

Topic Selection (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

Choosing an appropriate and interesting topic is the first step in the speech writing process. Consider your interests, experiences, areas of study, or other topics that would be appropriate for your speech assignment.

After you have chosen your topic, consider the following issues:

- What is the general purpose of the speech assignment?
 - A general purpose would be to inform, to persuade or to commemorate.
- What topics are appropriate for the occasion?
 - Consider how the occasion (such as a retirement dinner, a persuasive speech in a classroom) determines what type of speech you should write.
 - Understand what your professor expects you to do in the speech (such as including research and/or discussing class materials).
- Is the topic appropriate for this audience?
 - Consider the audience's prior knowledge, needs, or experience when developing your topic.
 - For instance, you would not want to give a speech about why you should attend UWL to a group of UWL seniors.
- Is the topic appropriate for me?
 - You should choose a speech topic that is interesting to you.
 - You should choose a speech topic that you feel comfortable discussing in front of your audience.
- Is this topic narrow enough?
 - Be sure to choose a topic that you can discuss within the speech time limits.
 - If you have a big topic, find ways to narrow your topic for the speech limits

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