

Oral and Written Communication

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The world's worse speech

Mr President, Dear Colleagues,

This evening we are discussing a matter which touches the lives of millions of European citizens. Finally, the Commission has decided that it should deal with a problem that it has long ignored. I am happy to see the Commissioner here this evening, together with his team of experts. They should take note of what we, the elected representatives of the people of Europe have to say on this subject.

So I ask, on behalf of not only my own constituents, but also on behalf of concerned citizens from every part of Europe, what does the Commission intend to do about the problem of (insert any problem you care to name here, fracking, youth unemployment, refugee crisis).

How much longer must we wait for a really viable legislative framework that takes account of the challenges we now face? How much longer will we be ignored?



The most forgettable, “one size fits all” speech.

At just over 120 words, it will take a minute to deliver.

Speeches of this type are often heard under the 1 minute rule at the opening of a session of the European Parliament.



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The structure of a good speech

Think clearly about what you are trying to achieve with your speech.

Are you delivering information, trying to influence others, rebutting an argument?

Delivering information successfully is not about proving how smart you are.

Influencing others requires that in addition to providing facts, you must play on emotions.

Do not avoid the difficult issues; rebut them effectively.

Practice difficult names, any phrases in a foreign language beforehand and write them out phonetically in your speech or speaking notes.

Remember who your audience is.



Reading a pre-prepared text or using key speaking points

Reading a pre-prepared text

A pre-prepared text is good for the less confident speaker, you do not risk forgetting anything, getting muddled and you can plan your time accurately.

Needs particularly careful delivery (otherwise it can sound very monotonous and dull), lacks spontaneity and can sound unconvincing.

If someone has written a speech for you, you must be prepared to edit it and practice it BEFORE delivery. Never deliver a prepared speech you have not even read at least once.



Using key speaking points

Sounds more natural, you can respond to other speakers and to situations in the audience or your surroundings.

Requires greater skills as a speaker and in time management. You must be careful not to ramble or forget an important point.

Which would you use to make a statement or present an argument in a debate?



How many points to address in one speech – The “Rule of Three”

Three is a perfect number of points to expand in a line of thought.

U.S. Declaration of Independence: *Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*

French revolutionary slogan: *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*

Julius Caesar: *Veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered)

General MacArthur, West Point Address (1962): *Duty, Honor, Country*

The Rule of Three allows a speaker to express a concept, emphasise it, and make it memorable (and there it is again).



Time management

Respect time constraints and plan your speech accordingly.

Failure to do so annoys other speakers, disorganises conferences and seminars, or may result in not getting your full message across.

Start on time.

If you are introducing or greeting a VIP, remember people have come to listen to them, not to you.



Have a clock in sight.

Make at least a rough plan of your speaking schedule.

Be ready to adapt.

Allow time for questions .

Getting in the final word – it's what people remember and no one can rebut your arguments.



What are you actually going to say?

Avoid too much introduction, background

Tell a story

Make it personal

I was a little girl in WWII and I am used to being freed by Americans
- Madeleine Albright

Do the unexpected, surprise your audience.

I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear its inactivity.
Radosław Sikorski, Berlin, 2011

Use understandable words and phrases.

Don't stress too much.



The delivery – speed, tone and language of your presentation

If you are under strict time constraints, don't try to cram in 5 minute's worth of speech into a 3 minute slot.

By speaking too quickly you give the appearance of being nervous and agitated. Remember to breathe.

Even if you are not constrained by time, few speakers can hold an audience's attention for more than 15 minutes.

Remember, no one ever complained that a speech was too short.

Take time to pause for emphasis. It gives your audience time to digest what you are saying.

Woman, especially must be careful of not speaking in too high a tone of voice.



Working with interpreters

Think about your own level of language skills, the quality of the interpretation and your target audience, when deciding which language to speak in.

Be aware of the difficulties interpreters face if your speech is delivered too quickly.

Establish whether interpretation will be consecutive or simultaneous.

As a rule, you need to speak more slowly than normal and in shorter sentences.

Send the interpreters documentation in advance if possible.

Enunciate properly, skip the English idioms and use humour carefully (jokes, involving a play on words, will not translate well).

It's polite to thank the interpreters for their work.



Watching your audience, feeling their mood

Be prepared to tailor your speech to your audience, for example, look at the demographics. Make it about THEM.

Remember to take your eyes off your written text occasionally to see what is happening in the room.

Make eye contact with your audience.

An audience looking bored, starting to talk amongst themselves or leaving the room are signals for you to step up the pace or better still, finish.



Use of quotations

Avoid clichéd quotations, or using the same statesman or personality for every occasion.

Only use quotations if they are relevant and add to the weight of your arguments.

Do not pass off other people's wise words as your own, give credit where it is due.



Use of wit and humour

Often the part of the speech your audience remembers. Be sure it is for the right reason.

Be very careful not to offend your audience (bear in mind cultural differences).

Steer well clear of sensitive or risqué issues.

Laughing at yourself is OK, laughing at others is not.



Use of gestures, both dramatic and subtle

Storming out of a debate, shouting and banging your shoe on the table gets everyone's attention fast.

Only political and diplomatic "heavyweights" can get away with this, everyone else just looks like a petulant child.

Even the heavyweights should use such gestures with caution.

Subtler gestures - walking out, yawning, playing with your iPhone and other similar disrespectful signals made during someone else's speech, are frequently employed by skilled politicians and diplomats to show a lack of regard for an opponent.

Be careful you do not convey them inadvertently.



Formal Correspondence

Note Verbale

A note verbal has many uses. It is a common form of official communication from one government (or international organization) to another. The contents of a *note verbale* might be convey an official position statement on some matter of importance.

Sometimes they are much more mundane, and simply announce that the ambassador will be going on vacation.



A *Note Verbale* begins with the following formula of diplomatic courtesy:

"The Embassy (or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) of the Republic of Poland presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of (name of country) and has the honour to..."

The usual ending is:

"The Embassy avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry the assurances of its highest consideration."

It may also be in the name of the Minister, as:

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to His Excellency, the Ambassador of (name of country)..."



Letters

It is crucial to spell the recipient's name correctly and to use his or her proper title.

Use a guidebook if you are unsure of how to formally address a person of rank. For example, correspondence addressed to an Ambassador would be addressed to H.E. Ambassador X (H.E. = His/Her Excellency). In the salutation, you would use the form, "Your Excellency".

To someone you do not know by name, letters begin with "Dear Sir, Dear Madam", and should close with "Yours faithfully".

A letter beginning with a person's name "Dear Mr. James, Dear Ms Robinson, Dear David" should close with "Yours sincerely".

Only in informal letters can forms such as "Best wishes", "Best regards", "Kind regards" or "Cordially" be used.



There are cultural differences, with the USA being less formal than Poland, for example.

Even if the letter is type written, it is polite to write the beginning and end, together with your signature by hand.

Use an easy to read, basic “formal” font such as *Arial*, *Cambria*, *Calibri*, *Verdana* and *Times New Roman*.

It is important to check for grammar mistakes and typographical errors.

Don't use “don't”

Make sure the layout and formatting look professional.

Use a good quality paper (slightly heavier weight, not standard photocopier 80g/m² paper). Use a matching envelope in the same paper type.



Entries in Guest Books, Books of Condolence

Be prepared to write something, give some thought to what you will write earlier.

Make it personal.

Make sure you do not make spelling or grammatical mistakes.



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IT IS A GREAT
HONOR TO BE HERE WITH
ALL OF MY FRIENDS -
SO AMAZING & WILL NEVER FORGET!

[Handwritten signature]
[Handwritten signature]



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How to write brief, to-the-point, notes

No one has the time to read long-winded, badly presented notes or reports.

If you have a limited space to present your report, don't try the trick of using miniscule fonts and the slimmest of margins – hone your points instead.

Use clear formatting, bullet points and appropriate fonts.



If you must present more detailed information, consider using a 200 word “executive summary” to get your key points across.

Please note, this is what most people will read and no more, so make those 200 words count.

Be very careful when “copying and pasting” texts.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation matter.

Print off a copy, proof read carefully, or preferably get someone else to do a final proof read of your text, as you will not see your own mistakes.s



E-mails

Once you click and send, that's it.



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Address and Subject Line

The subject line is a summary of the content of the email, and should alert the recipient

A well-written subject line will ensure that the message gets the appropriate attention

It is also used for filing and retrieval purposes so it is important that it accurately reflects the topic of the email



Importance Label

The 'importance' label should be used discriminately

It will be ignored if you misuse it

Cc

Copies (cc) can be sent to individuals who only need to view the information for reference.

They should be ordered alphabetically, or – in a business environment – by importance

Attachments

Try to avoid overloading emails with system-slowng extras

Always send a covering note with attachments



Salutation and Sign-Off

Retain the same level of formality that you would use in all correspondence (eg 'Dear Sir', 'Dear Mr Brown', 'Dear Bob'). If you're approached with informality, then reciprocate in kind

In formal emails you might use 'Yours faithfully/sincerely'; in most cases you'll use something more casual (eg 'Best wishes')

In a business context, it's always useful to add your full name, job title and telephone number under your sign-off

No Emojis



Threads

Maintain threads (all the previous emails on a subject) where appropriate

If it's a long thread just putting 'I agree' isn't very helpful, so briefly state what you agree with.

Always read back through the previous threads to check that nothing has been said that the recipient(s) should not read



Security

Remember sensitive information can easily get into unauthorised hands (Wikileaks).

Use the correct channels of communication for official e-mails.



Text Messages

Widely used in both a professional and social context, text messages are for conveying short, instant messages

Important information may need a longer explanation - send an email

Do not send a text message if tact or subtlety is required

Occasions when texting is not appropriate:

Sending bad news – this requires a handwritten letter or a telephone call

Cancelling an appointment - make a telephone call

A thank you - a letter or card by post



Twitter and other Social Media

Twitter and other social media are coming to dominate communication by influencers and by those who want to influence the influencers

They have instant and wide spread impact

There is no such thing as a “private” Facebook or Twitter post by a public person



Making the best use of 120 characters

The same rules of defining your goal and your audience also apply to Twitter and other social media

Make each Tweet matter

Make each word of the Tweet matter

Once you Tweet, it can never be erased



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Examples of how to use a Facebook profile

For public diplomacy, showcasing your country's successes in business, sports, culture

As a bulletin board informing of your own activities and events

To promote events organised by your diaspora

As a tool to help communicate with your citizens in crisis situations



Handy hints

Avoid reposting news items (they can be put on your website)

Keep track of statistics, likes, re-posts.

Try to tailor your content to what your target audience is interested in and likes to read about





Sabina Klimek added 10 new photos — with Urszula Gacek.

September 9, 2015 · New York, NY, United States · 🌐

The first ever Polish Fashion Week started yesterday! It was a great success, promoting Polish designers and Polish clothing industry is so important. Congratulations to **The Polish-American Fashion Foundation** and **Alexandra Borowczak**, that was a great job. The events were of course supported by Trade and Investment Section of Polish Consulate.

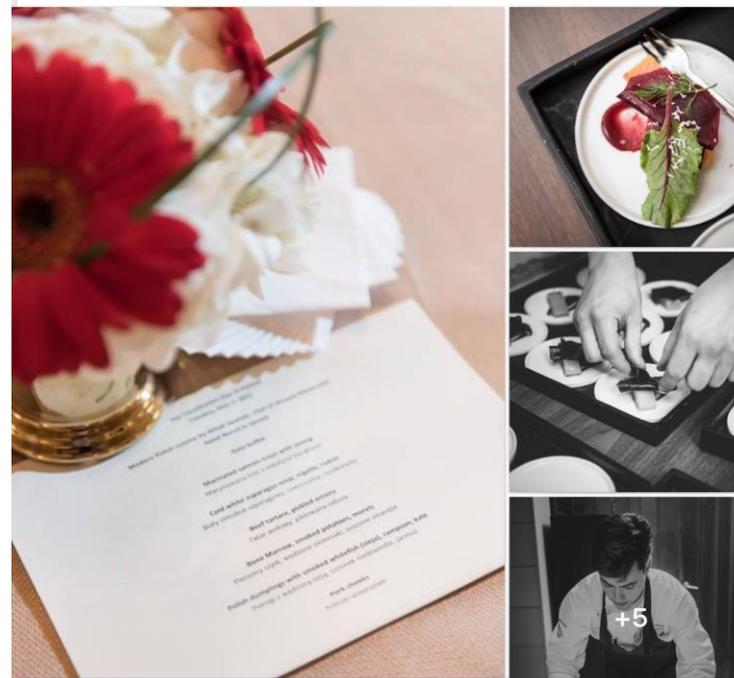


Consulate General of Poland in New York added 8 new photos.

May 10, 2015 · 🌐

We can't help ourselves but to go back to the Constitution Day of #Poland reception on May 5th at the Consulate General in New York, when a celebrity chef **Witek #Iwanski**, who runs Restaurant #Aruana in Hotel #Narvil in #Serock, Poland, offered his unusual take on the #Polish food. His dishes were light, delicate, sophisticated and pleasing to the eye. Have a look at these pieces of art and at **Witek Iwanski** at work.

Photos by Błażej Sendzielski



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