

If it doesn't add, then subtract it!

"In general, shorter is better. If you can encapsulate your idea into a single captivating sentence, you're halfway home" Len Wein

Next time you are writing your speech watch out for these **"time wasters"** and let your audience benefit from the **"less is more"** factor.

1. Trite expressions: which contribute no value to your communication: "As it were", "In conclusion", "As you can see", "I would like to spend a few moments.."

2. Repetitious expressions: "As I said before", "As I've just explained", "If I can just reiterate". **If you have to restate something then just do it.**

3. Re-clarifying expressions: "What I'm trying to say to you is...", "I'd just like to say...", "What I'd like you to understand is..." Just say it. **Explain it better.**

4. I-could-go-on expressions: "And so on", "And so forth", "etc, etc". Stop cleanly on your final point. **Don't pretend you could go on forever.**

5. Doubtful expressions: "I don't know if I should tell you this but...", "I don't know if you've already heard this..." **If in doubt, leave it out.**

6. Resistance-building expressions: "I heard a good one the other day", "Something really *funny* happened" - audience thinks, 'Go on, make me laugh.' Similarly, "But seriously, folks" indicates either a. you think audience aren't bright enough to understand humour or b. you were lying before.

7. Story-flagging expressions: "I'd like to tell you a story" (unless you are a famous comedian), "That reminds me of..." **Tedious.** Go straight into the story.

8. Brain-stopping terms or words: never use **terms foreign** to the experience of the audience ie. "75% of Americans would rather be lying in a coffin at a funeral than making the eulogy" to a group of children; their minds will wander groping for the possible meaning of the word "eulogy".

9. Superlative expressions: "This is absolutely and completely essential!", "This is totally brilliant!" - and above all, "This is absolutely unique" ("unique" already is an absolute so qualifying it is **even worse** ("really/very unique").

10. Appeasing expressions: "You may not agree, but...", "It seems to me", "It's just my (humble) opinion". Of course it is.

11. Qualifying or vague expressions: "more or less", "that kind of thing", "to a greater or lesser extent", "sort of" take the **impact off** your idea.

12. Imprecise expressions and words: especially **bland adjectives** such as "good" or "nice" - do you mean "pleasant-natured", "tasty", "colourful", "stylish", "attractive", "enticing" ...?

13. Too many conjunctions: "and", "so", "because", "when", "not only...but also" - unless the connection is essential, **add a full stop** and start a new sentence. Keep it sharp and easy to follow.

And finally....

14. Show-stopping expressions: most common ending with untrained speakers - "That's all I have to say" or "That's all".

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