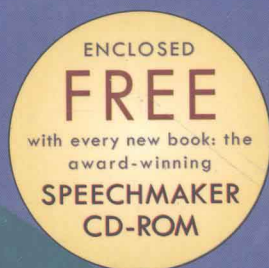


# THE SPEAKER'S HANDBOOK

SIXTH EDITION



DOUGLAS STUART

# The Speaker's Handbook

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**Sixth Edition**

**Jo Sprague**

*San Jose State University*

**Douglas Stuart**

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# Preface

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*The Speaker's Handbook*, Sixth Edition, is at once a reference guide for the individual speaker and a textbook for use in the public speaking course. It is a compendium of principles, examples, and exercises that covers the issues one commonly confronts in preparing and delivering a speech. What distinguishes *The Speaker's Handbook* from other books on public speaking, though, is its flexibility: Each of the thirty chapters stands by itself, so that speakers need consult only those parts of the book covering the aspects of speech-making with which they need further help.

## About the Handbook Approach

In a sense, a book about public speaking is a contradiction. Public speaking is a lived, performed, embodied event that draws its special qualities from the immediate context, the personality of a particular speaker, and the response of a certain audience. Is there really any useful general advice about so specific an act?

Apparently so. For as long as people have felt the need to speak in public, they have turned to others for advice on how to do so more effectively. Early evidence from Egyptian tombs shows that leaders gave serious thought to the choices they faced in speaking to their followers. The oral tradition captured in Homeric legend hints that the giving and taking of this advice predated the written word. The increasing supply of information about the ancient cultures of China, India, and the Americas shows that these peoples had culturally distinctive ways of speaking, which some analyzed and discussed. These observers then formulated advice for others in their culture. Such advice usually came in two forms: Those who had vast experience as speakers told stories about what worked for them; others looked beyond what worked and theorized about why it worked.

Both forms of guidance are still present. Leading platform speakers write books about their experiences. The popularity of such books year after year suggests that people find benefit in the personal and experiential approach. At the same time, university libraries continue to accumulate academic treatises on rhetoric and communication. Here, too, the vitality of these lines of

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research after thousands of years suggests that much is left to be said and investigated.

There is a third form, one that we differentiate from both those kinds of books and place within another venerable tradition that is over two thousand years old. This form is neither a narrative account of personal success stories nor a scholarly theoretical tome. This is the *handbook*. The first written handbooks for speakers were probably produced by the Sophists in the Greece of 200 B.C.E. In any field, a handbook represents a particular blending of theory and practice displayed in a concise format. There are scouting handbooks, birding handbooks, managing handbooks, and meditation handbooks. In all these cases, a handbook is a distillation of the experience and theory of many people and many eras.

The particular usefulness of handbooks can be found in their characteristics.

### **Handbooks are brief.**

They fit in a person's hand. They are supposed to be as small as practicable to remove the impediment of size for easy carrying, storing, and referencing. The implication of this is that we have tried to distill the most meaningful advice, avoiding bulking the book out. The sample speeches on the Web site are called on over and over again in the text in both examples and exercises. Putting in as many sample speeches as usual in standard textbooks, interspersed throughout the body of the book, would defeat the advantages offered by the handbook format. Cartoons and photographs, likewise, take up too much space.

### **Handbooks are reference books.**

The contents of a handbook are meant to be used in any order. The progression of the chapters, as we have arranged them, is not random, but then again, a reader or teacher does not necessarily have to follow that order. We have written the chapters to be as self-contained as possible to make the book adaptable to the differing needs of its various users. Long before the information superhighway or menu-driven computers or the invention of the term *random access*, people liked to learn things as they needed them.

Adult learners have their own way of designing their learning programs, whether they are setting up a computer or understanding a new job. Most people who buy a computer do not take a course on how to use it. They try a few things, glance at the manual, and work until they get into trouble. Then they look at the manual again, but only for the specific information they need to get beyond the current problem. In effect, they don't worry about the things they don't have to worry about, but they won't know that a thing to

worry about exists until they discover it. Public speaking is like that. Until people start speaking, they cannot be sure of all the areas in which they may need improvement. Therefore, users should approach this handbook with a spirit of flexibility, taking what they need in the order they need it. Each teacher brings to the classroom a different experience set and an understanding of the values, needs, and capabilities of the students who attend a particular institution. Therefore, each teacher may choose to assign chapters in an order that fits his or her perception of the best way to increase the skills of those students. Whether users are teachers, students, or professional persons, we think that they will find some benefit in every chapter of this handbook, but we don't dictate to them in what order they will find that benefit.

### **Handbooks are handy.**

When people haul out the book that came with their computer, they want to find the section on changing printer types quickly, not read about the architecture of the system to find the bit that refers to communications between the computer and printer. A good user guide compartmentalizes related information and then tries to make that information as accessible as possible through a variety of pointers and references, using design tools to make things easy to find. We have included aids to let users get to where they want to be, from the quick index and checklists on the endpapers to the use of color and typeface weight in the text itself.

With this compartmentalization, users do not have to read everything at once. A student may be preparing to give an informative speech for a class and is thinking of including some humor. The student could jump ahead and read section **18a(4)**. It is not that long. A businessperson may be giving a presentation to the board on the adoption of new technology but feel uncertain if he or she has covered everything and in the most effective order. That person could read chapter **9** on transforming his or her ideas into points and chapters **21** and **22** on informative and persuasive strategies.

We do have a few specific recommendations, however, on preliminary steps that will help students and other readers get the most out of this book. First, such users should read chapter **1**. It provides an orientation to communication and helps them crystallize their self-definition as speakers. It helps them diagnose their skill level and gives them an approach to mapping out a skill-development plan for themselves. The format of this book is based on the assumption that speakers cannot be conscious of everything at once. In designing a skill-development program, speakers should *not* be conscious of everything at once. Trying to do everything in parallel will frustrate their purpose and inhibit their skill-building. As we say in **1d**, speakers should

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avoid being overly conscious of their manner of speaking or their message's exact language. But if a speech is different from just another conversation, as we also say, how do public speakers become *just enough more conscious* of the craft of speaking to improve their skill without breaking the conversational bond? The secret lies in having a very clear plan of what their priorities are and in deciding on a limited number of goals to pursue consciously at any one time. The handbook approach lets users pick one or two important skills to work on, and when those are mastered, move to another set.

## About Writing This Book

We approached this writing task with an unusual combination of perspectives. In her thirty years of teaching public speaking, visiting the classes of other teachers, and consulting, Jo Sprague has observed that there are many “right ways” to approach a course. Doug Stuart, as a vice president of a technical and marketing publications department and a director of a creative development department, has learned how to take even the most complex material and make it clear and accessible to readers. It became evident to us that there was a need for a different kind of book on speaking, one based on what we knew about how adults learn. *The Speaker's Handbook* proceeds from the premise that people like to focus first on the area of greatest concern and then design their own learning experience outward from that point.

## About the Sixth Edition

We have been gratified with the response to the first five editions of *The Speaker's Handbook*. And we are pleased that the handbook format worked for students and their instructors, as well as for people who give presentations in their business or community. In this edition, we have once again responded to user suggestions on how to make the information even more accessible. The sample speeches, once in an appendix, are now available on the *Handbook's* Web site. We have added a new chapter on listening that pulls together material previously dispersed throughout the book and adds several new recommendations for listeners. A second new chapter replaces Guidelines for Special Occasions and introduces the notion of speech *contexts* in their wide variety. The new chapter 23 presents the norms and expectations for several business, professional, political, civic, social, and ceremonial contexts. Perhaps more important, since no two contexts are alike, it guides readers through the steps they might use in analyzing any speaking context. It casts speakers as leaders who have the power to shape contexts in constructive ways and thus improve the level of discourse in society.

For this new edition, important new resources are now available:

**InfoTrac® College Edition** A free four-month subscription to this extensive online library is enclosed with every new copy of *The Speaker's Handbook*, Sixth Edition. This easy-to-use database of reliable, full-length articles (not abstracts) from hundreds of top academic journals and popular sources is ideal for opening whole new worlds of information and research. To help you use the this tool effectively, key exercises throughout the text are linked to InfoTrac College Edition.

The *SpeechMaker* CD-ROM, packaged free with every new text, brings together text, full-motion video, sound, and the Internet to create a dynamic exploration of the steps involved in the speechmaking process.

*The Speaker's Handbook* Web site, containing additional InfoTrac College Edition exercises, sample speeches, and Web links focusing on technology in communication, research, documentation, and more can be found at <http://www.communication.wadsworth.com>.

Thomson Learning WebTutor™ Advantage, 2.0 for WebCT and Blackboard is a Web-based teaching and learning tool that takes a course beyond classroom boundaries to an anywhere, any time environment. WebTutor for *The Speaker's Handbook* corresponds chapter-by-chapter and topic-by-topic with the book, including practice quizzes and online tutorials. Instructors can use WebTutor to provide virtual office hours, post syllabi, set up threaded discussions, and track student progress on the practice quizzes.

Instructor's resources include

*Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Bank*, by Jo Sprague, Doug Stuart, and Neeley Silberman has proved to be an invaluable resource for instructors. It features a wealth of teaching resources including discussions on issues in teaching public speaking, basic course materials including sample syllabi, speech outlines, critique forms, test questions, and much more.

*ExamView* is a fully integrated collection of test creation, delivery, and classroom management tools that feature all of the test items found in the *Instructor's Resource Manual*.

Finally, though we have received compliments on the inclusiveness of the first five editions, we strive to make each subsequent edition of the *Handbook* more attuned to the diversity of contemporary life. In our treatment of language, reasoning, and vocal and physical delivery, we attempt to show how social forces shape, and are shaped by, speech. What is appropriate, or clear, or persuasive constantly changes as society changes. The effective speaker will be open to the subtle cultural variations in speech situations. If there were no differences between people, communication would be unnecessary. If there were no similarities, it would be impossible. The great strength of oral communication is that its many dimensions offer people ways to seek



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out connections in the midst of difference; its immediacy allows for on-the-spot adjustments.

## Acknowledgments

From the vantage point of this sixth edition we cast back in time to the first edition and once again acknowledge Peter Dougherty, who initially approached us with the idea for *The Speaker's Handbook*. The Wadsworth team for the sixth edition proved to be enthusiastic, attentive, dedicated, and professional—and through their efforts and vigilance made it easier for us to be enthusiastic, attentive, dedicated, and professional as well. Working closely with Deirdre Anderson, Executive Editor for Speech Communication, and Eric Carlson, Senior Development Editor, has been a pleasure. Along with Deirdre and Eric, others at Wadsworth who were involved in this edition are Mary Noel, Production Project Manager, Jeanette Wiseman, Senior Technology Project Manager, and Kimberly Russell, Marketing Manager. Vicki Moran, at Publishing Support Services, and copy editor Tom Briggs provided expert production guidance.

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Whenever a book revision comes into our lives it overlays an already complex set of responsibilities, interactions, and deadlines. Were it not for the combination of nudges, cheerleading, opinions, and creative selflessness from our partners, Gary Ruud and Samantha Schoenfeld, we might not have been able to untangle ourselves enough to give this project its due. For this, and much more, we stress our love and thanks.

Jo Sprague  
Douglas Stuart

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