

HOW TO PREPARE A SPEECH IN 10 STEPS

1. PRAY FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR SPEECH WRITING PROCESS

2. SELECT A TOPIC IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN PROVIDED WITH ONE

3. PREPARE A THESIS ON YOUR TOPIC.

WHAT IS THE MAIN ARGUMENT OR POINT THAT YOU WILL BE PRESENTING?

For example, if your topic is '**bananas**', your thesis could be '**bananas are a source of many nutrients for our bodies**'. Keep in mind who your audience will be.

If your topic is '**The Life of the Holy Prophet [sa]** ', your thesis could be '**The life of the Holy Prophet [sa] is an ideal example of showing fairness and kindness to others**'. Ensure your thesis is not too specific, otherwise you will not be able to expand on it during your speech. Also ensure that it is not so vague that your speech will be too scattered and not have one main focus.

4. PREPARE THREE SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT YOUR THESIS

The main portion of your speech will be the supporting arguments that you present to support the thesis that you have prepared. These arguments should not be too specific, because then you will not be able to expand on them. They should also not be too vague, as that will make you lose focus and become scattered. Keep in mind who your audience will be and what types of arguments will be convincing and interesting to them.

For example, if your thesis is '**bananas are a source of many nutrients for our bodies**', your three main arguments could be: **fiber, potassium, and vitamin B**.

If your thesis is '**The life of the Holy Prophet [sa] is an ideal example of showing kindness to others**', your three main arguments could be: the Holy Prophet [sa] demonstrated kindness to his own family, kindness to his business partners, and kindness to slaves and prisoners of war.

5. PREPARE MATERIAL TO SUPPORT EACH OF YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

Each of your supporting arguments will have to be expanded on during your speech. Here is where you can provide specific examples of each of your arguments. Each example should be backed up by a reference to prove that you have gotten your points from reliable sources and they are true. You can use statistics, numbers, quotations, incidents, etc. to convince your audience of your argument. Keep in mind who your audience will be and what types of references they will be familiar with and trust.

For example, if your three main arguments are: **fiber, potassium, and vitamin B**, then you should prepare examples how the banana is a significant source of each nutrient, how the banana provides them to our bodies, and why they are important for our bodies.

If your three main arguments are: the Holy Prophet [sa] demonstrated kindness to his own family, kindness to his business partners, and kindness to slaves and prisoners of war, then you need to

expand on each of those topics. For the first topic, you can talk about his treatment of his wives and children and provide specific examples of each. For the second topic, you can provide examples of business transactions that he made and how he was just and honest throughout them. For the third topic, you can provide examples of how he treated prisoners of wars and slaves, etc.

6. PREPARE AN INTRODUCTION

Your introduction should be catchy, witty, smart, humorous, and interesting. It should make even a boring topic sound like the most exciting topic to listen to. Start off with a bang! Hook your audience from your very first sentence so that they *want* to hear what you have to say about this topic.

You can start with a question, a quotation, a statistic, etc. Keep in mind who your audience will be what statement will be impactful to them.

If your topic is 'bananas', your introductory statement can be: "What if there was one food that was packed with so many nutrients that it could give you an energy and health boost in less than two minutes? Wouldn't it be convenient to grab this snack on a busy morning or right before a track meet? Well the good news is - there is such a snack!"

7. PREPARE A CONCLUSION

Your conclusion should be a summary of your speech. It should wrap up your argument in such a powerful way that the audience is completely convinced of your argument by the end of it. Rephrase your thesis and supporting arguments. Wrap up with something memorable and witty, and with an action statement.

For example, if your topic is 'bananas', your last sentence could be, "An apple a day might keep the doctor away, but a banana a day will keep weakness at bay - let's all make a pact to do our bodies a favor and eat at least one banana everyday!"

8. ADD APPROPRIATE INTRODUCTORY GREETINGS

Add appropriate greetings and prayers to the beginning of your speech. For example, add Ta'awwudh, Bismillah, and Tashahhud.

Who is your audience? Add the proper greeting: 'Dear brothers', or 'dear respected audience', or 'dear friends',

9. ORGANIZE ALL OF YOUR CONTENT INTO A SPEECH FORMAT

Make sure all of your content is organized and flows well. Make sure your speech is not too long or too short. Make sure you have all of your references and sources.

10. PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE!

Practise reading your speech over and over until it is perfect! Repeat it over and over to ensure you have a good flow and proper pronunciation. Memorize it if that is required. Time it if there is a time

limit. Read it to your friends or family members to gauge their reactions. Become very familiar with your speech; you are the expert of it! Be ready to present it to wider audiences.

HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

1. PRAY FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR ESSAY WRITING PROCESS

2. SELECT A TOPIC IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN PROVIDED WITH ONE

3. PREPARE A THESIS STATEMENT ON YOUR TOPIC.

**WHAT IS THE MAIN ARGUMENT OR POINT THAT YOU WILL BE PRESENTING?
YOUR THESIS STATEMENT MUST BE ARGUABLE.**

Keep your audience in mind when constructing your thesis statement. What level will they be at?

Ensure your thesis is not too specific, otherwise you will not be able to expand on it during your speech. Also ensure that it is not so vague that your speech will be too scattered and not have one main focus.

Example of non-arguable statement: "It rained yesterday."
(It's a fact and the opposite cannot be true)

Example of arguable statement: "It rained yesterday because I purchased new rainboots."
(It can be argued that this statement is incorrect)

If your topic is '**bananas**', your thesis statement could be '**bananas are a very popular fruit amongst Americans**'.

If your topic is '**The Holy Prophet [sa]**', your thesis statement could be '**The Holy Prophet [sa] was an inspirational leader for people of all religions**'.

4. PREPARE THREE SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT YOUR THESIS STATEMENT

The body of your essay will be the supporting arguments that you present to support the thesis that you have prepared. These arguments should not be too specific, because then you will not be able to expand on them. They should also not be too vague, as that will make you lose focus and become scattered. Keep in mind who your audience will be and what types of arguments will be convincing and interesting to them.

If your thesis statement is '**bananas are a very popular fruit amongst Americans**', your three supporting arguments could be: **bananas as breakfast foods, bananas in dessert dishes, and bananas as on-the-go snacks.**

If your thesis statement is '**The Holy Prophet [sa] was an inspirational leader for people of all religions**', your three supporting arguments could be: the Holy Prophet [sa] was inspirational for Jews, the Holy Prophet [sa] was inspirational for Christians, the Holy Prophet [sa] was inspirational for Muslims.

5. PREPARE MATERIAL TO SUPPORT EACH OF YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

Each of your supporting arguments will have to be expanded on in your essay. Here is where you can provide specific examples of each of your arguments. Each example should be backed up by a reference to prove that you have gotten your points from reliable sources and they are true. You can use statistics, numbers, quotations, incidents, etc. to convince your audience of your argument. Keep in mind who your audience will be and what types of references they will be familiar with and trust.

For example, if your three main arguments are: **breakfast, dessert, and snacks** then you should prepare examples of how the banana can be used in each of those categories, and statistics of how many Americans use them in each category.

If your three main arguments are: **the Holy Prophet [sa] was inspirational for Jews, the Holy Prophet [sa] was inspirational for Christians, the Holy Prophet [sa] was inspirational for Muslims**, then you should prepare examples of guidance that he provided for people of each of the above religions, and perhaps quotations from people of those religions that were inspired by him.

6. PREPARE AN INTRODUCTION

Your introduction should be catchy, witty, smart, humorous, and interesting. It should make even a boring topic seem like the most exciting topic to read about. Start off with a bang! Hook your audience from your very first sentence so that they *want* to read what you have to say about this topic.

You can start with a question, a quotation, a statistic, etc. Keep in mind who your audience will be what statement will be impactful to them.

7. PREPARE A CONCLUSION

Your conclusion should be a summary of your essay. It should wrap up your argument in such a powerful way that the audience is completely convinced of your argument by the end of it. Rephrase your thesis statement and supporting arguments. Wrap up with something memorable and witty, and with an action statement.

8. PREPARE A BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE

Prepare a page at the end of your essay that lists all of the resources that you used to write your essay. Each one should be referenced according to the appropriate format that you have been assigned (such as MLA, APA). It is important that you never present someone else's ideas or research as your own - ensure every single idea that was not originally yours has a citation beside it.

9. ORGANIZE ALL OF YOUR CONTENT INTO A SPEECH FORMAT

Make sure all of your content is organized and flows well. Make sure your essay is not too long or too short. Make sure each sentence leads into the next and each paragraph leads into the next so your essay is not choppy. Make sure it is easy to read and follow along with.

10. EDIT, EDIT, EDIT!

Once your essay has been written, read it over and over until you find no more corrections that need to be made. Ask a friend or family or look over it so you have a new pair of eyes to critique it. Ensure there are no grammatical mistakes, ensure that each reference has a citation beside it, ensure that each citation is mentioned in the bibliography, ensure that the formatting is perfect, etc.

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION?

1) Be familiar with Microsoft Powerpoint

- If you are not familiar with how to use the Microsoft Powerpoint program, please look online. There are many websites that will show you how to use the program to build a presentation step-by-step.
- One such website is: www.wikihow.com/Create-a-PowerPoint-Presentation

2) A catchy title/main heading

- For example, instead of: "The Holy Prophet [sa]'s Treatment of Women", you can write: "The Prophet of Islam [sa]: An Activist for Women's Rights"

3) Slide Content

- **Text:** Keep the writing on each slide limited. Too much writing will be distracting and difficult to read. Keep it short and sweet.
- Do not use large paragraphs of writing - use point form notes and expand on them throughout your presentation. If you paste your entire presentation into the slides, your audience will be so busy reading the slides that they will not listen to what you are saying
- **Font Size:** Keep the font size legible. Not too small, but not too large. For example, size 18 font might be too small. Size 36 font will be easier to read and see from afar
- **Citations:** Remember to include citations if you are using quotes or references that are not yours

4) Visual Presentation

- Keep in mind that your audience may be sitting far from the screen
- **Background:** Effective backgrounds can be found online that can be used for your presentation. Ensure that the background is simple and not too busy, otherwise it will be distracting
- **Color theme:** Choose a wise color theme. Co-ordinate the color theme with the background color. Orange and black might be hard on the eyes, but white and blue would be easier to read
- **Images:** Include images that are simple and powerful and help to illustrate your point. They will help your readers to balance out the text on the slides with images and further understand your message
- **Graphics:** Avoid using busy graphics or animations that will be difficult to use during the presentation and may be distracting
- **Layout:** Arrange it so that the viewer's eye will be attracted to the title and the main pertinent information. Make it viewer-friendly and easy on the eyes. Make it look organized and professional
- **Citations:** Remember to include citations if you are using images that are not yours
- **Note:** Remember not to use photos of the Holy Prophet [sa], the Khulafaa, or photographs that would go against purdah (such as photographs of women)

5) Proofread

- Read over all the slides to ensure there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes. Nothing turns viewers off of an event more than errors on a presentation that they have to sit through
- Ensure there is nothing in the presentation that can be offensive

6) Practise

- Run through your presentation as if you were presenting it to your audience. This will help you see if there are any glitches in the animation, and to ensure the slides are legible and that your presentation is effective

COMPOSING THOUGHTS AFTER ATTENDING AN EVENT
(SUCH AS AN `IJTEMA, JALSA, VACATION, MARRIAGE PARTY, ETC.)

You go to school to attain a formal education, but the fact is that a lot of your personality and intellect will be formed from the informal learning that you do throughout your life. This learning will vary from person to person - some people may see a learning opportunity at every corner and gain wisdom from each one, while others may not see the value of certain events. Each one of us can develop the art-form of picking up a life lesson or two from each experience that we have in life. Even if you attend an event that you do not fully understand because it is too difficult, you can pick up tips on effective public speaking, how to organize an event, etc. Here are some tips to help you develop or further hone this skill:

- **Create a notebook:** Carry a small notebook around with you that you can write in everyday, kind of like an events journal. When you attend a school assembly, quickly scribble down the date of the assembly and the main points that you learnt. It will come in handy later if you need to write an assignment or tell someone about that topic.
- **Three Points System:** Challenge yourself to come up with three main points about each event you attend that you learnt. What is the speaker trying to get across? What is something new you learnt? Challenge yourself to write three points about each event you attend into your events journal.
- **Analyze:** Develop critical thinking skills by analyzing each event. Did you like the set-up of the event? What would you change? What were the strong points of the event? Were the speakers effective? Were the topics selected wisely?
- **Communicate:** Speak to your fellow audience members after each event. This is a good time to speak to others: you will both have a lot in common at the time after having attended the same event, and will both have a lot to say. This will also help to build your communication skills and perhaps your contacts list. Share what you liked about the event and ask for the other person's thoughts. Exchange contact information if appropriate.
- **Follow-Up:** If you particularly enjoyed one speaker's style or thoughts, note down their name and look them up after. Contact them if you have any further questions or thoughts. If you made a contact that you would like to invite to another event or keep in touch with, send them a message to let them know you are thinking of them - that will encourage them to stay in touch with you.
- **Apply your new skills and knowledge:** Perhaps you can use your newfound skills to organize a small event of your own, or to prepare a speech or presentation on the topics you have learnt about for school. Perhaps you can hold a booth during lunchtime where you can share flyers or information that you have learnt.

COMPOSING AN ANALYSIS AFTER READING A BOOK ON ANY GIVEN SUBJECT

Book reports should be descriptive and answer questions such as "What is this book about?" Writing a book analysis will help you to think more deeply about a book you've read and to demonstrate your understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Here you want to provide basic information about the book, and a sense of what your report will be about. You should include:

1. Title (underlined)/Author
2. Publication Information: Publisher, year, number of pages
3. Genre
4. A brief (1-2 sentences) introduction to the book and the report/review.

BODY

There are two main sections for this part. The first is an explanation of what the book is about. The second is your thoughts and discussion about it.

A good place to start is to explain the author's purpose and/or the main themes of the book. Then you can summarize.

- a) Provide a general overview of the author's topic, main points, and argument. What is the thesis? What are the important conclusions?
- b) Don't try to summarize each chapter or every angle. Choose the ones that are most significant and interesting to you.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

In this section you analyze or critique the book. You can write about your own opinions; just be sure that you explain and support them with examples. Some questions you might want to consider:

- What was the author's purpose in writing this book?
- What makes the writing effective, powerful, difficult, beautiful?
- What are the strengths of the book?
- What is your overall response to the book? Did you learn new things that you did not know before?
- What would you tell someone else about the book to recommend it to them?

CONCLUSION

Briefly conclude by pulling your thoughts together. You may want to say what impression the book left you with, or emphasize what you want your reader to know about it.

Some Information Taken From: <http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreporths.html>

DESIGNING A FLYER IN EIGHT STEPS
(TO ATTRACT AN AUDIENCE FOR THE `IJTEMA OR ANY OTHER EVENT, SUCH AS FUND-RAISING, TARBIYAT WORKSHOP, ETC.)

1) Use a good computer program, such as Microsoft Publisher or Photoshop

2) Write a catchy title/main heading

- For example, instead of: "You should come and attend our Jalsa", you can write: "Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live with a perfect man? Come and hear witness accounts and learn valuable life lessons from him."

3) Prepare the content of your flyer

- Do not have too much writing - keep it short and sweet
- Make sure you have a sub-heading that describes what the event is so that someone who did not fully understand it from reading just the title is more clear on it. For example, if the main heading is "Seerat Jalsa [sa]", the sub-heading could be "An Event Celebrating the Life of the Holy Founder of Islam"
- Make sure you include: date of event, location of event, time of event, whether or not the event is free, whether or not there is a dress code, if the event is exclusively for men or women, etc - do not leave out any pertinent details that will mislead or confuse the reader
- Include host information so the reader knows who is holding the event
- Include contact information in case someone has a question about the event
- Remember to include citations if you are using quotes or references
- **Remember not use Allah's name on the flyer. For example, do not write "In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Merciful", because the flyer might end up on the ground. Do not use Quranic verses or prayers.**

4) Choose a colour theme that is easy to look at from afar

- Orange and black might be hard on the eyes
- White and blue would be easier to read
- Choose colours that contrast well together

5) Select images

- Use visual images to attract people to your event
- Use graphics and relevant images. For example, if it is a food drive you are advertising, insert photographs of previous food drives, of a family sitting down for dinner, of piles of canned food, etc
- Remember to include citations if you are taking images from the Internet or other sources
- **Remember not to use photos of the Holy Prophet [sa], the Khulafaa, or photographs that would go against purdah (such as photographs of women)**

6) Arrange the material in an attractive manner on your flyer

- Do not make the flyer too busy or too empty - find a balance

- Arrange it so that the viewer's eye will be attracted to the title and the main pertinent information
- Make it viewer-friendly and easy on the eyes
- Make it look organized and professional

7) Proofread

- Read over all the content to ensure there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes. Nothing turns viewers off of an event more than errors on a flyer!
- Ensure there is nothing on the flyer that can be offensive. For example, avoid generalized statements: "Every homeless person loves canned food"
- Have an elder or family member look over it to ensure it is ready to print

8) Print wisely

- Be realistic in the amount of flyers you will need to print. Do not print too many or too little.
- Think about where you will be posting your flyer and what sizes will be required there. For example, do not print small leaflets if you will be putting up flyers on street corners - print at least 8x10 flyers so that they can catch pedestrians' eyes. On the other hand, if you will be handing out flyers on a street corner, then print leaflets so they are easy to hand out and grab.