

Attention Getters (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

Audience-centered speakers have engaging *attention getters* to start their speeches.

Types of attention getters

- **Ask a question:** Speakers can ask their audiences questions which expect a verbal or nonverbal response or rhetorical question (no response from the audience)
 - Speakers can poll the audience – ask them to raise hands in response to a question
 - Speakers should ask questions with short responses
 - Limit use of questions in prepared speeches
- **Surprising fact or statistic:** Speakers can use data from their research to engage their audience
 - This information should help their audience become more interested in their topic
- **Brief narrative or anecdote:** Speakers can use a short story to connect their topic to real or hypothetical narratives
 - Narratives should be clearly connected to the speech topic
 - Narratives should not overwhelm the introduction (keep it brief)
- **Famous or inspiring quote:** Speakers can use famous quotations in order to get the attention of their audience
 - Quotes should be clearly connected to the topic
 - Quotes should be accurate & attributed
- **Joke**
 - Jokes should be inclusive to the audience (not offensive)
 - Jokes should be appropriate for the topic and audience

Tips for effective attention getters

- Use attention getters to start the speech, then introduce yourself
- Keep attention getters brief
- Use attention getters that are inclusive and connect with diverse audiences

*Handout adapted from: Huisman, D., Berry, I., Peterson, J., Van Oss, J. (Eds.) (2019). *Communicating Effectively*. Southlake, TX. Fountainhead Press.*