

How to Make a Good Speech

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1. Introduction

Our team thinks many high school students have never made speeches. They may have never been asked to give a speech, either. However, the ability to make a good speech will be required for them in the future. We researched strategies for improving our ability to make speeches by comparing several speeches made by two famous people; President Obama and Abraham Lincoln. As a result, we found some techniques for making good speeches.

2. President Obama's speech in Hiroshima

The following is an Obama's speech in Hiroshima. He used some unique expressions in his speech.

“Seventy-one years ago, on a bright cloudless morning, death fell from the sky and the world was changed. A flash of light and a wall of fire destroyed a city and demonstrated that mankind possessed the means to destroy itself. Why do we come to this place, to Hiroshima? We come to ponder a terrible force unleashed in the not so distant past. We come to mourn the dead, including over 100,000 Japanese men, women and children, thousands of Koreans and a dozen Americans held prisoner. Their souls speak to us. They ask us to look inward, to take stock of who we are and what we might become. It is not the fact of war that sets Hiroshima apart. Artifacts tell us that violent conflict appeared with the very first man. Our early ancestors, having learned to make blades from flint and spears from wood, used these tools not just for hunting but against their own kind. On every continent the history of civilization is filled with war, whether driven by scarcity of grain or hunger for gold, compelled by nationalist fervor or religious zeal. Empires have risen and fallen, peoples have been subjugated and liberated, and at each juncture innocents have suffered -- a countless toll, their names forgotten by time.”

We can see that he often uses the word “we”. The speaker could emphasize that what he wanted to convey applies to everyone in the world. He also often use “positive words” like “God”, “new”, “common”, and “generation”, which made

everyone more likely to agree with his opinions (Azuma, 2009).

Through his speech, we can notice that making a speech needs some words that inspire the audience. So If you want to make a good speech, you should use some positive words such as the words President Obama used in his speeches.

3. Gettysburg address by Abraham Lincoln

The following is the script of the “Gettysburg address” by Abraham Lincoln.

“—we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate - we cannot consecrate - we cannot hallow - this ground.”

Abraham Lincoln’s speech has some similarities to Obama’s. They both use the same kind of expressions and positive words. Lincoln’s speech refers to war and the tragedy it causes. He was able to emphasize the importance of avoiding war.

4. Conclusion

Our team learned two things through this study. First, both President Obama and Abraham Lincoln used metaphorical expressions, so that the audience could easily understand what they wanted to convey. Second, they both used a lot of “positive words”, so that the audience had good impression and was persuaded to think that the speakers were right. Therefore, if we use these strategies, we will be able to deliver a better speech.

5. References

- Azuma, S. (2009). *The language sense of Obama. Trans.* Tokyo: Nihon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai.
- Miura, T. (2013). *Speeches of Obama. Trans.* Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.