

Story telling in Public Speaking: – Purpose

Stories reach people's hearts and minds.

Why? Brain scans reveal that stories stimulate and engage the human brain, helping the speaker connect with the audience and making it much more likely that the audience will agree with the speaker's point of view.

From Secret #2 Master the Art of Storytelling

Talk Like TED – The 9 Public Speaking Secrets of the World's Top Minds: Carmine Gallo. Publisher MacMillan 2014.

In Speech New Zealand syllabuses the skills involved in storytelling begin at Grade 2 level in both our Speech and Drama and Public Speaking syllabuses, and are found in our Oral Communication in Schools syllabus. The skills developed through the Learning Outcomes in each grade will lead to the ability to present a vivid, well-chosen 'story'.

In an effective story the topic is suited to the speaker, the audience and the occasion.

The speaker is totally involved in the moment of telling to connect with their audience.

- Their voice and speaking complement the story
- The structure enhances the story
- The use of imaginative and relevant language helps the speaker to create images for the audience
- There is often a balance between narrative, direct speech and description
- Gestures, and sometimes visual aids/props, are integrated into the telling.

Stories in Public Speaking can be used for a wide range of purposes:

- **To entertain:** Social talks – eg anecdotes (brief stories) about the person to whom a tribute is being paid.
- **To personalise the message:** Make the message relevant for listener: eg Bank teller – story re misuse of PIN number, or, tell a personal story or one against yourself.
- **To involve audience's emotions:** To persuade: eg real life story re a victim.
- **To give a contrasting style of speaking:** To relieve a long factual talk: eg story re a similar organisation.
- **To give evidence:** A story to support ideas instead of reasons or facts. eg story re a family using tuckshop once it stocked 'healthy' food.

See also resources SNZ for: **Storytelling : Techniques**

Storytelling : Tell a brief story to illustrate a point in a talk.