet and take down the stop sign. The stop sign is in their control. A lot of folks think the laws of God are like the laws of the stop sign.

But Dorothy Sayers said, "There is also the law of the fire. The law of the fire says that if you put your hand into fire, you will get burned." Now she said, "Imagine that all of the nations of the world gathered, all of the delegates gathered in one huge conclave and all of the delegates to this convention voted unanimously that from here on out, fire would not burn. The first delegate to leave the assembly and put his hand in the fire will discover that there is a difference between the law of the fire and the law of the stop sign, because bound up in the nature of fire is the penalty for abusing it." And Dorothy Sayers said, "The law of the fire is like the moral law of God. You don't really break God's laws." She said you just break yourself on them, and that even God himself cannot cancel the penalty of the law of the fire without changing the nature of fire itself. I read that thirty-five years ago, but every time I think of the moral law of God, I think of the law of the stop sign and the law of the fire. What Dorothy Sayers had done was to give me a "for instance," and I was able to respond to a very abstract concept and say, "Oh, I see what you mean." Good speakers do that. The audience says, "for instance," and you give them specifics. You get down to the things you have in your treasure. So, do you have it?

First stage: "Ho-hum"—you begin with an interesting statement. Second stage: "Why bring that up?"—what you do is surface a need. The third is, "What is your big idea?" And what you do is you tell them what you are talking about. You tell them the idea of your talk, and then, as you are developing that idea, you respond to the incessant demand of the audience—"for instance, for example"—and you get down to specifics. You help them to see what you are saying, and that makes for a very interesting talk.

# Discussion Questions

Describe the four stages a good speaker will bring her audience through. What should the speaker give her audience in each of these stages and why is this important?

Explain the three strategies “Explain,” “Prove,” and “Apply.” How does a speaker accomplish these?

How does a good speaker identify the subject of his talk?

# Quiz

1. What is the “Ho-hum” stage of the audience?
  - A. The stage when the audience needs the speaker to surface a need
  - B. The stage when the speaker gets up to speak and the audience is already a little bit bored
  - C. The stage when the audience is looking for examples
  - D. None of the above
2. Once the speaker has convinced the audience that they have a need, which question must the speaker answer next?
  - A. Why bring that up?
  - B. What is your big idea?
  - C. Can you give an example?
  - D. How can I apply this?
3. The speaker must have a specific subject for her talk.
  - A. True
  - B. False
4. The speaker should be able to sum up the subject of his talk in one word.
  - A. True
  - B. False
5. Which of the following questions can a speaker use to define his subject?
  - A. Where?
  - B. What?
  - C. When?
  - D. All of the above
6. Which of the following explain how to come up with the main idea of your speech?
  - A. Subject + Complement = Idea
  - B. Question + Answer = Idea
  - C. Both A and B
  - D. None of the above
7. Why, according to Dr. Robinson, is it so important that the speaker knows exactly what her main idea is?
  - A. If the speaker is uncertain of her main point, the audience will have little hope of understanding it.
  - B. So that she can write a good outline
  - C. So that she can use the speech/sermon again
  - D. None of the above

8. At the stage when the audience asks “for instance,” what are they looking for?
  - A. The speaker’s main idea
  - B. Specifics to back up what the speaker is talking about
  - C. A reason to pay attention
  - D. None of the above
9. A subject can have more than one complement.
  - A. True
  - B. False
10. In the lesson, Dr. Robinson provides an example of C.S. Lewis responding to a difficult comment from someone in his audience. In this example, what did C.S. Lewis do?
  - A. He told the audience member he was wrong.
  - B. He explained the man’s needs.
  - C. He provided a specific, concrete explanation for an abstract concept by using an analogy.
  - D. All of the above

Answers: 1. B 2. B 3 A. 4. B 5. D 6. C 7. A 8. B 9. A 10. C

# Lesson 3 Study Guide

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**ML111**

## *Introduction To Public Speaking*

What Difference Does It Make?

Updated 2014

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**Our Daily Bread**  
**Christian University**

# Objectives

In Lesson Three, Dr. Robinson talks about the importance of a good conclusion in speech writing. Examples of visualization and how the audience can be encouraged to put the speaker's material into practice are discussed.

When you complete this lesson, "What Difference Does It Make?," you should be able to:

- Arrange the material so listeners will receive it.
- Discuss the theory behind speaking as listeners like it.
- Recount all five steps to preparing a speech that listeners like.



# Transcript

## Course Title: Introduction to Public Speaking

### Lesson Three: What Difference Does It Make?

When I was in my early teens, I used to keep a diary. Well, that is not really true. I kept a diary for the month of January and maybe into the month of February. It seemed to me that when people kept diaries, they always had something profound to say. I discovered, for me, it was sort of a “got up, went to school, went to work, had supper, did my homework, and went to bed.” Each day was sort of ditto, ditto, ditto. So, after a couple of weeks of that, I gave it up. But, years ago, I went back home when we were moving my father down to Texas to live with us. We cleaned out his apartment, and I found some of those diaries I had written years ago. In one of the diaries, I discovered that on a Tuesday evening, I had gone to hear a man preach, and his name was Dr. Harry Ironside, the pastor of a large church in Chicago. I look back at that, and I wonder why I went on a Tuesday night to hear somebody speak. I certainly wasn’t that religious. Sunday was one thing, but Tuesday was another. But any rate, I came home and I entered into my diary this question: “Some people speak for an hour and it seems like twenty minutes, and others speak for twenty minutes and it seems like an hour, and I wonder what the difference is?” I guess I have spent my life trying to answer that question. What is it that makes one speaker interesting and another dull? What is it that makes one speaker the kind of person you want to hear again and another you would rather avoid? You know, what makes a good speaker interesting? That is a question that any thoughtful person asks and especially if you have to do the speaking.

So, what we have been trying to do is to say, well, there is a way of putting together a talk that relates what we have to say to the people who have to listen. What we are trying to do is to take voluntary attention and turn it in to involuntary attention. When people listen to us, we get up to speak, and they listen because they have to listen. Otherwise they are an unruly mob. What we want to do is to get them to listen because they want to listen. They start with voluntary attention, and then it becomes involuntary if we do our work well. They don’t even think about the fact that they are listening. They just do. That is the kind of person who will talk for an hour and it seems like twenty minutes. So, what we are trying to do is to relate what we have to say to the way an audience has to listen.

Do you remember the steps that we have talked about thus far? We have said that the first step is the “Ho-hum” step—that when you get up, you don’t dare assume that people are eager to hear what you have to say, even if you get a flattering introduction. You don’t necessarily believe it, and the audience doesn’t either. No, you want to begin by going for an interesting statement. You want to go after the audience’s mind right away. Then, if you have done that, the second thing the audience asks is, “Why bring that up?” What you want to do is to surface a need. Tell them when you begin why, if they will give you the next 30 minutes, you are going to do something that will help them in their lives. Relate what you have to say to a felt need of the audience. If you have created a need, that is, if you have gotten them to itch, then they want you to scratch it. So, the

question they ask is, “What is your big idea? What is your solution to the need you have brought up?” What you want to do is state the basic idea of your sermon or of your talk or of your lecture. The folks have a right to know what you are talking about and what you are saying about what you are talking about. So as you are developing it, be sure to center everything you are saying around a single driving idea. Try to nail that home in the audience’s mind as you are developing the idea.

The fourth thing that people ask again and again is well, “for instance?” or “for example?” What you want to do as you are developing your talk is to give people something concrete, something specific. Help them to see what you are talking about, and you do that with illustrations, with examples. We were saying that anytime you are developing a point in your talk, there is only one of three things you could do. You can explain it, you can prove it, and you can apply it. We said there were three questions. One question is, “What does that mean?”—that is explaining. The second question, “Is that true? Do I really believe it?”—that is proving. The third is, “So what? What difference does that make?” So, as you are developing your talk and you come to the end of your talk, the audience wants to know, “So what? What difference does that make?”

All of us have heard talks or sermons, which were interesting and maybe even moving, but you had no idea when the talk was over what you could do tomorrow as a result of what you heard today. Or, a person is making an important point, they tell you it is important—you think it is important—but you don’t really know how to put that into practice. You can give people an illustration of how that would work. That is what a good illustration is able to do. By the way, that brings me to that last point of development. We were just talking about the “for instance,” using illustrations to explain, to prove, to apply. But, if you think of the last question that an audience asks after the “Ho-hum” and “Why bring this up? What is your big idea?” and the “for instance,” the last thing they ask is, “So what? What difference does this make?” Try to answer that for the points within your talk, but you also want to do it at the end of your talk. You want to show people how to put this into practice.

On my desk at the seminary where I teach, I have a little saying framed. It is a bit of doggerel. It says, “As Tommy Snooks and Betty Brooks were leaving church on Sunday, said Tommy Snooks to Betty Brooks, ‘Tomorrow will be Monday.’” That has got to be the ultimate low of social conversation. But, for someone like myself who preaches or teaches, the ultimate high. When people come to listen to you give your talk, they hear you on a Tuesday night, but tomorrow is Wednesday. They want to know, “How can I put this into practice for the rest of the week?” or, sometimes, “for the rest of my life?” The best speaking gives people some specific ways of taking the idea and putting it into practice. Put it this way. Suppose after you spoke, somebody came up to you and said, “Oh, that is very interesting, and I think I understand you and I think I believe you, but how do I really put that into practice where I work or in my home or with my children?” What would you say? If you can’t answer that, then chances are your talk may be irrelevant. And if you can answer that, then answer it and put that into your talk. People want to know how to put something into practice. Now to be fair, not every talk or every sermon can be put into practice in Monday morning’s world. The concepts you teach or may preach on a Sunday, or that you may use in talking to an audience, may not be something that the next day people can dress up in overalls, put into a business suit, or put an apron around, and actually use it.

Sometimes what we are doing is we are giving people a concept that they will use sometime in the future. I spent a number of years in the state of Oregon—a very beautiful state. They have mountains. And as you go up into the mountains of Oregon, you will see a sign that says, “Beware of falling rock.” I often wondered about that sign. You’re driving along the highway, you look up, and you see these huge boulders. And if they begin to fall you, might look up at them, and there they come and down you go. Falling rock would destroy you. It always seemed to me to be an unnecessary sign, because if you see falling rock, what do you do about it? But, if you think about it, when we talk to folks, sometimes what we are trying to do is to help them avoid falling rock sometime in the future. This concept we are trying to get across is something that they will be able to use, maybe not tomorrow or the next day but someday in the future. Well, how would you do that?

One way of doing it is what people in communication call “visualization.” Visualization is a way of projecting people into the future, into a situation in which what you have said, they may be able to use. You have to have two things if you are going to visualize. One is, it needs to be a possible situation. It is even better if it looks like a probable situation. What you are doing is getting people to picture some situation in which they will use what you have been telling them. For instance, let’s suppose you are a Christian and you are talking about the forty-sixth psalm. Great psalm. It says, “The Lord is our refuge and strength and available help in the time of trouble.” If you look at the psalm, you will see that it is divided into three stanzas. At the end of the second and the third stanzas, there is a refrain. It says, “the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our strength.” You are talking to people about that psalm.

The major idea is that God is our refuge and strength, an available help in the time of trouble. And then the refrain, “The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of even Jacob is our strength.” Who is the Lord of hosts? Well, the phrase refers to the God who made the sun, the stars, and the planets, the hosts of the heavens. It also refers to the God who has a myriad of angels to do His bidding. “Those heavenly hosts.” It is a way of saying, He is the God of power, the God of might, the God who names the stars and sets flaming suns into the vaults of heaven. It also says, “The God of even Jacob is our strength.” Jacob, who is nobody’s candidate for man of the year, was a conniver. He wasn’t what we normally think of when we think of a pious and devout person. No, a lot about Jacob made him into a deceiver. Not the kind of person you would think lived a righteous life. But the point of the psalmist is that this God who is the God of the hosts is God of a man like Jacob—a very unlikely man. Anyway, that is how the psalm develops. “The Lord is our refuge and strength and available help in the times of trouble.”

What kind of God is He? He is the Lord of Hosts, the Lord of the heavens, the Lord of the angels. What kind of God is He? He is the God even of a chap like Jacob. A fellow who in many ways made a mess of his life and in many ways seemed to be going away from God, but a man who wrestled with God and God wrestled with him. Jacob was made weak in order to be made strong. That is the talk. So the question is, “Where would you use this?” Well you might use it tomorrow, but it may be that there are folks there who are not really facing a crisis in life but you want to visualize this for them. You want to give them a, “So what? What difference might this make?” So you might say to the audience:

I don't know when it happened, but I can imagine it happening in the middle of the night. The phone rings and you are awakened from a deep sleep, and you grab hold of the telephone and you put it to your ear hardly awake. And then a voice at the other end tells you that someone that you love very deeply, someone who is the security of your life, somebody that you thought you could never live without has been suddenly taken. Gone! You hear the news. You mumble something like 'thank you.' You ask for a bit more explanation. By this time you are wide awake. You put that phone back on its cradle, and you know that your life from here on out will be changed and will never be the same. It is going to be different. You may be filled with grief; you may be filled with fear; your heart may quiver. But perhaps at that moment in the darkness of that hour, you will remember what the psalmist said, 'The Lord of Hosts is with you, the God of even Jacob is your strength. The Lord is your refuge and strength. The Lord is an available help in the time of trouble.' That does not mean that there will be no grief. It does not mean that there will be no questions. It does mean you don't have to go it alone. God Himself will be with you.

That is visualization. That is the way of taking the concept and putting it into the stuff of life. So whatever your talk is, give them a, "So what? What difference does it make?" Give them several if you can. Give them a way of taking what you have said and putting it into practice. Good speakers do that.

At any rate, that is the outline. You begin with the "Ho-hum" and there is an interesting statement.

Then there is the, "Why bring this up?" We surface a need.

"What is your big idea?" And you in that talk tell them what your idea is, tell them what it is you are driving at. As you develop the talk, you respond to the, "For instance?" "For example?" And be concrete, down to earth.

Finally, "So what? What difference does it make?"

Remember that diagram I gave you of the two islands? The "Ho-hum"—you have an interesting statement, you light a fire. "Why bring that up?"—and then you build a bridge between where you are and where the audience is and bring them across. Then, when they come across, you show them your treasure. You give them your idea, and then by the use of specifics you open up that treasure and you show them the particulars inside that treasure chest. The final one, and what you do is, as that audience goes back to their island, their time with their children, back to their job, back to the crabgrass in their yard—all of their stuff of life—you give them something to take with them. They go back across that bridge and practice what you have said. That is an audience-oriented outline.

You can look at it another way. If you think of a logical outline, then the first two steps—the "Ho-hum" and "Why bring this up?"—that really forms your introduction. A good introduction gets attention, surfaces needs, and helps people know where you are going.

The answer to the question, “What is your big idea?” is what the whole talk is about. A number of different times, you tell them what that idea is. You remind people of it, even when they have forgotten the specifics. They need to have that in mind. And then what you want to do is to enforce that with the specifics and end by showing them what you have said makes a difference in their lives. It will work.

And the last point, “So what? What difference does it make?” is your conclusion. The illustrations and the idea are the body of your message. The conclusion gives people something they can do tomorrow as a result of what you have said today.

So next time you get a chance to speak, as you work with your content, think of your listener. Work with it logically, but work with it psychologically. Give them an audience-oriented outline and see what a difference that can make.

# Discussion Questions

Explain the importance of the “So what?” step in the outline described by Dr. Robinson. Why is this step important for your listeners?

Explain the concept of “visualization.” How is this concept useful in preparing a speech or sermon?

According to Dr. Robinson, what are the five steps in preparing a speech that listeners like? What did you learn in this course that might be most helpful in improving your public speaking skills?

# Quiz

1. When Dr. Robinson says the speaker's goal is to take voluntary attention and turn it into involuntary attention, he means:
  - A. The goal is to have the audience feel like they must listen to you.
  - B. The goal is to have the audience consciously decide to listen to you.
  - C. The goal is to have the audience not have to think about listening.
  - D. All of the above
2. The speaker should answer the "So what?" question at the end of the talk.
  - A. True
  - B. False
3. What does answering the "So what?" question do for the audience?
  - A. It shows them how to put what you've said into practice.
  - B. It explains to them why they should come hear you speak again.
  - C. It shows them that you are a competent speaker.
  - D. None of the above
4. Based on the five points of the audience-oriented outline that Dr. Robinson has discussed in this course, what point(s) make up the introduction?
  - A. "Ho-hum"
  - B. "Why bring that up?"
  - C. Both A and B
  - D. "What's your big idea?"
5. Based on the five points of the audience-oriented outline that Dr. Robinson has discussed in this course, what point(s) make up the body?
  - A. "What's your big idea?"
  - B. "For instance"
  - C. Both A and B
  - D. "So what?"
6. Based on the five points of the audience-oriented outline that Dr. Robinson has discussed in this course, what point(s) make up the conclusion?
  - A. "Why bring that up?"
  - B. "For instance"
  - C. Both A and B
  - D. "So what?"
7. When constructing an outline, think of it only psychologically.
  - A. True
  - B. False

8. Dr. Robinson advises that the speaker tell the audience her main idea:
  - A. Only once
  - B. Three times
  - C. Many times
  - D. Never - the main idea should be implied.
9. What technique should a speaker use to explain to his audience the importance of a concept they may not need to apply right away, but rather, in the future?
  - A. Visualization
  - B. Inspiration
  - C. Hesitation
  - D. Polarization
10. Who/What does Dr. Robinson recommend you think of when working with your content for a speech or sermon?
  - A. Yourself
  - B. Your listener
  - C. Your message
  - D. The church

Answers: 1. C 2. A 3 A. 4. C 5. C 6. D 7. B 8. C 9. A 10. B