Victory Briefs presents

How To . . . Extemp

Written by Jesse Nathan

Preface to the Updated Edition

Hello! I am proud to introduce you to the new, updated version of Chad Ho's "How to…Extemp." No matter where I go, or how far I travel, I never cease to be amazed at how relevant and important extemporaneous speaking is, as a skill and even as a method for learning about a topic. Few exercises in life offer a more effective and intense method for obtaining such a wide variety of life skills—from speaking to researching to analyzing information to basic communication. Extemp combines it all. Whether you become an advanced extemper or not is less important than whether you focus on developing the skills that make extemp so valuable. The medals you win at tournaments, while nice, are not likely to be as valuable in the long run as the tools this event will give you.

It has been almost fifteen years since this book was written but the topics and methods presented here are still both essential and relevant. Now, after a review, the updated version of this text will provide you with both the timeless wisdom of the original book, complete with up-to-date examples, amendments and topics. Chad's excellent manual on beginning this event should now continue to serve your needs as a coach or student interested in learning more about beginning extemp.

As Victory Briefs Extemp division continues to develop and expand, I encourage you to get involved online (www.victorybriefs.com) or to check out our Victory Briefs Extemp Institute, held every summer at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Happy reading!
Jesse Nathan
nathanjz@bethelks.edu

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Introduction

Extemporaneous Speaking is often considered one of the most impressive events that the National Forensic League has to offer. Having the insight to critique an issue as well as the facts and figures from a dozen publications to substantiate that analysis will often amaze an audience.

When striving to give that amazing speech, however, aspiring extempers should keep in mind that there is no one "right" way to do extemp. Looking back at past winners of the National Tournament, you will find that their styles have been as diverse as the champions themselves.

What then can one hope to get out of this book? There are certain guidelines which every extemper should follow, and the purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive overview of different techniques used in the category. Granted, I will offer recommendations for, and even endorse various strategies, however, it is ultimately up to the reader to draw from several options and decide what technique suits him or her best.

At this time, an important qualification must be made about the examples used to illustrate points throughout this text. In these examples, the analyses used are based on accumulated readings and are legitimate positions that you may want to explore further. However, the actual evidence and source citations are not accurate and are intended only to make the discussion of examples more concrete.

Good luck!

-The Victory Briefs Extemp Staff

Part I
What is Extemporaneous Speaking?

Extemporaneous Speaking involves the critical analysis of current events. This forensic event is divided into both United States extemp, which focuses on domestic issues (including U.S. foreign policy), and foreign extemp, which deals with world affairs (including the role of the U.S. in such global matters). Thus, to a limited extent the topics may overlap.

At a tournament, extempers assemble in a preparation room ("prep room") where they take turns drawing three questions out of a box. A typical question might read: ***"How can the federal government improve America's educational system?"*** The extemper must then choose which of the three questions he or she would like to answer. To formulate an answer, the person is given 30 minutes, during which time the extemper may consult a file. A file consists of any published materials, such as newspapers and magazines, which provide evidence to support a position. A file may not consist of any prepared outlines or previously taken notes. The speaker must assimilate selected information, jotting down any notes he or she chooses. After 30 minutes have expired, the extemper must leave the prep room and deliver the speech before a judge(s). The length of the speech should be as close to, without exceeding, the 7 minute time limit.

While an outline of the speech may be created and rehearsed during the 30 minutes in the prep room, a speaker may not refer to these notes during the actual presentation at most tournaments. Some tournaments do allow notes to be used during the speech, but I advise against this option for several reasons. First, looking down at notes will force the extemper to break eye contact with an audience. Second, holding notes will impede gesturing. In general, having to refer to notes makes the overall presentation seem less impressive. Still, if an extemper is just learning the category and would like to use notes for the first few speeches, he or she should check to see if the rules for a particular tournament permit them.

The performance will be judged in terms of both the content and delivery of the speech. Content focuses on not only the extemper's own knowledge, but how well the individual substantiated his or her position with evidence. Delivery encompasses fluency, rapport with the audience, and overall style.

Part II
Creating a File

Chapter 1
Types of Filing Systems

There are two major types of files, the index and the folder systems. Most extempers prefer the folder system, although resource limitations may dictate the alternate index method. (As a side note, you may think of other types of filing systems. By all means, do not limit yourself to the 2 mentioned in this text. Use the method with which you feel most comfortable. The only caution should be to check that your system does not violate any National Forensic League rules.)

Type 1: The Index System

This method involves indexing magazine or newspaper articles, generally on a 4 x 6 note card, by subject heading. Label the top of the card with a subject heading. (A sample list of subjects will be given in Chapter 2.) There are 3 things to consider about subject headings:

1. **You will have to update your headings over time, depending on what issues are currently important.**

2. **The specificity of your headings will depend on how extensive you make your file.** For example, if you have half a dozen articles on Alaskan Oil drilling alone, you might want to create a separate heading just for articles on that issue rather than mix them with other aspects of the environment such as deforestation.

3. **Make sure that the headings are brief categorical descriptions.** Overly specific headings, such as "The Political Process behind drilling for Oil in the Alaskan Wilderness," are prohibited.

Under the heading, list the publications in your file. Leave space between publications to fill in specific source citations. If your file is very extensive, you may have to devote several note cards to each publication.

Below the publication, include in each source citation the date of the issue, the title of the article, and the page number. **Be careful, you are NOT allowed to include a description of an article on the note card.** For example, the title of an article might be: "Alaskan Oil Drilling – Who Will it Hurt?" In this case, you would not be permitted to add the following description: "This is an article explaining how Alaskan Oil Drilling will harm the environment."

> Rule: Because article descriptions are prohibited, learn to use only the title call its contents.

Often times, the same article will be useful in more than one area. For example, an article discussing cutbacks in military spending might be relevant to speeches on both the budget deficit and defense. (The link between these issues will become clearer when we refer back to this example later in the chapter.) In this case, do not hesitate to index the same article under 2 or more different subject headings.

> Rule: If an article is relevant to more than 1 subject, index it under each heading. Doing so will help ensure that you are able to find all articles pertinent to a particular topic.

After creating your note cards, alphabetize them by subject heading and place them in a shoe box or recipe box of some sort. As far as the actual magazines and newspapers are concerned, keep them in a box or carrying case. Group the publications by title and chronologically order the specific issues. In short, keep your file organized.

> Rule: Your entire file must be organized if your index system is going to work effectively and efficiently.

***Sample* Index Cards (**based on fictitious articles and dates**)**

A ***poorly*** organized index:

> ENVIRONMENT
> U.S. News and World Report March 3, 2004; p. 22; "Politicians argue over drilling"
> Newsweek April 1, 2004; p. 67; "Is it Safe to Breathe?"
> Time Jan. 7, 2005; p. 25; "Denver's Folly"
> Newsweek Jan. 14, 2005; p. 78; "Suffocation in Florida"
> Newsweek Mar. 2, 2004; p. 45; "A Leak of Nuclear Proportions"
> Time Feb. 16, 2004; p. 32; "California's Air Attack"
> Time May 25, 2004; p. 72; "Don't Drink the Water"

Notice the problems with this example. The heading "ENVIRONMENT" is too general, entries are not divided by publication, and the dates are not in order.

A ***better*** organized index:

DRILLING:
U.S. News and World Report
March 3, 2004; p. 22; “Politicians argue over drilling”

AIR POLLUTION
Newsweek
April 1, 2004; p. 67; "Is it Safe to Breathe?"
Jan. 14, 2005; p. 78; "Suffocation in Florida"
Time
Feb. 16, 2004; p. 32; "California's Air Attack"

TOXIC WASTE
Newsweek
Mar. 2, 2004; p. 45; "A Leak of Nuclear Proportions"
Time
Jan. 7, 2005; p. 25; "Denver's Folly"
May 25, 2004; p. 72; "Don't Drink the Water"

In this example, notice the changes. The general heading of "ENVIRONMENT" has been replaced by the more specific headings of "AIR POLLUTION" and "TOXIC WASTE", each put on separate notecards. Also, the entries are divided by publication, and the dates are in order.

Type 2: The Folder System

The essential idea behind a folder system is to group the actual articles on each subject, rather than just an index of sources, in order to enhance accessibility. You can either xerox the articles or tear the actual pages out from the source itself, depending on resource constraints. If you choose to rip out articles, you will have to xerox those pages which contain more than one article. **Make sure you label each article with its appropriate source.**

The rest of the folder system closely parallels the index method. You need to create the same types of subject areas, yet instead of putting the headings at the top of notecards, put them on manila folders or divider tabs of some sort. Alphabetize the headings, and change them when necessary. Also, subdivide categories as folders become to bulky. For example, you might decide to devote an entire folder just to affirmative action programs if your folder on discrimination in general grows too large. Finally, duplicate articles which are relevant to more than one topic.

Because it is essential to understand the importance of this last point on duplication, let us look more closely at the example involving military cutbacks introduced in the previous section. As we mentioned above, this subject is relevant to

both defense and the budget deficit. Therefore, you should put a copy of the article in both the "DEFENSE" and "BUDGET DEFICIT" folders. Why? The advantage is evident in the following scenario:

Suppose you pull the question – ***"How will America's defense change in the near future?"*** In this situation, "defense" serves as the buzzword prompting you to consult your "DEFENSE" folder. In it, you would find the article on military cutbacks. You could then say that a decrease in funding will force our military to be more efficient and less experimental with new weapons.

On the other hand, what if you pulled the question – ***"Will the federal government avoid budgetary disaster?"*** In this case, "budgetary disaster" would probably be the buzzwords prompting you to consult your folder headed "BUDGET DEFICIT." In it you would also find the article on military cutbacks. You would then have the evidence to say that our government will avoid budgetary disaster because it is decreasing military expenses.

Some might argue that it's not worth duplicating the article in this scenario. After all, you could still consult your "DEFENSE" folder in the second situation to find the key data. That may be true, however, the key here is being able to remember not only that you have the article, but exactly which folder contains it. If your file has hundreds of articles in it, that will be difficult to do. When you pull the question – ***"Will the federal government avoid budgetary disaster?"*** – your tendency would probably be to consult your "BUDGET DEFICIT" folder, not your "DEFENSE" folder. If you had put the article on military cutbacks only in the "DEFENSE" folder, you might not find it. When you only have 30 minutes to research, outline, and practice delivering a speech, you do not want to waste valuable time finding an article. Your chances of finding an article in the shortest time are maximized if you put copies of it in all relevant folders.

Rule: If an article pertains to more than one subject, make copies of it for each relevant folder.

Group or Individual File?

One of the most commonly asked questions is whether extempers should share a team file or create individual ones. In making this decision, consider several elements. In a group system, since there are more people to share the burden of xeroxing and indexing, the workload that each person must put into creating and upkeeping a file decreases. However, you also loose a certain degree of freedom over decisions such as what to highlight and how to divide subject headings which comes with having your own individual file.

This is my suggestion-- If you have other extempers on your team, try a group file first. From the very beginning, the group should attempt to create a few universal

guidelines so everyone has a good indication of what to expect from the others. These guidelines should establish deadlines for filing articles and a division of labor. You can divide up the work by assigning people to file either a particular publication(s) or subject area(s). Most importantly, everyone should take this time to reveal any personal or stylistic preferences. That way, individuals will be aware of any philosophical differences or similarities that exist among the team. Ultimately, if the group cannot come to an agreement on the various aspects of a file, and you have the time and resources, you may find it in your best interest to create an individual file.

A WORD OF WARNING: A group system can often cause extempers to "lose touch" with the file when individuals fail to take note of the information filed by others. This will hamper tournament success.

> Rule: You should not feel that a group system reduces the individual responsibility you have to know all the contents of a file.

Chapter 2
Contents of a File

The first thing to keep in mind is that **articles must be filed in their entirety**. **National Forensic League rules also prohibit extempers from writing notes in the margins of an article.** The second general thing to remember is to divide the contents of the file into domestic and foreign issues. In fact, a team should create 2 separate files:

One for US extempers and one for foreign extempers. This will increase organization and prevent a "prep room jam" that can be caused by too many extempers working out of one file. With this overview said, we can now turn to the more specific contents of a file.

When to File

File once a week. I advise against daily filing because news changes so rapidly that daily reports of most events quickly become outdated. This will clutter your file. A weekly magazine will generally provide more comprehensive and concise information. Therefore, look over a week's worth of newspaper articles and choose only those with insight which the weekly magazines in your file do not give.

How Much to File

You should definitely file at least 3 weekly magazines and select articles from 1 or 2 daily newspapers. If you have access to and can make use of more publications, by all means, add them to your file.

> Rule: Make sure that you can work with the size of your file. Huge files may look impressive, but they are counterproductive if you cannot process the information in them during the 30 minute prep time.

Finally, watch CNN news—or better yet, the BBC World News or the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour on PBS—regularly, and pay special attention to articles and broadcasts for the week of a tournament. Citing the paper or newscast for the day of a tournament is especially impressive.

Initial Filing for Beginners

Beginning extempers might notice a problem with this filing procedure. One of the goals in extemp is to have a comprehensive file which covers the broadest possible range of topics. However, to assimilate such a wealth of information takes time. Publications cannot run articles on all topics at the same time. They generally limit most of their coverage to stories of immediate significance, and it may take more than a year for some subjects to surface in the news. Consequently, even a beginner who files regularly may find that he or she does not have information on several areas.

To avoid this predicament, I suggest that beginners form an "information base" as part of their preparation. This entails researching past articles (published in the last year or two) for information on topics for which you lack current data. For example, if your regular weekly filing does not produce articles on Syria, look at past articles to find out the country's political and economic status. Your goal should be to have at least 3 or 4 comprehensive articles on those subject headings which do not appear in the news regularly.

> Rule: Extempers should not think of their files as collections of only those stories which make today's headlines. There are many subject areas which do not appear regularly in the news, yet are regular topics for questions asked at tournaments.

What Publications to File

The following is a list of publications often used in extemp. Get a feeling for their topic selections and biases. Then choose those that you think you can work best with.

Magazines	Newspapers
Businessweek	Chicago Tribune
Congressional Digest	Christian Science Monitor
Businessweek	Los Angeles Times
Congressional Digest	Manchester Guardian Weekly
Current History	New York Times
The Economist	Wall Street Journal
Foreign Affairs	Washington Post Weekly
Foreign Policy	
National Review	
The New Republic	
Newsweek	
Businessweek	
Congressional Digest	
Current History	
The Economist	
Foreign Affairs	
Foreign Policy	
National Review	
The New Republic	
Newsweek	
Time	
US News and World Report	
World Press Review	
Tikkun Magazine	

What Subjects to File

The following is a list, though not an exhaustive one, of categories which have been standard topics for questions used in the past:

United States Extemp	
abortion	health care
aids	medicaid
airlines	medicare
business/labor	homeless
crime	housing
defense	judicial system
homeland security	media
terrorism	politics
drugs	congress
economy	ethics
budget deficit	political action committees
interest rates	president George W. Bush
inflation	poverty
trade deficit	racism
social security	science/medicine
minimum wage	space
savings and loans/banking	transportation
education	9/11
foreign policy	

Foreign Extemp			
Africa Angola Ethiopia Liberia Nambia Somalia South Africa Americas Argentina Brazil Canada Quebec Chile Colombia drugs Cuba El Salvador Haiti Mexico Nicaragua Panama	Asia Cambodia China economics politics India Japan economics trade with US Eastern Europe Czechoslovakia Hungary Poland Romania Former Yugoslavia Environment defoliation greenhouse ozone	Middle East Islamic fundamentalism Afghanistan Gulf War Kurds Iran Iraq Israel/Palestine Lebanon Syria Russia Azerbaijan Armenia Baltics economy politics Trade debt EEC GATT IMF World Bank NAFTA	US Foreign Policy aid arms control globalization United Nations Western Europe France Germany Great Britain NATO

(You will notice that these areas are very broad; most questions, however, will require specific analysis. Therefore, you must be able to discuss a wide range of issues within these more general subject headings.)

What Articles to File

At many tournaments, questions are based on stories covered in what are considered the 3 major publications: ***Newsweek*****,** ***Time*****,** and ***US News & World Report.*** Read through these magazines and make sure that you have information on most, if not every, subject they address.

Rule: In general, your goal sh file any art that you feel cover possible topics for tournament questio

Most articles fall into this category, therefore, here are some suggestions for determining what articles have less importance:

1. **Editorials which do not give an insightful approach to a subject can be disregarded.** Those that give strong opinions and positions are good because they help you to discern the different sides of an issues, but some editorials do not meet this criteria. Ask yourself: Does this one present a problem or solution from a new or interesting perspective? Are their any biases in the author's critique that the reader should be aware of?

2. **Sections on art, entertainment, and lifestyles are of less priority, although you may encounter some questions on these areas**.

3. **Profiles which trace life histories can also be disregarded if these articles are not relevant to the person's current life.** For example, an article which discussed what type of sports President Bush loved as a child could probably be overlooked. However, if the article talked about how the competitive aspect of sports shaped George W. Bush's attitudes, the story should be filed because it could explain some of the views he now holds as President.

4. **Lengthy cover articles which are sensationalist in nature and do not offer a substantive critique of a subject need not be filed.** Make sure that you do file cover articles which present a "fact and figure" analysis of a topic. Finally, if you are unsure about what to file, err on the side of conservatism.

> Rule: If in doubt about the importance of an article, file it. It is always easier to throw an article away later than to try to retrieve it.

In light of this, do not make the mistake of assuming that an article lacking current significance need not be put in your file. In the first place, what seems an insignificant topic now will often become very important later. Second, you will find that several questions at tournaments are on rather obscure topics. You want to be prepared for any subject, no matter how trivial it appears. You never know when that tiny article occupying only a quarter of a page will be vital to answering a question.

Additional Materials

As a last note on what to put in a file, you might find it beneficial to include an almanac, dictionary, and quote book. These are excellent sources for background information, introductions, and general clarifications.

Chapter 3
Using a File

Once you determine what publications, subject headings, and articles will comprise your file, the next step is being able to use the file. The key to using a file effectively is to be extremely familiar with your file.

> Rule: Know thoroughly how your file is organized and what it contains. Knowing a file entails familiarizing yourself with all of the articles you have on each subject and where each article is located within the file. Sometimes, subject headings may not be specific enough for this task, and you should not rely solely upon them. Therefore, **try to memorize exactly where you put specific articles when you file them.** If you are part of a group system, go through the file and know what your teammates filed. You should be able to mentally create a picture of where actual articles, not just subjects, are located in the file.

Cross-Referencing

In addition to knowing where articles are located, you must learn to crossreference multiple subjects. Cross-referencing involves thinking about how subjects apply to other areas rather than just thinking of topics in and of themselves. Approaching topics in this manner will enable you to provide a complete analysis in your speech. For example, suppose that you pull the following question: ***"How can the federal government reduce poverty in America?"*** Let us suppose further that you have "POVERTY" as a subject heading in your file. That is an obvious folder or index for you to consult. But is that the only place you should look for information? If you had practiced thinking of subjects in groups, then you would probably cross-reference a file headed "MINIMUM WAGE" and another titled "TAXES." Both subjects would be relevant to the issue of poverty if you chose to criticize the low minimum wage and any regressive tax laws as part of the problem.

Let us look at another example. Suppose you pulled the following question:

"What can be done to improve our quest for justice in the US?" In this case, you might not even have a subject heading "JUSTICE." Yet even if a question does not contain an immediate buzzword which matches any of your headings, there is no reason to panic. Just ask yourself, What subjects pertain to justice? If you have practiced crossreferencing, you should have no problem coming up with "CRIME," "JUDICIAL SYSTEM," and "PRISONS." Consulting articles on each of these areas may then reveal statistics on the homicide rate, sentencing in the courtroom, and overcrowding in jails.

Cross-referencing even further might cause you to pull articles on drugs because it is the leading cause of crime in America.

> Rule: Because you only have 30 minutes of prep time, it is to your advantage to mentally cross-reference ahead of time, during the filing stages.

Chapter 4
Highlighting

Before determining what you should highlight, it is imperative to note that National Forensic League rules prohibit using more than **one** color to highlight. The choice of color remains up to you, but after that decision, highlight only in that color.

What to Highlight

Highlighting takes practice. Beginners will often find that they highlight more of an article than not. This defeats the purpose of highlighting. You would be surprised at how little of even the highlighted portion of an article you will actually use in a speech, so be selective.

> Rule: Highlight only that which you think you can and will use in a speech.

Here are a few suggestions for what to look for when highlighting:

Highlight any background or historical information to help you understand topics with which you are generally unfamiliar. Of course, if you already know about a subject, you need not spend time highlighting background information for it.

Numerical data: Highlight important statistics, figures, and dates. However, do not automatically highlight any numbers you come across. Instead, highlight only data which you can explain and your audience will understand. Your goal should not be to spew out as many numbers as possible. Too many statistics without adequate explanation will only confuse your audience.

Problems/Solutions: Highlight those portions of articles which trace various events or explicate the problem/solution aspects of a subject. Do not highlight every single detail. Highlight just enough for you to grasp and convey the main idea of a topic.

Quotes: Highlight quotes by authorities which affirm or clarify definite positions. Do not just highlight a quote because it "sounds good," or else your speech will sound verbose.

Terms: Highlight words or phrases which offer clarifications. This is especially important for subjects in which jargon is frequently used.

Sample Highlighting

The following sample comes from an article published by the BBC News Online, February 6, 2005 called "Iran 'to retaliate if U.S. attacks.' The bolded portions constitute what might be useful to highlight.

> **Iran's top nuclear negotiator says Iran will retaliate and accelerate its efforts to develop nuclear technology if attacked by the US or Israel.**
>
> Hassan Rohani told Reuters news agency there was nothing the **West could do that would persuade Tehran to scrap its nuclear programme.**
>
> Both the **US and Israel** have said it would be unacceptable **for Iran to have nuclear weapons**.
>
> Iran says its nuclear programme will be used to generate electricity.
>
> **The US has refused to rule out a military strike on Iran**, but has said it will try to resolve the dispute by diplomatic means.

Enrichment activities

> **Mr Rohani, secretary-general of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said Iran's ability to produce its own nuclear parts had made it "invulnerable" to attack since it could simply rebuild whatever was destroyed.**
>
> "If such an attack takes place then of course we will retaliate and we will definitely accelerate our activities to complete our fuel cycle and make nuclear fuel," he said.
>
> "But I do not think the United States itself will take such a risk," he added**. "They know our capabilities for retaliating against such attacks."**
>
> Mr Rohani said that not **even the offer of lifting US sanctions or security guarantees** from Washington would be enough to make Iran abandon its enrichment programme.
>
> **"Uranium enrichment is Iran's right," he said.**
>
> Iran has agreed to suspend all its enrichment activities during negotiations with Britain, France and Germany.
>
> **The US is not taking part in negotiations, and wants Iran to be referred to the UN Security Council, which has the power to impose sanctions.**

The European countries would like to use a **package of incentives** to induce Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions, but Tehran has said it is disappointed with what is on offer so far.

It says it can only continue talks for a matter of **months**, not years.

Enriched uranium can be used to produce nuclear power, but the technology behind it can also be used to develop weapons-grade nuclear material.

Chapter 5
Thinning a File

Since you should always try to keep the information in your file at a manageable level, one way to do this, in addition to being selective of the articles you file, is to thin your file.

When to Thin

The frequency with which you thin your file will depend on several factors. If you choose to file many daily newspaper articles, you will probably have to thin every month. If you file weekly, thin about every 3 months. Of course, these figures will vary depending on how quickly new topics arise and how quickly information becomes outdated. For example, a file on a country, such as the Russia, which is constantly in the news would probably need to be thinned more often than a file on a country, such as Yemen, which is seldom in the headlines.

What to Thin

There are essentially 2 kinds of articles which may be discarded:

1. **Repetitive articles**: Get rid of articles which say the same thing as another article. You do not need 5 different articles each telling you that 60% of the population uses drugs. When deciding if articles are repetitive, however, make sure that **none** of the contents are unique. In some cases, part of one article mirrors another, but each may also contain different material. For example, 2 articles may both tell you that drug use is at 60%, but each may then offer 2 very different solutions to the same problem. One might advocate attacking the supply side of narcotics; the other might target the demand. In this case, it would be good to keep both articles.

> Rule: Only discard articles which do not give ANY new insight into a subject.

2. **Outdated articles**: Get rid of outdated articles (such as the pre-election 2004 material, for example), **but only if you have more current ones to replace them**. While it is always better to have the most recent figures, having slightly older data is still better than having no data at all. Besides, you may find that some older articles will contain historical background or long term analysis that still apply. This information can be useful, so do not throw away articles just because the date of publication seems old.

As a special note, sometimes it may be a good idea to keep past statistics and figures, even if you have more current data, in order to illustrate certain cause-effect relationships. This is especially true for the economy. For example, according to the principles of economics, a decrease in the value of the dollar will increase US exports. If you wanted to incorporate this principle into your speech, showing your audience an example of this relationship would make your analysis more clear than just saying such a relationship exists. How can you go about doing this? Well, let us say that you have figures for this month's export total and dollar value. You know that exports are high, and the dollar value is low. If you had kept the parallel figures for six months ago and the opposite were true, then you can illustrate that a low dollar leads to higher exports because domestic goods will be more appealing to foreign buyers.

A WORD OF WARNING: Whenever you use illustrations to clarify an assertion, keep in mind that **correlation does not always equal causation**. Only if you know for a fact that a certain relationship exists can you make these kinds of illustrations.

Rule: Never make blind assertions based only on the apparent correlation of 2 circumstances.

What to do with a File at the End of the Year

If you plan to do extemp the following year, **keep your file!** Do not throw it away because you think it will become outdated. The fact of the matter is that many topics in one year will continue or resurface in the following year, and having an older file on these subjects is invaluable.

Rule: It is much easier to add current evidence to an already-existing file than to start from scratch.

Of course, having last year's file does not excuse you from keeping up with your current filing. Rather, what last year's file does is give you that all-important "information base" we talked about earlier.

Part III
Creating a Speech

Chapter 6
Types of Questions Asked

We discussed earlier that many tournament questions are based on topics covered in major publications. With this in mind, you might be wondering how these topics are framed in the form of questions. Here are the 6 primary types of questions asked:

"Should"

Many questions will have "should" as an operative term. For example, ***"Should the US increase foreign aid to El Salvador?"*** When answering such questions, your analysis may include both **pragmatic and moral** concerns. Pragmatic issues which might be discussed in this example include whether increasing aid is economically feasible, whether the financial support will have a significant impact, and whether domestic opposition can be overcome. On the other hand, moral topics of interest might focus on whether the US has the right to impose its democratic views on another sovereign nation, or whether we ought to prioritize our domestic needs over that of foreigners. Not all "should" questions will have moral implications, but if one does, you must find a medium between pragmatics and morality in your overall answer.

> Rule: When weighing practical and moral issues, do not sway too far to the extreme or your audience may disregard your position as too idealistic or heartless.

"Can"

Questions involving the word "can" are very similar to those centering on "should." The primary difference between the two is that "can" emphasizes the pragmatic over the moral issues of a topic. For example, ***"Can the federal government support a national health care program?"*** In your answer, you might say that such a policy would simply be economically unfeasible. That does not mean that you have anything against the inherent qualities of a national health care program. In fact, you can tell your audience that it would be desirable, but unfortunately, financial constraints make it impossible.

> Rule: What we can do is not always what we should do--"can" emphasizes reality, while "should" emphasizes ideals.

"Will"

Questions using/implying the term "will" give you a rather straightforward objective – they call for you to make a prediction. For example, ***"In light of the Enron scandal, are the days of big businesses numbered?"*** Unfortunately, how you go about achieving this objective is a bit more difficult because you can never state, as a matter of fact, what the future holds. Instead, all you can do is use current trends, which point in a certain direction, as the basis for a forecast.

> Rule: Look for trends when a question calls for a prediction.

Depending on the nature of the question, you may have to deal with anything from social to technological trends. For US extempers, two of the most effective trends to pinpoint are **legislative and judicial** direction; foreign extempers should try to pinpoint diplomatic movements in the form of **international treaties or agreements**. With this in mind, you could substantiate a "yes" response to the question on big business by asserting that 1) judicial enforcement of anti-trust laws is increasing and 2) recent congressional tax laws favor small proprietorships.

Furthermore, in addition to citing concrete examples of a trend, you can enhance your position by citing the attitudes of a specific individual or population as a whole. Ask yourself, Are there any biases which could act as potential obstacles to a certain course of action? How will the public's support influence a certain decision? Looking back at the question on big business, you could add a third point to your answer stating that the population's support of big business is waning because consumers have grown weary of corporate giants which charge high prices for low quality goods as well as the obvious reason (prefaced in the question): Enron-type scandals.

"Is"

Occasionally, you may be asked to determine whether something is true. For example, ***"Do animals have rights?" "Is the American work ethic gone?"*** In these questions, you must base your answer on what is **currently** true as opposed to what may be true in the future or what was true in the past. For instance, ***"Are minorities safe in America?"*** You might answer "no" because 1) the number of violent crimes against minorities is greater than ever before and 2) judicial biases are reflected in the harsher sentences minorities convicted of crimes receive. You might qualify your position and say that legislative trends seem to be moving toward protecting minorities, but the benefits of this will not be felt until much later. Therefore, as matters currently stand, minorities must be considered at risk.

> Rule: "Is" questions require you to base your answer on current principles, values, opinions, and so forth. Trends pointing toward a future which will be different from the present may be mentioned in your speech, but they should not be the basis for your answer.

"What"

Some questions will ask you to explain the circumstances surrounding either a general or specific policy, program, or situation. For example, ***"What would be the implications of a treaty banning all nuclear testing?" "What effect would legalizing drugs have on America?" "What advantages or disadvantages would mandating community service for all citizens bring to the US?"*** In these cases, you must comment on the impact a thing or person will have on another. Try to divide these effects into 3 different spheres, the traditional (and sometimes overused) areas being the economic, social, and political ramifications of a topic. In addition to these, you can discuss many other aspects including educational, legal, and medical fields. Your options are nearly limitless.

There are, however, two key guidelines to follow when choosing your areas of analysis. First, make sure that the **range** of topics you discuss is appropriate. You do not want to be too narrow or broad with the issues; as always, find a balance. Second, make sure that each area you discuss is **significant**. Do not choose an area just because it is easy, or you happen to find the most evidence on it. In fact, it is a good idea to tell your audience why you chose to address certain areas. That will enhance the apparent importance of your speech.

"How"

Sometimes a question will include "how" as an operative term. For example, ***"How can the U.S. curb the spread of aids?"*** For this type of question, you must define the measures or conditions which would allow a goal to be reached. In this case, you might offer mandatory education programs as a necessary step toward controlling the HIV virus.

Additionally, notice that "how" will often be used in conjunction with another operative term such as "can" or "should." In these situations, "how" requires that you change the nature of your analysis from whether or not something is true to how something can or should be made true.

> Rule: When a question asks "how," make sure you do answer "how."

Sample Questions

The following is a list of basic questions used at past tournaments which will help you get a general overview of various issues and the types of questions used:

US Extemp

Should AIDS patients be quarantined?

How can the U.S. adequately deal with terrorism in the post-9/11 world?

What will Republican control of all three branches of government mean for American democracy?

What kind of judges will Bush likely appoint to the Supreme Court in the next four years?

Does mandatory drug testing violate the Constitution?

How can America stop the international drug trade?

How can the federal government reduce the budget deficit?

Should we ratify a balanced-budget amendment?

How will a recession affect big business?

Can American business regain its competitiveness overseas?

Can the government prevent the economy from overheating?

Should the Federal Reserve increase interest rates?

How can the Federal Reserve stop the economy from stalling?

What are the implications of raising the minimum wage?

Will housing ever become affordable again?

What must be done to improve American education?

In what direction are US-Russian relations heading?

Should social security be invested in the stock market, as the Bush administration suggests?

Should the federal government once again regulate the savings and loan industry?

Have travelers benefited from the deregulation of the airline industry?

Has the National Rifle Association become too powerful?

Foreign Extemp

Is the power of the dollar waning worldwide?

What are the ramifications of German reunification?

Can the Russian economy be saved?

Will the Iraqi insurgency ever end?

Cuban socialism or Castro's death: which first?

Is Apartheid truly dead in South Africa?

Will peace last in the former Yugoslavia?

What do recent Croatian elections mean for that country?

Have the winds of change brought peace to Ethiopia and Ertrea?

Has Guatemala established democracy at last?

Will Britain adopt the Euro?

Should NATO continue its eastward expansion?

Will the US be successful in tilling the rocky soil of Mideast peacemaking?

Have Russian kleptocrats taken full control of the economy?

What should the world do in response to global warming?

Will the death of Yassir Arafat spell better or worse peace prospects for the Middle East?

Does peace in the Middle East depend entirely on United States support?

Will Afghanistan remain a stable country in the coming years?

Chapter 7
Introductions

The introduction is one of the most important parts of the speech for two reasons. First, your audience will be most **attentive** at the beginning of your speech. Second, introductions establish the **rapport** you have with your audience. A good introduction will draw your audience in and make them want to listen to you. A poor introduction will turn your audience off, and they may even be inclined to block out the rest of your speech.

> Rule: The introduction sets the table for the rest of your speech; therefore, do not underestimate its importance.

Prepared or Spontaneous?

One of the biggest debates about the introduction is whether it should be prepared or spontaneous. I do not feel that there is anything wrong with a prepared introduction **if it is relevant to your speech**. Critics say that a "canned" introduction is not true extemporaneous speaking, but let's face it – few (if any) extempers go into a round without any ideas for possible introductions. Of course, it would be great if you suddenly came up with an appropriate introduction "off the cuff," but in case you do not, have a backup set of introductions from which to choose. In fact, many extempers find it valuable to put anecdotes, cartoons, editorial clips, and so forth in a file folder just for introductions.

Your set should not consist of just 1 or 2 introductions. Rather, have at least 1 introduction for each of the major areas including the economy, politics, Russia, and Middle East, just to name a few. Novice extempers should have about 5 different introductions. As experience increases, create new ones which are more and more specific to different areas. For example, a beginner might have one general introduction for the economy, but an experienced speaker should have more specific ones for different aspects of the economy such as the budget deficit, interest rates, inflation, and so forth.

> Rule: Extempers should always strive to increase the specificity of their introductions.

Possible Openings

> Rule: There are virtually no limits on the types of introductions which can be used as long as they are relevant and in good taste.

With that in mind, here are just a few of the most popular possibilities:

Quotations: Using a quotation to introduce the theme of your speech is very effective, especially if it is taken from a famous person. If the person is less known, make sure that you cite the individual's qualifications. Whether you cite the author before or after the quotation is a matter of personal preference. Additionally, try to use novel quotes. Cliches and adages are so often heard that audiences may consider them trite and overused. Here are 2 examples:

Overused: "A penny saved is a penny earned." -- Ben Franklin

Fresh: "He who will not economize will be forced to agonize." – Confucius

Political cartoons: These can serve as excellent introductions because they set up images for an audience which are often easier to remember than a bunch of words. However, while these cartoons can be very humorous and entertaining, they can also be difficult to deliver. When giving this type of introduction, you are cast more in the role of storyteller than extemper. For this reason, choose cartoons carefully. Some are too visual in nature and not conducive to verbal communication. Furthermore, practice your delivery of the cartoon. **How you say the story is just as important as what you say.** Concentrate on timing (do not rush) and pause after the punchline so the audience has time to react to it.

The following describes a political cartoon: “Secretary of State Condi Rice runs up the stairs to the White House and bursts into George W. Bush's room. She warns the President, ‘There's a rebellion outside!' The President responds, 'Quick – call in the military.' Rice retorts, 'They are the military.'”

True Story/Factoid: Sometimes you may choose to begin a speech with factual information. This information may include statistics or actual examples which convey the significance of your topic. These types of openings are advantageous in that they are often found in the same articles you will use to substantiate the main body of your speech. Hence, your introduction will fit very well with your points and appear very specific to the topic. However, some feel that such "evidence-oriented" introductions tend to be less creative and entertaining. Therefore, you must find a balance between relevance and interest-appeal. Here are 2 examples:

First story: Citizens of Anytown, USA, had encountered many freaky things over the past several years, including a six-legged frog and a cancer rate which was 600% higher than the national average. But when an eyeless baby girl was born a few months ago, the people finally took action. Several water samples were tested for toxic contamination. As it turned out, the local power plant had been using negligently-treated toxic

waste as fertilizer.

Second story*:* In an article entitled 'Boo! You're Dead!', several Harvard professors figured out what it would take to raise one's chance of death by one-millionth: smoke 1.4 cigarettes, drink 1/2 liter of wine, spend 6 minutes in a canoe, 30 minutes in a mine, drink Miami tap water for 1 year, or spend 2 days in New York City.

Anecdotes/Fables: Occasionally, there may be a moral or lesson you would like to convey in your speech. Fictitious stories or legends are good ways to introduce your message. As I mentioned earlier with quotations, use less well known
stories to avoid boring your audience. For example, if you wanted to convey the importance of compromise, you probably would NOT want to tell the following tale:

Once there lived an elephant who was so steadfast that it had never been moved, against its will, by anyone. At the same time, there also lived a rhinoceros who was so powerful that nothing had ever withstood its charge. One day, these 2 giants crossed each other's path. The rhinoceros charged the elephant. Neither side would yield any ground to the other, and the 'unstoppable force' collided with the 'immovable object.' The result: both were killed.

Chances are that your audience will have heard a version of this story before. Instead the following might be more appropriate to illustrate that when 2 sides do not work together, each side can cancel the other's efforts:

There once lived a man whose hair was half brown and half gray. The man also had two wives, one youthful; the other elderly, and both extremely jealous of the other. One night while the man was sleeping, the older wife decided to pull out her husband's brown hair so their hair color would match, while the younger wife pulled out the man's gray hair so their hair color would be more compatible. Consequently, when the man woke up, he was bald.

Analogies/Historical Examples: Sometimes you may want to compare your topic with someone or something else. For example, extempers have compared AIDS with the Black Plague. However, make sure that you draw very **strong and concrete** links. Because it is often easy to find **some** similarities between any two things, you want to make your comparison seem intelligent and insightful.

Personal Story: This is somewhat of a controversial type of introduction. Some judges tend to question the credibility of individual experiences; others feel that telling a personal story is not formally suited to extemp. Whether these claims are legitimate, here are a few guidelines to consider when using a personal story:

1) Combine your experience with another type of introduction. In one case, you could start off with a quote first and then follow with your story. For example, "Benjamin Franklin once said, 'Beware of little expenses. A small leak will sink a great ship.' On my first trip alone away from home, I found out how wise Mr. Franklin truly was..."

2) Make the story humorous and light-hearted. Telling of a personal tragedy may make your audience uncomfortable. Some may even be so skeptical that they think you are making up the story just to elicit sympathy from your judge.

Ultimately, the choice is yours. You may decide to always use just 1 type of introduction, or you may prefer to use a variety. In general, experiment with different types of introductions. Note your audience's reactions, and see which types work best for you.

The Bridge

The next step to a good introduction involves the bridge between your opening and the question. This entails spending a few sentences explaining or commenting on the opening before stating the question. How was the quote insightful? What lesson does this anecdote teach us? What is the general significance of the opening? Keep in mind that this bridge should be smooth and gradual, not sudden and abrupt. Let us take a look back at 2 of the openings used above, and this time, we will add an appropriate bridge leading up to a question for each of them.

Political Cartoon: "Secretary of State Condi Rice runs up the stairs to the White House and bursts into George W. Bush's room. She warns the President, 'There's a rebellion outside!' The President responds, 'Quick--call in the military.' Rice retorts, 'They are the military.' Due to recent reductions in the defense budget, soldiers have raised their 'arms' in protest. They fear that cutbacks will not only hamper their safety, but that of the country as well. And thus the question arises, ***'Would cutbacks in the defense budget threaten national security?'***"

Anecdote: "There once lived a man whose hair was half brown and half gray. The man also had two wives, one youthful; the other elderly, and both extremely jealous of the other. One night while the man was sleeping, the older wife decided to pull out her husband's brown hair so their hair color would match, while the younger wife pulled out the man's gray hair so their hair color would be

> more compatible. Consequently, when the man woke up, he was bald. Now the moral to this story is NOT that bigamy is bad, but that compromise is important. When 2 sides have their differences, both sides can end up losing if they fail to cooperate. Such is the dilemma that the US and China face. After years of trade barriers and general hostilities, both sides now recognize the advantage of economic exchange. And thus the question arises, ***'Should the US strengthen economic trade with China?'***

Take note that in these examples, the purpose of the bridge is to provide a smooth transition from the opening to the statement of the question.

Justification (Optional)

Right before stating the question, an increasingly popular strategy is to include 1 or 2 sentences in the bridge explaining **why** it is important to address the topic. For example:

> "... Because, according to the New York Times, the loss of computerized medical records endangers the lives of over 200,000 patients, it is vital that we answer the question, ***'How can we stop the spread of computer viruses?'***"

Keep in mind that you are **not** to answer the question in the justification. Its only purpose is to show the importance of the question itself.

Chapter 8
Thesis Statement

After stating the question, the next step is to offer a thesis. In the thesis statement, you have two options. You can either 1) immediately give your answer to the question followed by how you intend to affirm that answer in the main body of your speech, or 2) explain how you plan to analyze the topic in order to reach an answer, reserving that answer for the latter part of the main body of your speech.

When to Answer the Question

This is arguably the point upon which the extemp community is most divided. Half of the coaches and competitors strongly advocate answering the question immediately after stating it; an equal number prefer to wait until later in the main body to answer the question. Personally, I would always offer my answer midway through the speech. I did this, however, NOT because I thought it was better, but because I felt more comfortable with it organizationally. Since extempers have been successful using either method, you should choose the method with which you feel more comfortable in terms of style and organization.

Answering the Question at the Beginning

After stating the question in the introduction, state your answer and then outline how you intend to affirm your position. Here are 2 examples:

> "... and thus the question arises, ***'Can America reduce its trade deficit with Japan?'*** My answer to this question is 'yes' for three reasons: 1) the US is increasing research and development 2) American worker productivity is rising and 3) our savings rate is increasing."

OR

> "... and thus the question arises, ***'What does the future hold for Russia?'*** Well, after analyzing the situation, we must say Russia's future will be bleak and dim. And in order to see why, let us look at three areas in which this unpleasant future will be evident: 1) political 2) social and 3) economic spheres."

Advantages to Answering the Question at the Beginning

1. Your audience's attention will be greatest in the beginning.

2. Your audience will know from the start where you are going analytically.

3. You have more time to directly substantiate your answer.

Answering the Question at the End

After stating the question in the introduction, let your audience know what you plan to analyze **before** reaching an answer. Reserve saying your actual answer until the end. Now when I use the term "end," I do not literally mean to answer the question in the conclusion with only a few seconds left. In fact, most times, you should probably offer your answer in the middle of the speech. You will need the time to substantiate your position. (The actual timing of your speech will be discussed in Chapter 13.) Let us now turn to the same questions for which we formed a beginning-answer thesis, and create a new thesis to fit the end-answer method.

> "... and thus the question arises, ***'Can America reduce its trade deficit with Japan?'*** In order to answer this question, let us look at 1) how large the trade deficit is, 2) its harms, and 3) only then can we assess the facts and arrive at a reasonable answer."

OR

> "... and thus the question arises, ***'What does the future hold for Russia?'*** In order to answer this question, let us look at the 1) political, 2) social, and 3) economic factors. And only then will we be able to assess the situation as a whole and conclude with an informed response."

In these examples, notice how the end-answer format differs from its counterpart. Basically, in the end-answer format, you are telling the audience what you need to assess **before** the question can be effectively answered. (A closer comparison of how a change in when you answer the question will cause a shift in the content and organization of points will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter on the main body.)

Advantages to Answering the Question at the End

1. Your audience is kept in suspense and has more reason to continue listening.

2. Logistically, it is more natural to assess the facts before arriving at an answer.

3. Your audience may find it easier to understand your answer if you first discuss the facts leading up to the answer.

Chapter 9
Main Body

Whether you choose the beginning or end-answer method, as you will soon see, the **content** in the main body will essentially be the same. The primary difference will be the **organization** of your points. We will look at how this organization shifts later in this chapter, but for now, let us focus our attention on some of the different types of speeches. (As a logistical note, we will first look at the different types of speeches using the *end-answer* organization. Then we will look at some of those same speeches using the *beginning-answer* organization.)

The following are 4 of the most frequently used types of speeches. As we look at them using the end-answer method, you will notice that the main body can be grouped into two major parts - the prelude to the answer and the answer itself. Both of these parts can often be further subdivided.

Type 1: Problem-Solution

Sometimes you will be asked to resolve a predicament. For example**, *"How can the government clean up the environment?"*** In this situation, a problem-solution organization can be very effective. In the prelude to the answer, you would detail the problem; and in the answer portion itself, you would offer the solution. Let us now turn to the specific components of this type of speech.

The Problem

Basically, there are two essential items which need to be included in this section – the actual problem and its harms.

1. **Problem**: Isolate exactly **what** is the problem. Using examples, quotations, and statistics (the specific use of which we will cover in Chapter 12), tell the audience **how significant** the problem is. Quantify the dilemma or threat. For example, if you are discussing pollution, you might assert that it has risen by 45%.

2. **Harms**: Show **how** the problem is harmful, and **what** negative effects it has. When doing this, do not just look at the obvious. Look at the larger picture. Do not just say that pollution is 'ruining the purity and beauty of the environment.' There are many other harms to consider such as lost resources, global warming, and health threats. For example, you might say that over 30,000 animal and 500 human deaths a year have been linked to environmental hazards.
In short, the prelude to the answer should serve two purposes: 1) it informs the

audience about the problem with which we are dealing, and 2) offers compelling reasons to address the threat. Once you have accomplished these goals, you are ready to answer the question.

The Solution

In the solution, your goal is to target the actual **causes** of the problem and present ways to rectify **each** cause you cite. Hence, your solution should be multifaceted if there is more than one reason for the problem. Beginners should strive to target two primary causes of a problem and work their way up to a three or four step solution.

Solutions need to be well-substantiated and explained, so here are a few suggestions to consider:

1. **Do not be overly philosophical**. For example, in answering the above question on pollution, do not just say that "we need better leadership." Although leadership is a legitimate concern, the phrasing of the point is very abstract and ambiguous. Instead, be more concrete and say, "we need to unify the EPA's districts in order to maintain central direction and uniform standards." You could then go on to elaborate that currently, the Environmental Protection Agency consists of twelve districts, each with a different set of requirements and standards. Without any supervising body, the EPA has been unable to generate universal results.

2. **Do not generalize**. It would be very easy to say that "we need increased penalties in order to protect the environment ... that way, more offenders would be deterred from breaking environmental laws." However, this assertion lacks specificity. True it seems **logical** that increasing penalties would lead to reductions in offenses, but the **link** is never clarified. It would be better to maintain the following: "In order to deter the breaking of environmental laws, we need increased penalties. As the situation currently stands, businesses do not have an economic incentive to follow the law. Proper disposal is more costly than fines for illegal dumping, and businesses find it more profitable to take their chances with negligently discarded waste."

3. **Do not overlook the importance of attitudinal barriers**. Most times, extempers deal with concrete programs and policies, but sometimes, intangible elements, such as a lack of public support, may contribute to the problem. How then can we come up with a concrete solution to reverse attitudinal opposition? The first thing you must do is determine **why** this attitudinal barrier exists. Why are people against something? More often than not, it is a fear which causes opposition. After isolating this reason, you need to offer a tangible proposal which will mitigate people's fears and induce a change of heart. For example, you might cite a shortage of landfills as one predicament compounding pollution.

You might further stipulate that the solution to a shortage of landfills is not as simple as building more because people are unwilling to permit the creation of new landfills in their neighborhoods. Moreover, the reason for their lack of cooperation is a fear of toxic leaks. Once you have pinpointed the root of the problem, you could advocate the implementation of certain technology within the landfill which would reduce toxicity (such technology does, in fact, exist; yet it has not been comprehensively implemented). If people no longer feared the waste, then they would be more willing to allow the creation of new landfills in their area.

Type 2: Change-Effect

Sometimes you will be asked to hypothesize what effects a certain change will cause. For example***, "Will a decrease in the defense budget have a negative effect on national security?"*** Using the end-answer method, this format is very similar in organization to the problem-solution type speech in that there are two major parts – the prelude to the answer (consisting of the change) and the answer itself (consisting of the effect).

The Change

In this part of the speech, you need to isolate the change which is supposed to have various effects. That change may take the form of the adoption of a new program, treaty, and so forth. You must first pinpoint **what** is the change and qualify the **degree** of change. For the question on national security, you should **quantify** the reduction in spending. Moreover, it would be important to discern exactly **where** some of the cutbacks will come from. Will there be less funding for research and development? For weapons? For soldiers? After your audience understands all of these implications, you can then proceed to answer the question.

The Effect

The format of this portion of the speech parallels the structure of a multi-faceted solution in a problem-solution type speech. You must target the specific effects of the changes you have isolated and then determine their overall impact. For the question on national security, you might say that one effect of the cutbacks will be fewer purchases of new weapons by the military. After this assertion, assess the impact that less new weaponry will have on national security. You might say that it will not hamper our protection because our military will be able to compensate by upgrading older weapons. A second effect of the cutbacks you could cite for this example is troop reductions. How will this impact national security? In keeping with a "no" answer to the question, you might say that a decline in manpower will not hinder our safety because current technologies have reduced the role of the individual soldier.

Type 3: Criteria-Evaluation

Sometimes you may be asked to assess a situation and determine whether or not a certain option is viable. For example, ***"Is Barak Obama a viable presidential candidate for 2008?"*** In this case, the criteria-evaluation format can be very useful. Like the previous two types of speeches, this one will also be divided into two parts. The criteria will serve as the prelude to the answer, and the evaluation will serve as the answer itself.

The Criteria

In this portion of the speech, you need to establish the criteria which will be necessary for something to be true. Referring to the question above, you would need to list the requirements for anyone to be a viable presidential candidate. Therefore, your criteria might consist of the following: 1) money, 2) fame, and 3) popularity. After establishing these requirements, you can proceed to answer the question.

The Evaluation

Your objective in this part of the speech is to assess the viability of the criteria. For example, you must determine if Barak Obama has the necessary money, fame, and popularity. If you were to offer a "yes" answer, you would need to elaborate more specifically in your evaluation on how strongly Obama meets each of the criteria. You might point how much money he has in his campaign fund, how well-known his name is (especially after the 2004 Democratic National Convention speech he gave) and what his approval rating is, at least in his home state of Illinois.

Type 4: Past, Present, Future

Sometimes you will be asked to assess the future. For example, ***"What does the future hold for minorities in America?"*** Anytime you have a question similar to this one, it is often useful to employ a chronologically oriented speech. Like the other speeches, chronological speeches can be broken up into two main parts. This time, the prelude to the answer will include any background information needed for a prediction, and the answer portion will include the prediction itself.

The Background

In this part of the speech, you need to explain the current situation. Tell the audience what issues should top a list of concerns. Sometimes, if you feel it would help your audience understand matters, include an overview of the past. As a word of

caution, however, do not get bogged down in past events. In fact, even when discussing the past, it is good to discuss **how the past has affected the present**. For the question on minorities, you might first want to qualify how the number of minorities in America has grown by 50% over the past 2 years, and how problems of violence and discrimination are up 40%. Once you get your message across to the audience that minorities are not very secure currently, you can then proceed to predict whether the future will be different or the same for them.

The Prediction

Basically, in this part of the speech, you want to look at very specific shifts in ideology or policy which hint at what the future may be like. Are there any trends which will probably continue into the future? In short, cite anything which can serve as a future indicator of the situation. For the question on minorities, shifts you could consider include how social acceptance has led to increased representation in politics (35%), how legislation in support of affirmative action programs has led to increased representation in labor (20%), and how efforts to reform educational biases have led to increased representation in schools (40%). Therefore, you might conclude by saying that these current reforms will allow minorities to rise from their current suppression and prosper in society.

Structuring a Speech Using the Beginning-Answer Organization

As we mentioned at the start of this chapter, your decision to answer the question in the beginning or the end has no bearing on the content of your speech. However, your organization will change. **Generally, the subpoints within an *end-answer* organization will become the major points for the main body in a *beginning-answer* format.** The remaining information in an end-answer can then be dispersed throughout the major points in a beginning-answer format. If this sounds confusing, don't worry. It might help to visualize this transformation by contrasting a few outlines of speeches both in the end- and beginning-answer formats.

Example 1: ***"How can the government clean up the environment?"***

If you will recall the points discussed earlier for this question, its outline in a problem-solution type format using an **end-answer** organization would look like this:

Main body:

Point 1. Significance of pollution
- 45% increase in pollution

Point 2. Harms of pollution
- 30,000 animals die
- 500 people die

Point 3. Solution

Subpoint A. Unify the EPA
Subpoint B. Increase penalties
Subpoint C. Upgrade landfills

Re-organized to fit a beginning answer organization, the outline would look like this:

Main body:

Point 1. Unify the EPA
- 45% increase in pollution

Point 2. Increase penalties
- 30,000 animals die

Point 3. Upgrade landfills
- 500 people died

Notice that when you change from the end to beginning-answer organization, the subpoints A, B, and C of the answer become the points 1, 2, 3 in the main body. Additionally, instead of grouping the harms and significance into points of their own, they become dispersed throughout the main body where relevant.

Example 2: ***"Is Barak Obama a viable presidential candidate?"***

If you will recall the points discussed earlier for this question, its outline in a criteria-evaluation type format using an **end-answer** organization would look like this:

Main body:

Point 1. Criteria
- Subpoint A. Money
- Subpoint B. Fame
- Subpoint C. Popularity

Point 2. Evaluation
- Subpoint A. Large campaign fund
- Subpoint B. Widespread name recognition
- Subpoint C. High approval rating in Illinois

Re-organized to fit a beginning-answer organization, the outline would look like this:

Main body:

Point 1. Money
- • Large campaign fund

Point 2. Fame
- • Widespread name recognition

Point 3. Popularity
- • High approval rating in Illinois

Notice that in this organization, unlike the end-answer structure, the evaluation does NOT **parallel** the criteria separately. Rather, the analysis becomes **unified**. Subpoints A, B, and C of Point 1 in the end-answer format become Points 1, 2, and 3 in the beginning-answer format, while the Subpoints in the evaluation of the end-answer format become dispersed as evidence for the appropriate points in the beginning-answer format.

In general, the idea of parallel and unified analysis is another good way to think of the structural difference between end and beginning-answer organizations. End-answer speeches parallel two parts. For example, "Point 1" will be devoted to only the problem aspect, and "Point 2" will concentrate only on the solution aspect. If "Point 1" sets up all the criteria, then "Point 2" will establish whether all that criteria is met. In short, the parallel structure used for an end-answer is patterned after the following general outline:

Point 1.
Problem A
Problem B
Problem C

Point 2.
Solution A
Solution B
Solution C

OR

Point 1.
Criteria A
Criteria B
Criteria C

Point 2.
Evaluation A
Evaluation B
Evaluation C

On the other hand, beginning-answer speeches unify, rather than parallel the points. Instead of discussing all of the problems first and then all of the solutions second, you would take one aspect at a time of the overall problem and explain what aspect of the overall solution will resolve it. Rather than setting all the criteria first and then evaluating all of them second, you would state just one of the criteria and immediately assess whether it is viable. Then you would move on to the next pair of criteria-evaluation and so forth. In short, the unified structure used for a beginning-answer structure is patterned after the following general outline:

Point 1.
Problem A
Solution A

Point 2.
Problem B
Solution B
Point 3
.
Problem C
Solution C

OR

Point 1.
Criteria A
Evaluation A

Point 2.
Criteria B
Evaluation B

Point 3.
Criteria C
Evaluation C

A Pro/Con Speech

This type of speech employs a unique format which some extempers like to use—but which is highly risky because it tends to come across as wishy-washy; it tends to leave the judge unsure what exactly the extemper's answer to the question really was, and this violates the cardinal sin of extemp—never leave the judge wondering what your answer was.

Basically, it involves detailing **both** sides of an argument before offering an answer to the question. For example, ***"Should the federal government raise the minimum wage?"*** Your first point would be the arguments for raising it, and your second point would be the arguments against raising it. Then in the third point, you would take one side and explain why you chose that position over the other one.

I recommend **against** this type of speech for two reasons. First, because you must devote time to explaining both sides, it reduces the strength of any one position. Second, you run a greater risk of having a judge find the alternative position more persuasive than the side you decide to choose. **Therefore, if you are going to use this format, make sure that in your answer, you refute each and every argument for the alternative side.**

Rule: In a pro/con speech, it is vital that you give the specific reasons why one consideration outweighs another.

Preempting

As we said earlier, a pro/con format is time consuming and may still be unconvincing. What I would use instead is a similar, yet less risky tactic called preempting. Preempting is the art of predicting what an opposing side would say and immediately asserting that the argument is untrue or lacks priority. For example, if your were trying to justify a "yes" response to the question – ***"Should the federal government raise the minimum wage?"*** – you could offer the following preemption:
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"Granted, critics argue that raising the minimum wage will increase unemployment, but that cannot be our foremost concern. Otherwise, we would never raise the minimum wage. There is an overriding moral imperative which requires that our earnings keep pace with the cost of living."

The key to preempting is not to spend an entire point, as in a pro/con speech, explaining the opposition's views; rather focus on the strength of your own position.

Summary of the Main Body

Throughout this chapter, we have detailed several technical ways to structure a speech, some of which may have been complicated and confusing. However, do not feel as if you have to follow the formats outlined in this text to the letter. The ones we have discussed need only be used as guidelines. In fact, the only rule you must remember is also the simplest rule.

> Rule: Organize the main body logically. Structure the speech in a way most people think about the topic. **And above all: answer the question; do not leave doubt in the minds of judges as to what your main points were and what answer they were supporting.**

Eventually, you will probably develop a certain format that you prefer, and you will try to fit most speeches into that outline. That is perfectly acceptable, however, sometimes, you will need to tailor your organization to a particular question.

> Rule: Do not hesitate to change your organization if it will add clarity to your speech.

Chapter 10
Conclusions

The basic purpose of the conclusion is to summarize the speech. This may seem like a simple task, but in reality, it is not that easy. Many extempers make the mistake of not practicing their conclusions because they believe that anyone can summarize. Consequently, they stumble through the last minute of their speech. This may not seem too costly – one bad minute out of seven; but keep in mind that your conclusion provides the last impression judges will have of you.

> Rule: A bad conclusion will hurt your ranking even if the rest of your speech was stellar. Therefore, plan ahead of time what you are going to say in the conclusion.

Guidelines for Conclusions

1. Refer to your points as a whole. As we said earlier, your essential objective is to summarize your speech, but stylistically, do not describe your speech point by point. That will disrupt the fluidity of your conclusion, and it will seem as if you are unable to look at the "big picture." For example, here are 2 conclusions for the question on the environment which we discussed in the previous chapter on the main body: Fragmented conclusion: “So when we ask ourselves the question – 'How can the federal government clean up the environment?' – remember that my first point was to unify the EPA; my second point was to increase penalties; and my third point was to improve landfills ....”

> **Unifying conclusion**: “So looking at the entire situation, we can indeed conclude that the dangers of pollution are very real. In order to alleviate the problem, the EPA must provide central direction, stricter enforcement of laws, and technologically improved methods of disposal. Only if all 3 of these goals are achieved can America make significant gains toward preserving its environment ....” Technically, there is nothing wrong with the first conclusion, but referring to the issues only as individual points might prevent the audience from thinking of how the points relate to each other. The second conclusion does a better job of tying the answer together.

2. **Be brief**. Do not reiterate overly-specific details from the main points. Here are 2 conclusions for the question on minorities which we also discussed in the previous chapter on the main body:

> **Poor conclusion**: “So when we ask ourselves the question – ***'What does the future hold for minorities?'*** – we can clearly see brightness and potential due to the increased representation of minorities by 20% in politics, led by the first black governor of Virginia; 30% in the work force due to over 300 affirmative action programs; and 50% in education stemming from the 1982 changes in

> standardized testing which have reduced cultural biases ....”
>
> **Better conclusion**: “So when we look at what is in store for minorities, we can see a bright future filled with potential. Due to shifts in legislation and social attitudes, we have seen gains in politics, the work force, and education. Moreover, current trends point to even further progress ....”

In the first example, too much time is spent rehashing the same evidence used in the main body. Consequently, the conclusion is too long and seems more like a minispeech
than a general summary.

3. **Refer back to you introduction**. When concluding, you want to create the effect of rounding out your speech--making it complete. Do this by alluding to your opening and showing how your answer affirms the point you made in the introduction. For example:

> ***"Should the US adopt a mandatory national service program?"*** Suppose that for this question, your answer was "yes," and in your introduction, you had used John F. Kennedy's quote – "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." Here is a possible conclusion which refers back to the introduction:
>
> “So when we ask the question – ***'Should the US adopt a mandatory national service program?'*** – clearly the answer must be 'yes' because there is a need for civil servants in numerous social programs, and our moral community would be strengthened. Indeed it is important that our country listen to the wise words of John F. Kennedy and – 'Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.' The sooner we heed his advice, the sooner we will be able to help the less fortunate.”

4. **End with an engaging thought**. For more experienced extempers, you will seem very polished if your last sentence is a quote, adage with a twist, simple comment, or anything that will inspire your audience to think or take action. For example, to the above conclusion on national service, you might add these words as a finishing touch.

> “... The sooner we heed his advice, the sooner we will be able to help the less fortunate. We are often told to 'give until it hurts.' A teacher once told me otherwise – 'give until it feels good.'”

This technique is just "extra frosting on the cake," so do not focus on it until you feel comfortable with the other aspects of extemp.

Chapter 11
Strategies for Answers

Here are some suggestions to consider when formulating answers:

1. **Take a definite position**. The most basic type of answer belongs to those questions which call for simple "yes" or "no" responses. Whenever you get such a question, just answer *"yes"* or *"no"* and then give your audience the reasons **why** you responded in such a way. Do **NOT** give answers such as *"maybe," "perhaps,"* and *"possibly."* Often times, judges will consider "middle of the road" answers to be no more than "cop out" responses.

> Rule: It is better to take a definite, well-supported position than a wavering, indecisive stance.

2. **Do not oversimplify the answer**. Taking a definite stance does not mean that you can oversimplify the situation. Do not be afraid to admit the difficulty and complexity of solving a problem. Nonetheless, explain to your audience that difficulty does not excuse letting the predicament go unsolved.

3. **Come up with a coherent theme**. As we said earlier, some questions will require you to analyze different areas such as politics, society, and the economy, or labor, medicine, and education. However, when you scrutinize different realms, try to find a unifying link among them. For example, recall the question we discussed earlier –

> ***"What does the future hold for minorities?"*** For this topic, we looked at politics, labor, and education, and a common theme that we cited was a bright future for minorities in all these spheres.

Keep in mind that the theme does not have to be fancy or profound. Its primary purpose is to point the audience in one direction. A speech that says minorities have potential in all three areas would be smoother, more cohesive, and easier to understand than one that predicted no success in politics, great prosperity in the work force, but only some opportunity in education. An audience will appreciate being able to associate an underlying theme with your answer.

4. **Do not negate the question**. Negating the question involves contending that the question rests on a false assumption. For example, the question – ***"How can the US win the war on drugs?"*** – rests on the assumption that we, in fact, can win the war on drugs. The question leaves it up to you to specify the necessary measures. However, if you wanted to negate the question in your speech rather than detail those measures, you would tell the audience that we cannot win the war on drugs. In the remainder of your speech, you would then focus on why we cannot prevail.

I advise **against** negating the question simply because it violates the spirit of extemp's fundamental requirement:

THE GOLDEN RULE OF EXTEMP: ANSWER THE QUESTION!!!

No matter how good you sound or appear, your paramount concern should always be to answer the question. Even if you give good reasons why the question is based on a false assumption, some judges may, nevertheless, down-rank you. Therefore, if you think the premise of a question is wrong, choose another one to answer.
Let us now turn our attention to answers for two special types of questions:
absolute and value questions.

Absolute Questions

Sometimes you will be asked to make an absolute judgement. For example, ***"Will America ever eliminate its budget deficit?" "Is there any hope for AIDS patients?"*** For these types of questions, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to take a definite 'yes' or 'no' stance unless you have nearly irrefutable evidence. Regardless of its current size, how can anyone say that we will never eliminate our budget deficit?
One strategy to make the burden of proof less absolute is to offer a **qualified** response. Basically, this entails answering either 'yes' or 'no' followed by the **conditions under which your answer would be true**. Here are 2 examples of qualified answers:

> "... yes, America will reduce its budget deficit if and only if we raise taxes and eliminate porkbarrel expenditures ...."

AND

> "... no, there is no hope for AIDS patients unless we increase funding for medical research and insurance companies become more sympathetic to victims ...."

Rule: I advise against pic fied response might be useful.

Value Questions

Sometimes a question may ask you to make a value judgement. For example, ***"Should euthanasia be allowed?"*** These kinds of questions are rare in extemp, but occasionally, you may come across one. Should you encounter one, **stay away from it**.

Rule: Avoid value questions. They are too controversial.

However, if for some reason you must choose one, here are a few suggestions:

1. **Stress that the topic is controversial and that the judge may certainly disagree with your opinion**. Tell the audience that different positions on the issue are understandable and should even be expected. Making the judge conscious of personal biases may reduce the chances of him or her penalizing you for those biases.

2. **Cite outside authorities as the basis for your answer**. This will make you seem like less of a "bad guy." For example, for the question – ***"Should women have the right to an abortion?"*** – you could respond, "... according to the Supreme Court, the answer is yes." You could then go on to explain the basis for the High Court's ruling.

3. **Stress the need for reason over emotion**. For example, ***"Should animal testing be allowed?"*** You might answer 'yes' and offer the following explanation: "... granted, it would be wonderful if we did not have to test animals, but unfortunately, human safety dictates otherwise. As a lesser of 2 evils, some animals must be subject to controlled experiments to further medical science. This is a fact we need to accept unless the nature of medical science changes."

4. **Overall, seem very tempered and understanding**. Acting as if you are unquestionably and unsympathetically right is suicidal.

Chapter 12
Evidence

In extemporaneous speaking, you must not only be able to form a position on an issue, you must also be able to support that position with evidence. This evidence will generally take three forms: examples, quotations, and statistics.

Examples

It is especially good to incorporate examples into your speech because concrete illustrations will help your audience understand your point. Furthermore, examples can be emotionally more powerful and compelling than abstract statistics. For instance, if you wanted to cite the problem of gang warfare, you might use the following example: Six year old Mary Thompson was happily tossing a ball around in her yard when it bounced across the street. As she went to retrieve the ball, a crossfire erupted between two rival gangs. Paralyzed with fear, Mary could only stand there until a bullet hit her in the head and killed her.

> Rule: Examples can be emotionally charged and enhance a speech, however, they should rarely be used by themselves.

In fact, the number of examples in a speech should generally total no more than five. The purpose of evidence is to **prove** a point; this can seldom be done convincingly by presenting only a few examples. Therefore, it is a good idea to use statistics to show how **representative** the example is. Looking back at the above example, you should add the following qualification:

> ... until a bullet hit her in the head and killed her. Unfortunately, Mary Thompson is not the only victim of gang warfare in America. In fact, over 5,000 innocent bystanders die per year at the hands of gang violence.

With the latter statistic, your audience is much more likely to realize the significant harms of gang violence.

Finally, examples are also good to highlight novel solutions, situations, programs, and so forth. Let us say that you had to offer a solution to air pollution, and you had read an article about the effectiveness of California's alternative fuel requirements for automobiles. You could then offer California's plan as a blueprint that the rest of the country should follow. The only thing left to consider is how representative the example is. At first, this may seem difficult. You cannot use statistics, as in the Mary Thompson example, about other similar policies which have worked because California has the only such requirements. After all, that is why you are offering it as a model solution. How then can you enhance the credibility of your proposition?

Instead of statistics, use a quote by an authority, such as an EPA official, to affirm your belief in California's plan.

> Rule: Quotes, like statistics, can be used in conjunction with examples to help prove a point.

Quotations

Here are some suggestions for how to choose quotes:

1. **Make sure that the quote is taken from an authority fi**gure. That will make your speech more persuasive.

2. **Choose short concise quotes**. They are easier to follow and generally more powerful than long quotes. In fact, do not hesitate to quote KEY PHRASES rather than entire sentences if the quote is lengthy.

3. **Choose quotes that are colorful and vivid**. Quotes that are dry and commonplace will appear useless. If that is the case, you would be better off describing matters in your own words.

4. **Do not use too many quotes**. Excluding those you may use in the introduction and conclusion, you should rarely use more than five quotes. If you quote too much, the quotes will lose their impact and can even hurt your speech.

> Rule: The primary purpose of a quote should be to affirm your points, not to take the place of your explanations. Therefore, be selective.

Statistics

Statistics are the best way to substantiate your points.

> Rule: Use statistics almost every time you make an assertion.

Whenever you say something is a "significant problem," you must tell your audience **how significant** it is. Otherwise your audience will have no reason to believe you. On the other hand, do not just rattle off statistic after statistic. Some extempers, in their quest to impress an audience, make the mistake of spewing out a number every five seconds throughout their speech. Rather than appear knowledgeable, however, they merely confuse their judges.

> Rule: Citing a huge quantity of statistics is useless if your audience does not understand them. Therefore, make sure that your audience knowsexactly what the statistic represents.

For example, if your topic is inflation, do not just say, ***"The CPI rose 2% in March. Therefore, we must make sure that the economy does not overheat."*** You need to also clarify **what** the Consumer Price Index is and **how** its increase serves as an indicator of inflation. If you include these types of explanations for the data, you will find that you generally have time to cite 10-15 statistics.

Finally, whenever possible, try to offer statistics from a perspective that the audience can relate to. For example, if you offer Argentina's 4000% inflation rate as an indicator of its economic woes, it would be beneficial to tell the judge that a 4000% inflation rate translates into an 11% increase in prices **every day**. (That is a real incentive to get your Christmas shopping done early.) Explaining the situation in this way helps the audience to understand how significant the problem really is.

How to Cite Sources

Judges can be picky about how to cite sources or even whether you should cite them at all. Some insist on citing sources down to the specific page of a publication, while others feel that constantly citing sources disrupts the flow of the speech. In general, this is what I have found will suit most judges preferences.

Cite the source for every piece of evidence you give. Stylistically, it is usually better to cite the source **before** you give the piece of evidence in order to focus your audience's attention. In the citation, you generally do not need to include the author, year (hopefully, your sources will be no more than one year old) or page number. Instead, always include the name of the publication and an abbreviated date. The date you give can be general or specific, depending on a few factors.

For both weekly and daily sources:

1. **If the issue is over one month old, then just say the month**.

   Example: *According to a March issue of Time ...*

2. **If the issue is between 2 and 4 weeks old, include the day of the month as well**.

   Example: *An April 21st issue of Time indicates that ...*

For only weekly sources:

If the issue is only a week old, refer to it as "this week's issue."
Example: *This past week's issue of Time reports that ...*

For only daily sources:

If the issue is no more than one week old, cite the day of the week.

Example: *This past Tuesday's edition of the Wall Street Journal informs us that ...*

Citing Alternative Sources

If within the publication an article gives the original source of the data, cite it, especially if it was a special study or experiment conducted. Additionally, citing authors with notable credentials will make your speech more persuasive. Also, if you are using a book, just cite the author's name and the title of the book. Copyright dates, chapter and page numbers are unnecessary. In general, citing alternative sources is a good way to add credibility and variety to your speech.

Chapter 13
Timing

Procedural Notes

At most tournaments, either a judge or member of the audience will give time signals so that the speaker can divide his or her time accordingly. Generally, these time signals are given by holding up flashcards or fingers. Make sure that you know who the timekeeper is before you begin speaking and what signals he or she will use.

Overtime

The overtime rule varies at different tournaments. There is usually no official "grace period," and generally, it is left up to the "judge's discretion" to penalize speakers who go overtime. Normally, going overtime by ten seconds or less is acceptable, **but you can still be penalized**. In fact, some extempers have lost tournaments because they exceeded the time limit. Therefore, make it a point to end your speech before the time limit expires.

> Rule: Do not go overtime. Play it safe. Do not run the risk of getting penalized.

How to Divide Your Time

Up to this point, we have talked a lot about the different elements of a speech and the content that should be included in each section. But how much time should be spent on each part? After all, the time limit for the entire speech is 7 minutes. In light of this, we shall now break down the different parts of a speech and list where you should be in a speech at a certain time.

1. **Introduction**: Your opening through the statement of the question should take about 30-45 seconds to complete.

2. **Thesis statement**: Your thesis statement should take another 15-30 seconds, taking you to the 1 minute-1 minute 15 second mark.

3. **Main body**: The main body should take about 5 or 6 minutes, taking you to the 6 minute 15 second-6 minute 30 second mark.

Keep in mind, however, that the time you spend on each point within the main body will not necessarily be 5 or 6 minutes divided by the number of points you have. In other words, the time you spend on each point will rarely be equal.

> Rule: The time you devote to each point will depend on its importance and what analysis is called for by the question.

For example, ***"How can the federal government reduce prison overcrowding?"***

The focus of this question is the solution to a problem, not the problem itself. Therefore, you should spend most of your time on the steps of a solution. More specifically, let us say that you decided to answer this question using the endanswer, problem solution format. Your points might be as follows: 1) the significance of prison overcrowding, 2) the harms of overcrowding, and 3) a solution. In this scenario, because the question asks – ***"How can the federal government reduce prison overcrowding?"*** – rather than – ***"Is prison overcrowding a problem which requires our immediate attention?"*** – you should spend only about 2 minutes total on the problem in points 1 & 2 and about 3 or 4 minutes on the solution in point 3.

> Rule: Pay close attention to the emphasis of the question and devote an appropriate amount of time to each point.

4. **Conclusion**: Allow yourself about 20-30 seconds for the conclusion, and you should finish within the seven minute limit.

What is a Good Time?

Although there is technically no time minimum, beginning extempers should try to speak for at least 5 minutes. Generally, a speech that ends between 6 minutes and 6 minutes 30 seconds is considered a good time; a speech that is between 6 minutes 30 seconds and 7 minutes long is considered ideal.

However, time is NOT so important that you should keep speaking just for the sake of increasing your time. In fact, rambling and unnecessarily repeating yourself will **hurt** your rating.

> Rule: If you are over the 5 minute mark and have nothing else to say, it is better to end than to just ramble on or repeat yourself.

Part IV
Presentation

Chapter 14
Delivery

Up to this point, we have only discussed the first major aspect of extemp – the creation of a speech; now we must turn our attention to the other major component – the presentation of a speech. Unfortunately, there is only so much that can be conveyed about delivery through a text without personal demonstrations. However, I will do my best to cover the key elements of delivery. Here are a few suggestions:

Fluency

1. **Know your topic**. One of the biggest misconceptions about extemp is that content and delivery are exclusive of each other. That is not the case. If you are familiar with a subject, you will have an easier time explaining it smoothly.

2. **Be aware of "ums."** To say "um" in conversation is natural, but do not let it carry over into your speeches. The only way to stop this problem is for you, throughout the speech, to make a conscious effort to avoid saying it.

3. **Slow down**. Do not be afraid to pause. If you find yourself breaking the flow of your speech, check your pace. It might help to speak more slowly. Doing so will also reduce your inclination to say "um." Furthermore, slowing down can be an effective way to emphasize key points.

4. **Do not use difficult vocabulary words if you find yourself stumbling over them**.

5. **Plan your transition statements**. Learn to relate previous points in your speech to the new issue at hand. For example, an effective transition from the problem to the solution section of a speech might be as follows:

> "... Now that we have a firm understanding of the health hazards caused by environmental pollution, it is time that we explore possible measures to alleviate this crisis ...."

6. **Do impromptu speeches**. They will help you to speak fluently while thinking quickly on your feet.

7. **Practice**. A smooth delivery will not come with the snap of fingers. You must work at it.

Gestures/Movements

1. **Make sure that your gestures are natural**. Using a videotape or mirror, check to see that your gestures fall within the "gesture zone." (This is an imaginary zone marked off by a line across the navel and a line a couple of inches below the shoulders.)
Generally, motions which exceed this zone will seem awkward or rigid.

2. **Do not overuse one hand to gesture**. Many extempers have the tendency to favor one hand. Avoid falling into this habit.

3. **Do not hesitate to leave your hands at your side**. I know it feels very strange to leave your hands at your side, but you'd be surprised at how natural the position looks (see for yourself on videotape). If you are going to gesture, do it deliberately and with a purpose. Otherwise, keep your hands at your side.

4. **Do not pace**. Taking a few steps to enhance transitions **between** your points should be sufficient movement.

5. **Do not sway**. Shifting your weight and/or fidgeting can be a huge distraction to the audience.

Style/Tone

1. **Tailor the tone of a speech to fit the topic**. Some subjects, such as politics, are conducive to humor. Others, such as racism, demand more seriousness.

2. **Do not be afraid to use humor where appropriate**. Although extemp is considered a more serious event, good witty humor dispersed between facts and figures is always appreciated by an audience. (Do not be intimidated by judges who do not laugh hysterically at your jokes. Many times, they appreciate the humor, even if they do not show it.)

However, there are **3 cautions** about the use of humor. First, never direct humor directly at someone, even if you know them. Second, do not use inside jokes unless they are accessible to the entire audience. Third, do not include humor at the expense of content. (Remember the golden rule of extemp.)

3. **Do not talk at people**. Communicate with the audience. This will allow you to take notice of your audience's reactions and adjust accordingly. For example, if a judge seems confused, then explain your point in another manner.

4. **Employ an overall style that fits your personality**. You may choose to be lighthearted, more conservative, and so forth. Experiment with different styles and take notice of your audience's reactions. Which styles help you to establish good rapport with your audience? Ultimately, your choice of style should be the one with which you feel most comfortable.

Part V
Additional Advice

Chapter 15
Preparation Time

Some say that the 30 minute prep time is the most nerve-wrecking period in extemp. While occasionally it may be a nail-biting experience, there is no reason to feel intimidated, especially if you are prepared.

How to Assimilate a Speech During Prep Time

The first thing to do after choosing a question is to figure out exactly what the question is calling for and possible angles for an answer. (Note that if you are versed on current events then you should be able to come up with an approach to the topic **before** consulting your file.)

Once you have a handle on the question, the next step is to pull all relevant information from your file. Scan the articles for evidence to support your points. Jot down in outline form any main points, statistics, quotes, and so forth. Make sure that you outline only key ideas. Do **not** spend time writing out your speech. Leave the actual wording of sentences for when you rehearse the speech. Otherwise, you will run out of time. In fact, come with up with symbols and abbreviations which will reduce the amount you have to write. After taking notes for the main body of the speech, jot down any information, such as quotations, for your introduction and conclusion that you might have trouble remembering.

A typical outline might look like this:

"How can American education be improved?"

I. **Intro**: "Ed. is the greatest gift..." – Cicero
II. **Body**
A) Prob. w/ ed.
• US drop to 20th in math and sci. (June-Time)
• SAT's down 96 pts. (Apr.-Newsweek)
• avg. Jap. student > top 5% US stud. (Sat.-WSJ)
B) Answer
1. up teacher $: pay down 7% vs. inflation = no devotion (June-US News)
2. stress think > rote learning: Hawaii experiment show 15% better scores
3. mand. competence tests for grad.: 22% grads. illiterate (Wed.-USA Today)
III. **Conclusion**: "Ed. is our future..." --Dr. Bell, Prof., Detroit U.

Notice how this outline is composed of phrases and symbols. In fact, you probably cannot even understand my abbreviations and notations. This is to be expected. Your goal when forming an outline should be to write only the information **you** need to understand the main points and any evidence.

Rule: During prep time, your outline should serve only as a quick reference for key information. It should not be used as a manuscript of your entire speech.

Rehearsing Your Speech

During the rehearsal, concentrate first on memorizing the facts, quotes, and general evidence. In your remaining time, find a corner in the prep room where you can actually practice delivering the speech. As you leave the prep room on the way to your round, continue to rehearse the major points of your speech.

When rehearsing your speech during prep time, **do not feel as if you need to memorize it word for word**. **Above all: do NOT try to run through your speech word-for-word. You will then have a conception in your head of what your speech**

should sound like and, when you get into the actual performance, you will stumble and flub as you try to match that original, seemingly perfect practice run. Instead, practice in parts at most. (After all, your outline shouldn't contain every word of your speech.) Instead, **concentrate on memorizing evidence and key phrases** – you will become more skilled at "extemporaneously" filling in the "gaps" of your speech with practice. Learn to use key acronyms as mnemonic devices which will help you to recall different parts of your speech. In fact, for each point in your speech, you should assign a "cue" word(s). With a little practice, this strategy will help you to remember the contents of your speech.

How to Divide Prep Time

First, make sure that you are prompt. However late you arrive at the prep room will cost you that much of your prep time. When you are told that it is your turn to choose a question, immediately proceed to pull your 3 questions. Allow yourself a full minute, if necessary, to decide which question you could do best. After choosing, begin your preparation. How you divide your prep time will depend on which of the following 2 categories you fall under:

If You Know Your Topic

Basically, if the topic of your question is one that you are familiar with, you can spend more time rehearsing than researching your speech. For the first 10 minutes, consult your file and assimilate your speech. By the 10 minute mark, you should begin rehearsing the speech. That will leave you about 20 minutes to run through the speech 2 or 3 times.

If You Do Not Know Your Topic

Ideally, you will never fall under this category. Hopefully, you will be prepared on at least one of the 3 questions you pull. However, if all 3 questions stump you, the most important thing to remember is **not to panic**.

> Rule: When faced with an unfamiliar topic, you will work much more effectively with a calm and clear head.

First, choose the question on which you have the best file, even if you are unfamiliar with the actual information in that file. For the first 5 minutes, skim your file and try to get an angle on the question. Then allow yourself the next 10-12 minutes to outline the speech and assemble the evidence. Your goal should be to leave at least 12 minutes to memorize the facts and rehearse your speech.

Chapter 16
Practice Pointers

1. **Give speeches regularly**. The best way to improve is to give speeches on as many topics as possible as if you were in an actual tournament round.

> Rule: The best extempers are always the ones who practice the most. Preparation wins, not natural speaking ability.

2. **Do not focus on topics which you know**. Do speeches on questions with which you are unfamiliar so you become familiar with them – even if it makes practices more difficult.

3. **Speak in front of your coach and an audience**, if one is available. You want as much feedback as possible.

4. **Avoid "crutch" phrases**. Most extempers will fall into the habit of always repeating certain phrases such as *"we can see that"* or *"moving on."* Ask someone to count how many
times you use similar phrases and make a conscious effort to stop saying them.

5. **Be aware of sounding "robotic."** Some extempers give so many speeches that, despite their fluency, they begin to sound detached and unenthusiastic. No matter how many times you have done a speech, you must always seem "in-tuned" and "fresh."

6. **Speak despite distractions**. Expect distractions at tournaments, such as noise outside the room, door slamming or person coughing, while you are speaking. Therefore, ask someone to try and distract you during practice speeches to help improve your focus.

Rule: A good speech should never depend on ideal speaking conditions.

7. **Do not discuss topics with people BEFORE you do speeches on those subjects**. Otherwise, your speech may tend to be no more than a reiteration of others' views. Force yourself to come up with your own analysis first, and then discuss the issues with other people.

8. **Use videotapes, audio cassettes, and/or mirrors for self- critiquing**.

9. **Watch other speakers**, especially videotaped performances of the National Tournament. Do not mimic other people, but you can learn a lot from others and incorporate several of their techniques into your own style.

10. **Keep the outlines of all your speeches**. While you cannot use them in the prep room, they are a good source of review before and after tournaments.

11. **Study your file**. During the week of a tournament, if you are unable to give practice speeches on some topics of current significance, you should at least study the files on those subjects.

12. **Do not dwell on bad speeches**. You will often give bad speeches in practice, but do not think of them as an indicator of your tournament performance. Remember, in practice, your priority is to do speeches on unfamiliar topics. Therefore, you should expect to give weaker presentations, especially if you are speaking on a topic for the first time. But ultimately, this will prepare you for tournaments.

Chapter 17
Tournament Tips

1. **Dress appropriately**. Ask you coach about appropriate attire.

2. **Remember to bring your file**. Believe it or not, some people actually forget their evidence.

3. **Be at the tournament early enough to set up your file in the prep room**.

4. **Do practice speeches in the morning before your rounds begin**. They will help you to warm up.

5. Before speaking, **make sure your voice is clear**. Drink water and clear your throat before going to the round.

6. **Practice while you wait for the previous speaker to finish**. Sometimes, a round will run late, and you may have to wait for your turn. In that case, wait outside the room and rehearse your speech.

7. When it is your turn to speak, go into the room. **Be wary of the impression you convey.**

> Rule: From the moment you enter the room, you are being evaluated.

You always want to appear poised and confident, even before you begin speaking.

8. **Write your question on the board** (if there is one).

9. **Give the judge(s) your topic slip**.

10. **Wait until the judge is done writing your topic down**. In the meantime, just quietly stand in the front of the room. Do NOT pace or fidget – you don't want to appear nervous (even though you are).

11. **When the judge directs his or her attention to you, make sure (ask the judge if necessary) that he or she is ready for you to begin**.

12. **Make sure that you know who the timekeeper is** (if there is one).

13. **Take a few moments to collect your thoughts (do not put your head down) and begin**.

14. **Always be courteous to the judge**. Make the judge want to give you first place.

15. **Always be courteous to other competitors**. If you stay to watch other speakers after your performance, remain attentive. You will leave a bad impression with the judge if you show a lack of respect to others. (Remember Rule #7)

16. **Do not dwell on bad speeches**. Focus on the next round.

> Rule: Even the best extempers have an off round. But one sub-par speech should not affect the rest of your tournament.

17. Above all, **enjoy yourself**. Tournaments are a great time to meet people, so be sociable and have fun.

Chapter 18
A Final Word

Extemporaneous speaking is **not** as hard as it may first appear. Initially, the event will be difficult. Putting a file together and learning how to analyze topics can be overwhelming. But if you stick with it, things will become much easier. The key is patience; eventually, you will develop a certain style and format and all that remains is plugging in new information.

Extemp is an educational, very practical category. Knowledge about current events and learning to speak on your feet are extremely useful skills. Also, your ability to assimilate, analyze, and comprehend large quantities of information in short periods of time will improve dramatically. In short, extemp will help you in many ways outside of competitive forensics.

Ultimately, the choice is yours. Some enjoy extemp because of the variety of topics; others feel the category is mundane. If you are up to the challenge, I suggest you give it a try. It can be a very rewarding experience.

