

Academic Speech Topic Checklist

General

1. Do you have a specific goal to achieve (i.e., a conclusion) for the topic that you are considering?
2. Will you be able to write a “speech to persuade” with your topic?
3. Are you interested in the topic?
4. Do you have enough information on this topic through experience or study?
5. If you need more information, do you have the time to find it?
6. Will you enjoy talking about this topic?
7. Will the topic appeal to your audience*?
8. Can you interest the audience in your topic?
9. Does the audience need to know about your topic?
10. Will your topic offend some of the people in the audience?
11. Does your topic fit the audience’s expectations?
12. Can you give the speech within the time limit?

Originality

1. What does the audience already know about this topic?
2. Have you seen this topic on the front page of a newspaper or in the TV news?
3. To the best of your knowledge, has this topic been used by another speaker in a contest?
4. Is your approach conventional, or have you slanted it in an unconventional way?
5. Is your conclusion original?

Significance

1. When asked the question, “So what?” with respect to your conclusion, can you come up with a coherent and significant reply?
2. Is your topic quantitatively significant?
3. Is your topic qualitatively significant?
4. If you believe that your topic is qualitatively significant, can you demonstrate that to the audience?

*Note: In an academic speech contest, the audience includes the judges.

