

# Confidence in Public Speaking

Paul Nelson & Judy Pearson  
Sixth Edition



“It is with eloquence  
as with a flame;  
it requires fuel to feed it,  
motion to excite it,  
and it brightens as it  
burns.” *Tacitus*

# Confidence in Public Speaking

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Sixth Edition



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For the two of our  
six children who  
have not yet left  
the nest:

Benjamin Joseph  
Pearson-Nelson

&

Rebekah Kristina  
Pearson-Nelson



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# Preface

This sixth edition of *Confidence in Public Speaking* is our first “menu driven” edition, and includes twenty-five chapters from which to choose. Some chapters offer different presentations of similar topics. For example, this text features two approaches to persuasive speaking: one chapter focuses on the principles of persuasion, and the other focuses on the types of proofs. We have also included some summary chapters that combine the highlights of two or more highly detailed chapters. For example, one chapter combines the main points of the in-depth chapters on speech organization and speech outlining in a more succinct form. These different options allow instructors to formulate a mix of information to meet their specific needs.

This edition was written by multiple authors and was reviewed by specialized critics. The chapters were written by Paul Nelson and Judy Pearson, along with five contributing authors: John A. Hess, University of Minnesota, wrote Chapter D, “Ethics in Public Speaking”; Candice Thomas, Ohio University, wrote Chapter E, “Conquering Speech Anxiety”; Wendy H. Papa and Michael J. Papa, Ohio University, wrote Chapter U, “Speeches for Special Occasions”; and Gloria J. Galanes, Southwest Missouri State University, wrote Chapter V, “Dynamics of Small Group Discussion,” Chapter W, “Group Leadership and Problem Solving,” and Chapter X, “Small Group Communication and Leadership.” The manuscript was carefully reviewed by Jeanne Porter, De Paul University, and Mark Orbe, Indiana University, Southeast, for cultural sensitivity and diversity.

Cultural diversity permeates this edition. Example speeches by numerous members of different co-cultures, including, but not limited to, visually impaired individuals, Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, older Americans, and women from many different cultures, have been used throughout the text. Ethical considerations are included in nearly every chapter to underline the importance of this concept in public speech making.

Chapter A is a more inviting opening than in older editions. A new Chapter B quickly prepares students for the first brief speech that is assigned by many public speaking teachers. Chapter C instructs students on how to listen effectively to public speeches. Chapter D is a new chapter on ethics in public speaking. Chapter E is a new chapter on conquering speech anxiety. Chapter F reveals the concept of source credibility and how to achieve it as a speaker. Chapter G provides methods of audience analysis and means of adapting to audiences. Chapter H covers speech purpose and topic selection. Chapter I, on finding information, has been heavily revised to include consideration of electronic information sources.

Chapter J, on speech organization, discusses macro-organizational features such as the main parts of a speech, as well as micro-organizational features like transitions, signposts, previews, and reviews, while Chapter K addresses speech outlining. Chapter L is a

## What Is New in the Sixth Edition?

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## What Information Is Included in Each Chapter?

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concise summary combining the highlights of speech organization and outlining covered in Chapters J and K. There are, then, three possible chapters on organization.

Chapter M tells how to introduce and to conclude a speech. Chapter N, "Language in Public Speaking," retains traditional topics on language while rendering the information relevant to students with sections on the politically correct movement, college "hate speech" codes, and sexist and racist language. Chapter O covers methods of delivery, and also discusses the use of voice, body movements and gestures. Chapter P reviews a variety of presentational aids, including computer-generated aids.

Chapter Q is an extensive chapter on informative speaking, and Chapter R is a new chapter titled "The Ethical and Effective Use of Evidence, Proof, and Argument." Chapters S and T offer two different approaches to persuasive speaking. Chapter S covers the principles of persuasion, while Chapter T discusses the types of proofs. Chapter U is a new chapter on special occasions speeches.

Three new chapters examine small group communication. Chapter V, "Dynamics of Small Group Discussion," introduces small group communication, the types of small groups, and concepts such as group culture, norms, roles, and climate. Chapter W, "Group Leadership and Problem Solving," covers theoretical approaches to leadership, and discusses how to maintain organization, encourage creativity, and manage conflict in group problem solving. Chapter X, "Small Group Communication and Leadership," combines the main points of Chapters V and W.

The primary authors of this book are Paul Nelson and Judy Pearson. Paul is the Dean of the College of Communication at Ohio University, and has co-authored six editions of *Confidence in Public Speaking* and six editions of *Understanding and Sharing: An Introduction to Human Communication*. Judy Pearson is the Director of the Northern Virginia Graduate Center in Falls Church, Virginia, and a professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She co-authored the two books above, authored or co-authored six other text books, and authored two trade books.

We have been writing basic course texts for almost twenty years because the beginning courses are our first love. Both of us began as basic course directors in large programs, and we even met at a basic course conference.

We seek feedback from you about this book. You can let us know what you like or dislike by calling Paul Nelson at 614-593-4884 or Judy Pearson at 703-698-6006. Paul can be reached by writing to him at this address:

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## Who Wrote This Book?

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We would like to extend our appreciation to our many colleagues who have reviewed all six editions. We especially want to thank these reviewers for their keen insights and suggestions:

## Acknowledgements

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David Bashore, College of San Mateo; Doug Brenner, University of South Dakota; Jackie Buckrup, Ball State University; Larry Caillouet, Western Kentucky University; Robert Greenstreet, East Central University; Jon A. Hess, University of Minnesota; Diana K. Ivy, Texas A&M; Clark Olson, Arizona State University; Mark P. Orbe, Indiana University, Southeast; Jeanne Porter, De Paul University, Athens; Deanna Sellnow, North Dakota State University; Deborah Smith-Howell, University of Nebraska, Omaha.

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# DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE



*Speech is civilization itself.  
The word, even the most  
contradictory word,  
preserves contact—it is  
silence which isolates.*

*Thomas Mann*

## QUESTION OUTLINE

- I. What are three reasons public speaking is an important subject for you to learn?
- II. What are the similarities and differences between public speaking and interpersonal communication?
- III. How can one become more confident in public speaking?
- IV. What are the seven components of the public speaking process?
- V. In what way is public speaking a process?
- VI. In what way is public speaking a transaction?



## Introduction

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Narcus Washington had seen it all, and he was not afraid of much of anything. Now he found himself—through no fault of his own—taking a public speaking course. His advisor said he had to take the course because it was required for education majors. He had faced guys almost twice his size in football and he had been beaten up more than once in the school yard, but—he thought to himself—he would rather do that all over again than give a speech in front of class.

---

## Why Study Public Speaking?

---

As you sit in your first class in public speaking, you might wonder why you should bother to learn how to speak in public. After all, public speaking is frightening to many people and, generally, we try to avoid doing things that frighten us. We will start by looking briefly at some of the reasons you might want to learn from this course.

## Personal Advantages

Public speaking holds a number of personal advantages for you. First, you will gain a high degree of self-satisfaction. Second, you will become more confident. Finally, you will become more sensitive. Let us explore each of these personal advantages.

One reason you might want to learn how to speak in public is that this activity can give you a high degree of self-satisfaction. Many of the top public speakers of our time were once timid and afraid of other people. Thousands of people in business take the Dale Carnegie course in public speaking. A teacher in the Carnegie program once said that he decided to teach that course because he had spent so many years being afraid and inadequate in public situations. He found that conquering his fears and developing his skills were so self-satisfying that he ended up devoting his life to teaching other adults how to do the same thing.

You may also want to study public speaking because you will gain confidence. Indeed, the title of this book highlights this reason. Although people often come to a public speaking course with some fear, most people leave the course feeling very confident about public speaking opportunities. They feel higher in self-esteem and generally more secure in their speaking abilities than before they took the course.

Finally, public speaking will teach you to be more sensitive to other people. You will learn that public speaking is not a one-directional activity in which a speaker simply provides a message. Effective public speaking occurs only when the audience has been carefully considered in both the preparation and delivery of the speech. In the preparation phase, the speaker considers the audience's interest in the topic, their knowledge about it, and how they might be best informed or persuaded on the topic. In the delivery of the speech, the competent communicator responds to the audience's nonverbal and verbal feedback. Public speaking instruction also reminds us of the cultural diversity in our world and encourages us to consider the different ways that people come to know and experience that world.

## Professional Gains

Professionally, you will benefit from your study of public speaking for three reasons. First, public speaking will help you immediately to achieve your occupational goals by helping you earn higher grades in college. Second, public speaking skills will help you acquire employment. Third, public speaking will help you advance in your career. Let us explore each of these in more detail.