



Ice Breaker

Level 1 Project



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Item 8101 Rev. 12/2023

Ice Breaker

About Ice Breaker

You may have participated in an ice breaker activity at an event sometime in your life. These activities are designed to help people connect and get to know one another. Your Ice Breaker speech fulfills the same purpose.

The Ice Breaker marks the beginning of your new Toastmasters path. It is your opportunity to introduce yourself to the group and share something about yourself. You may choose to share anything, from the reason you chose this particular path to something personal about your life.

About Project Resources

This project includes 3 resources. You can print your project, view and print the evaluation resources, or review the tools provided to support the successful completion of your assignment.

Every project in Pathways includes resources that are always found in the first section. Watch for references as you work through your learning.

An interactive version of the Project Checklist can also be found in the Complete Your Assignment section of each project. An interactive digital speech evaluation form is available on Base Camp for your convenience as well as that of your evaluator. You will find a tool to send a link to both the digital and downloadable and printable versions of the evaluation form for your speech directly from the Complete Your Project section in every project.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Ice Breaker Speech Outline Worksheet

Evaluation Resource

Part 1: Get Started

In Part 1, you will find an introduction to the project, your assignment, an activity to assess your current skills, and the project competencies. Review each section below for more information.

Introduction

In this section, you will find a discussion about how a Toastmaster's journey begins—either as a new adventure for a member who just joined their first club or a fresh start for a member embarking on a new path.

Know-Wonder-Learned

This activity will help you think about what you know about public speaking and communication. Be sure to respond to every statement. There are nine in the Ice Breaker project.

Find Support

As you work through your Ice Breaker, you may have questions. Your club is likely full of members who have completed at least one Ice Breaker project and speech.

Consider contacting your Vice President Education or other club officer.

- To learn how to post a message for a member of your club on Base Camp, visit the Feedback page and use the buttons available under Member Feedback.

Remember, every member of your club supports your success.

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

This is your opportunity to share something about yourself with people you do not know well, or in the case of Toastmasters who are delivering an Ice Breaker speech again, to share something new with old friends.

The Ice Breaker speech is 4 to 6 minutes in length and the first one that all Toastmasters present to their clubs. It is also the speech Toastmasters deliver when they embark on a new path.

As you work through this project, you will begin to recognize skills you already have, build upon those skills to foster confidence, and identify areas you can improve to help you reach your goals.

You will learn to distinguish the basic elements of speech structure and learn about rehearsal techniques that will help you balance preparation and spontaneity.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to introduce yourself to the club and learn the basic structure of a public speech.

Overview: Write and deliver a speech about any topic to introduce yourself to your club. Your speech may be humorous, informational, or any other style that appeals to you.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist.

Learning in the Ice Breaker



Assess and Reflect

To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know my strengths as a communicator.

Wonder

For example: I wonder about the structure of a basic speech.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Recognize the elements of a basic speech structure.
- Balance preparation and spontaneity when delivering your speech.
- Acknowledge the value of peer feedback.
- Develop the skills needed to accept feedback graciously.
- Identify feedback to apply to subsequent speeches.

Part 2: The Ice Breaker Speech

In Part 2, you will find information about meeting your goals with Toastmasters, along with tools for planning and preparing your speech. Review each section below for more information.



The Value of the Ice Breaker

Members of Toastmasters have been completing Ice Breaker speeches for nearly a century. There is something special about that very first speech or the beginning of a new path. Part 2 starts with a video of members sharing their experience.

Planning Your Speech

Part 2 will provide support for writing and delivering your speech. You will find an outline for the speech and tips for how to practice.

Looking Ahead

Remember that you can always look ahead to other projects, such as Researching and Presenting in the electives at Level 3, to access more information on your Ice Breaker speech development and delivery.

You and Your Goals

Remembering the Ice Breaker

The Ice Breaker is your first opportunity to share something about yourself and your goals with other members of your club. You may want to include the following information in your speech to help club members get to know you:



Watch a video on Base Camp to learn more.

- The reason you joined Toastmasters (if a person or incident influenced you to join, share that story)
- Your previous experiences with public speaking, communication, and leadership
- Important moments or accomplishments in your life
- Your communication and leadership goals



You may choose to use the Ice Breaker Speech Outline Worksheet to help you collect and develop your thoughts. A clear, thorough outline will assist you in successfully crafting your speech and delivering it within the allotted time.

Organize Your Speech

Your Ice Breaker is a story about you. The four elements of a good story are:

- Interesting topic
- Opening
- Body
- Conclusion

Give your speech an opening, body, and conclusion to effectively communicate your overall purpose.

Begin by introducing yourself. In the body of your speech, share information you would like your fellow members to know about you.

Conclude with a funny or interesting anecdote that relates to your reasons for joining Toastmasters.

If you have completed an Ice Breaker before, focus on your goals for your current path, the reason you selected this path, or what you learned in your last path that brought you here.

Prepare and Present

Write It Out

Once you create an outline, write your speech. It can be helpful to memorize the opening and conclusion and then rehearse everything else until you feel comfortable. Ideally, this combination of memorization and preparation will give your speech a natural and spontaneous feel.

Remember Your Outline

Create notecards or an outline with a few bullet points from your speech on one page. Organizing this way can make it easier to remember the main points of your speech so that you can refer to them when presenting to your club if you have the need. Remember, your goal is to prepare well enough that you are not tempted to read your speech word for word.

Connect With the Audience

Effective speaking requires you to look up from a written speech and connect with your audience. Your engagement and connection with audience members will increase the possibility of delivering a speech with impact.

Techniques for Practice

Before you give your Ice Breaker, set aside time for practice. There are many ways to practice. Below are a few examples. Choose a technique that works for you, or develop one of your own.

Rehearse With Friends or Family

Rehearse your speech in front of friends or family to get feedback. Listen to constructive feedback and implement productive comments that could possibly work for you.

Record Yourself

Record yourself giving the speech and watch the footage. Avoid being overly critical. Concentrate on constructive self-talk and changes you can make to improve.

Use a Mirror

Practice in front of a mirror. The feedback is immediate and you can make adjustments as you go.

Practice Sections

Divide your speech into sections. First, practice your opening. Then move on to the body of your speech, which will include the main points you want to cover. Finally, practice your conclusion. When you feel comfortable with each section, put them all together.

Time Yourself

While you practice, remember that your Ice Breaker is 4 to 6 minutes in length. Time yourself. If you are running too close to the time limit, make sure all of your points are relevant and on-topic. If you are running short, re-examine the content and elaborate on topics that are under-represented.

Timing

When you present your speech before the club, the timer will use a signal device or cards as you speak to keep you informed of how much of the allotted time remains.

Pacing

You will soon become aware of whether you speak faster or slower in front of an audience and can adjust your time accordingly.

Organization

Whether you end early, on time, or over your allotted time, use the experience to enhance your understanding of how to organize and time your speech.

Review

If timing was an issue (whether you took more or less than the allotted time to deliver your speech), review the reasons and be aware of why they occurred.

Learn

After your speech, take time to write down if you became nervous and lost your place, repeated a section, or had to pause for laughter. This is all part of the learning process.

Communicate With Your Evaluator

Talk with your evaluator before your speech and request feedback on any specific skills you want to develop. The more specific you are, the more useful information you will receive in response.

Be sure to complete the top portion of the Ice Breaker Evaluation resource so your evaluator has all the information they need to meet your goals and expectations. If you do not know who your evaluator will be, contact your Vice President Education for information.

Relax, Breathe, and Enjoy

Check your pacing as you begin. If nervousness or fear begins to get the better of you, stop, breathe, and relax. Your fellow Toastmasters want you to succeed and begin your journey in a positive way.



Watch a video on Base Camp to learn more.

Overcome Anxiety

Fear and anxiety are typical for first-time speakers. If you're feeling this way, review your goals and focus on your reasons for joining Toastmasters. Remind yourself that your club meeting is a safe, supportive environment established as a place to practice communication and leadership skills. In meetings, you are encouraged to try new things, learn from the evaluations you receive, and celebrate your successes.

Part 3: After Your Speech

In Part 3, you will review what happens after your speech, including the evaluation process and the steps you take to complete your assignment. Review each section below for more information.

Understanding Toastmasters Feedback

Part 3 will provide a basic overview of the way Toastmasters evaluations are designed, completed, and delivered to you and your fellow club members.

Be sure to review the evaluation resource and complete the sections that are for you and then send the resource to your club leadership or your designated evaluator before your speech. Reviewing and preparing your evaluation resource ahead of your speech will help you clarify your goals and set the expectations of your evaluator.

Accepting Feedback

Facing feedback can elicit stress in many people. Part 3 will walk you through strategies for hearing feedback after your first speech, suggestions for how to ask questions and get the information you need, and support for choosing and applying the feedback that is most helpful to you.

Learn More

There are a few excellent places to learn about Toastmasters evaluations. You are always encouraged to talk to your Vice President Education, mentor, or club leadership to understand the process and methods unique to your club.



Return to Base Camp and visit the Resources Page for additional information.

Understanding the Toastmasters Evaluation

Feedback for your first speech may come from multiple sources.

Verbal Evaluation

Your speech evaluator will deliver a verbal evaluation before the club meeting is finished. The verbal evaluation is in front of the club.

Written Evaluation

Your speech evaluator will also share a written evaluation with you after the club meeting.

Club Practices

Depending on the practice of your club, you may receive written evaluations from the other members as well. It may be helpful to save these evaluations for future reference.

Accepting Feedback

Accepting a constructive evaluation is an integral part of improving as a public speaker and leader.

Ask for Clarification

After the meeting, ask your evaluator questions to clarify anything you did not understand. Talk to your mentor to gain additional feedback you can use in future speeches.

Accepting feedback can be challenging. Be aware of your responses during your evaluator's speech to the club.

- Listen carefully to the evaluator.
- Look directly at the evaluator as they give their evaluation.
- Suspend all judgment or reaction to what you hear.
- Carefully consider each comment and suggestion for improvement.
- Take time after meeting with your evaluator to evaluate your efforts yourself.

Meet With Your Evaluator

At the close of the meeting, be sure to take time to meet with your evaluator.

Review Your Evaluation

Review your full written evaluation. If you are not able to meet directly after the meeting, set a time to talk as soon as possible.

Use Your Time Well

Take steps to make the most of your time with your evaluator.

Be Thoughtful

Ask for clarification on any points from the evaluator's verbal feedback. You may find, after review, that some comments become clearer and more helpful.

Engage

Give your evaluator your full attention.

Stay Positive

When you hear constructive feedback, realize that it is never meant to apply to who you are as a person. It is only intended to help you improve as a public speaker and leader.

Listen

Listen to the feedback without objection and ask any questions you may have.

Once you receive feedback, apply what you have learned. Each of us has a unique method for adopting new information and integrating it into our behaviors.

Consider converting the feedback into a list and comparing it to a new speech you are writing. Cross-reference the list with your speech as you incorporate the feedback. Any method that works for you is appropriate.

Keep your focus on improvement in your future speeches and projects.

Evaluating Yourself

When your speech is complete, take time to think about how well you did. Regardless of your feelings—relief, excitement, nervousness, or a combination of emotions—you deserve to be proud. Each new speech is a challenge and an accomplishment.

Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What are some strategies you can use to balance preparation and spontaneity when delivering your speech?
- List your strongest communication and leadership skills.
- What are the elements of a basic speech structure?
- How will you approach receiving a speech evaluation from a peer?
- What communication and leadership skills do you want to develop?
- How will you choose feedback to apply to your next speech?
- List your immediate goals for communication and leadership.

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

This project includes:

- A 4- to 6-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or download the printable version from your digital project on Base Camp to add more items.

Schedule your speech with the Vice President Education.

Write your speech.

Rehearse your speech.

Communicate with your evaluator about your goals for this speech. Be sure to share your most important concerns and ask any questions you have about the evaluation process.

Meet with your evaluator to review your evaluation.

Applying feedback is the most important step to improve public speaking skills. Create a plan for applying the feedback you received.

Choose one piece of feedback that is reasonable to apply to your next speech.

Share with your mentor, a friend, or your next evaluator the feedback you received that you plan to apply to your next speech.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Evaluation Criteria



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Part 4: Reflect on Your Learning

In Part 4, you will go through the steps to complete your project, including the Learned section of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Take Your Time

Once you complete your Ice Breaker speech, you may be ready to dive into the next project and schedule your next speech right away, or you may need time to reflect before moving on. Trust yourself and know that your Toastmasters journey is unique to you. Work at your pace and your comfort level.

Complete the Learned Section of Know-Wonder-Learned

The Know-Wonder-Learned activity in this section will help you think about what you know and what you have learned. It also serves another purpose. It will support you as you consider what you would like to learn next and how you can make the most of your Toastmasters learning and your time with your evaluators and fellow Toastmasters.

Complete Your Project

- Know-Wonder-Learned activity
- Careful review of the Ice Breaker project
- Deliver your Ice Breaker speech
- Receive your speech evaluation by a fellow club member

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned to recognize the skills I need to develop to improve my communication (listening, thinking, and speaking skills).

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all the material in this project.

Deliver Your Speech

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Ice Breaker project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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