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## 2

# PUBLIC SPEAKING IN A CONNECTED WORLD

Inclusion, Ethics, and Critical Thinking

### UPON COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

- 2.1 Explain why cultural understanding enhances the effectiveness of speakers and audiences.
- 2.2 Discuss the importance of ethics, identifying ethical principles and guidelines relevant to public speaking.
- 2.3 Demonstrate the role critical thinking plays in public speaking, explaining its significance for speakers and audiences.

We've all been there. Speaking before members of other cultures, we inadvertently make a messaging mistake and end up miscommunicating. For example, what if you didn't know that in Brazil, raising your fist means a person's spouse is cheating, while putting your fist to your forehead indicates you think someone is stupid? In the United States, we interpret a raised fist as a power sign, while putting our fist to our forehead means we're thinking or have a headache. In the United States, raising two fingers and giving the V sign means victory or peace. In Australia, however, it is the equivalent of raising the middle finger in the United States, while in the United Kingdom, it's basically an invitation to fight. In the United States, the thumbs-up gesture signals "good job," but in Iran and Iraq it's one of the worst nonverbal insults you can make.<sup>1</sup> When cues like these cross cultures, they can be misinterpreted, becoming intercultural faux-pas. Should this happen to you, it's best to transform your miscommunication into a cultural lesson and learning opportunity.<sup>2</sup> For one thing, ask yourself what you erroneously assumed or failed to understand. Make the effort to discover what to say and/or how to gesture differently next time.

What do *cultural diversity* and *inclusion*, and *ethics* and *critical thinking* have to do with public speaking? Winning public speakers practice certain skills to reach diverse groups of receivers and to make each speaking engagement meaningful and respectful. Speakers who take cultural differences into account, demonstrating inclusivity and respect for diversity, develop messages with broad appeal. But it doesn't stop there. Ethics and critical thinking matter, too. Just as we expect athletes to play by certain rules and game referees to make fair calls, we expect speakers to make sound ethical choices—and to present their ideas, arguments, and information in a fair and balanced way. If a speaker is being unfair, we, the audience, then need to rely on our critical thinking skills to keep from being unknowingly manipulated. In this chapter, our goal is to help you become a culturally aware, ethical, and sound thinker—equipped with assets you can use not only on your campus but also well beyond it, including at work and in your community.

### RESPECT DIFFERENT CULTURES

- 2.1 *Explain why cultural understanding enhances the effectiveness of speakers and audiences.*

Public speakers need to prepare to speak before diverse audiences.<sup>3</sup> **Cultural diversity** is the recognition and valuing of difference. It encompasses such factors as age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, education, marital status, sexual orientation, and income. **Inclusion** is the opposite of exclusion and marginalization, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to belong, influence, and be heard.

Speeches and our responses to them demonstrate our understanding of difference and our tolerance for dissent. Beyond mutual respect, however, lies our own self-interest. When we demonstrate respect for cultural diversity and inclusivity, we reduce the chances of alienating members of the audience and increase the chances of eliciting the audience response we seek. By recognizing, for instance, that receivers from different cultures may be offended by different things, and that speakers from other cultures may display more or less expressiveness than their receivers, we become more culturally attuned and less culturally tone-deaf (see Table 2.1).

**TABLE 2.1** ■ Focus on Cultural Diversity

A Speaker Who Respects Diversity	A Speaker Who Neglects Diversity
Develops a complex view of issues	Develops a simplistic view of issues
Does not stereotype, avoiding its consequences	Frequently stereotypes, having to face the consequences
Sees things from others' viewpoints—empathizing with them	Sees things only from their own perspective; assumes others share their values
Is comfortable speaking before a culturally diverse audience	Becomes anxious when speaking before a culturally diverse audience
Does not alienate receivers by trying to impose their views on them	Tries to impose their views on others, risking open hostility from receivers

### Attune Yourself to Difference

Why should attuning yourself to cultural differences be part of your public speaking training? For one thing, according to demographers, diversity is reshaping the future of the United States and transforming our person-to-person ties even more quickly than was originally predicted. While the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau reported that 191.7 million people identified as non-Hispanic white people, the number of white people is declining. Nearly 4 in 10 people now identify themselves as other than white.<sup>4</sup> For the first time, the percentage of white people dropped below 60 percent. Some 57.8 percent of the U.S. population identify as non-Hispanic white people or white alone; 12.1 percent as Black or African American alone; 6.1 percent as Asian alone; and 1.1 percent as American-Indian and Alaska Native alone. 2.8 percent identified as two or more races. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders comprise .2 percent of the population. At 18.7 percent, Hispanics and Latinos are now the largest minority group. The under 18 population is now majority people of color at 52.7 percent. Within one generation, underrepresented groups are forecast to become the majority.<sup>5</sup>

More than half the children in the United States currently are of a minority race or ethnic group.<sup>6</sup> Given such statistics, there is a good chance you will find yourself speaking before audiences whose cultural backgrounds and perspectives differ from your own. Your success depends on your ability to face up to cultural diversity and speak freely and listen critically across cultures.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT 2.1: HOW PREPARED ARE YOU TO ADDRESS AND LISTEN TO PEOPLE OF DIVERSE CULTURES?

### Directions

Use the following scales to evaluate your feelings about multiculturalism by indicating where on the scale you fall relative to each statement.

Statement	Totally Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Totally Agree 5
1. I am equally as comfortable speaking before people who are like me as I am speaking before people who are different from me.					
2. It is important to me to consider the concerns and respect the values, beliefs, and customs of all groups in society equally.					
3. Public speakers always should take into account the differences between themselves and their audiences.					
4. I am equally comfortable listening to people from other cultures and listening to people from my own culture.					

Statement	Totally Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Totally Agree 5
5. I believe in respecting the communication rules and preferences of people from other cultures, just as I would want people from other cultures to respect the communication rules and preferences of my culture.					
6. I support the right of people from other cultures to disagree with my values and beliefs.					
7. I accept that people from other cultures may choose not to participate in a dialogue or debate because of their culture's rules.					
8. I understand that expressiveness, including facial expressions, gestures, and nonverbal signals, vary from culture to culture.					
9. I respect that a culture provides its members with a continuum of appropriate and inappropriate communication behaviors.					
10. I do not believe that my culture is superior to all other cultures.					

Analysis	Implication
<p>Add together the numbers you chose on each scale: _____ Total</p> <p>To determine your level of comfort with multiculturalism, refer to the range below:</p> <p>41–50 You are accepting of diversity</p> <p>31–40 You are ambivalent towards diversity</p> <p>21–30 You are somewhat unaccepting of diversity</p> <p>10–20 You are very unaccepting of diversity.</p>	<p>What does your score reveal? The higher your score, the better equipped you are to enrich the public speaking arena by welcoming people from diverse cultures into it.</p> <p>Although this evaluation is not a scientific instrument, it should give you some indication of your general feelings toward and acceptance of diversity.</p>

### Assess Your Understanding of Cultural Diversity

When speaking before audiences small or large, if we want to share ideas successfully, we need to take cultural differences into account. Speechmakers and their audiences need to consider how the language, norms and rules of their culture impact them and others. In addition to sensitizing themselves to the differences in the meanings attached to the nonverbal cues used, which as we see is necessary to avoid misinterpreting messages sent and received, they cannot overlook the importance that members of diverse cultures place on cultural customs. Too frequently, **ethnocentrism**—the belief that one’s own culture is superior to all other cultures—impedes communication by arousing feelings of prejudice and hostility toward those different from us. Overcoming the negative effects of ethnocentrism does not require agreement with another culture’s practices. What it does require is respect for the different cultures present and a willingness to adjust both messages sent and expectations. Rather than judge one another on the basis of appearance or delivery, listen like you would want a person from another culture to listen to you.

### Reflect Cultural Values

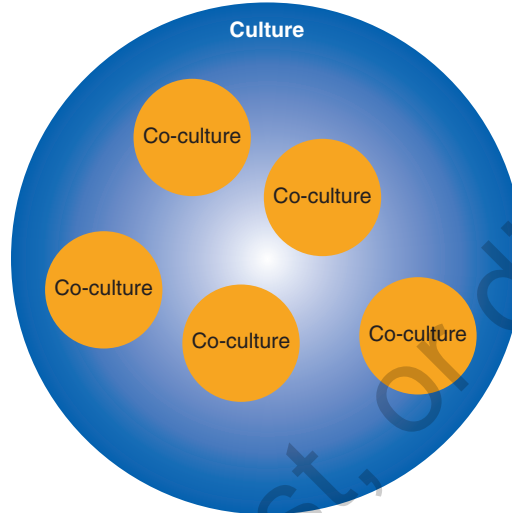
**Culture** is the system of knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and artifacts (objects made or used by humans) that we learn, accept, and use in daily life. Typically, cultural norms and assumptions are passed from the senior to the newer members of a group. Adept speakers use these cues to adapt to different audiences.

#### Co-cultures

Within a culture as a whole are co-cultures. **Co-cultures** are composed of members of the same general culture who differ in some ethnic or sociological way from the dominant culture. In American society, for example, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Japanese Americans, Arab Americans, disabled, LGBTQ+, and older Americans are just some of the co-cultures belonging to the same general culture<sup>7</sup> (see Figure 2.1).

People belonging to a **marginalized group**—a group whose members feel like outsiders—may passively, assertively, or aggressively/confrontationally seek to reach their goals relative to the dominant culture.

**FIGURE 2.1** ■ Culture and Co-Cultures



**A Culture and Its Co-cultures.** The term *co-culture* is preferred over sub-culture because the prefix *sub* denotes inferior status. A co-culture is a culture within a culture.

- Co-culture members who practice a *passive approach* usually avoid the limelight or the lectern, accepting their position in the cultural hierarchy. They embrace the cultural beliefs and practices of the dominant culture. Recent immigrants to the United States who desire to attain citizenship may choose this path, hoping to blend in.
- Co-culture members who employ an *assertive approach* want members of the dominant group to accommodate their diversity. At the same time, they are receptive to rethinking their ideas, giving up or modifying some, but holding strong with regard to others. For example, many Chinese Americans spoke openly of their support for America while also expressing their desire to live free from racism's reach during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, years earlier Muslim Americans spoke openly of their support for the War on Terror while also expressing their desire to live according to their religious values and beliefs, which were falsely conflated with those of the terrorists behind the attacks of September 11, 2001.
- Co-culture members who take an *aggressive/confrontational approach* more intensely defend their beliefs and traditions, leading to their being perceived by members of the dominant culture as “hurtfully expressive” or “self-promoting.” They make it difficult for members of the dominant culture to ignore their presence or pretend they do not exist.<sup>8</sup> Co-culture members adopt this strategy in an effort to de-marginalize

themselves and actively participate in the world of the dominant culture. In their early years, the members of ACT UP, a gay rights organization, employed such an approach, much like members of the Black Lives Matter movement do now.

Within the context of cultural diversity, how would you identify yourself? Consider your own classroom or workplace. When you look around, do you recognize groups that constitute co-cultures? When taking a podium, remember to avoid speaking solely to one group. Public speaking is about communicating to as many listeners as possible.

### **Different Communication Styles**

We need to recognize both how the culture we belong to affects our communication and how other people's cultures affect theirs.

Individualistic cultures like the United States tend to use **low-context communication** (members favor a more direct communication style), while **high-context communication** (members are very polite and indirect in relating to others) is predominant in collectivistic cultures such as China. As members of an individualistic culture, North Americans tend to speak in a low-context way, addressing an issue directly rather than relying on innuendo to get their point across. Persons from Asian countries including Japan and South Korea, usually avoid confrontation, relying on a high-context communication style that is based on inference rather than direct statements and allows others to save face.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a North American speaker may directly contradict what another person has said, while an Asian speaker's comments are likely to be more indirect and subtle.

In some cultures, dissent and disagreement with friends and relatives is considered normal—it is possible to separate a speaker from her words—while in other cultures, speakers and their words are perceived as one. In the latter case, when you dispute someone's words, you also cast aspersions on their character. As a result, rarely will one Saudi Arabian publicly criticize or chastise another because doing so would label that speaker as disloyal and disrespectful.<sup>10</sup> It is important that speakers and audience members not interpret each other's behavior based on their own frames of reference or cultural norms, but work to understand the cultural dynamics of persons from their own as well as other cultures.

#### **COACHING TIP**

*"Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work."*

*Andres Tapia, Global Diversity and Inclusion Solutions leader and author*

Creating community out of diversity depends on keeping the "isms" at bay. Because they exclude rather than include, ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, and ageism have no place in your speaker's toolbox. Maya Angelou observed, "We should all know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color." Diversity is not divisive. Its recognition is inclusive.



## Understand Cultural Identity

We also need insight into **cultural identity**, the internalization of culturally appropriate beliefs, values, and roles acquired through interacting with members of our cultural group. Cultural identity also is a product of our group memberships. We all belong to a number of different groups and form identities based on these group memberships, with cultural notions influencing what it means to be a group member.

- *Gender* affects the way males and females present themselves, socialize, work, perceive their futures, and communicate. Men tend to adopt a problem-solving orientation and prefer to use a linear approach to storytelling and presentations, while women typically offer more details and fill in tangential information.<sup>11</sup>
- *Age* influences our beliefs about how persons our age should look and behave. An older person may be perceived as wiser. Age can also influence judgments of credibility and precipitate disagreements about values and priorities. For this reason, persons belonging to different age groups are likely to perceive issues such as Social Security reform, transgender rights, and the value of rap music differently.
- *Racial and ethnic identities*, in addition to being based on physical characteristics, are also socially constructed. Some racial and ethnic groups share experiences of oppression; their attitudes and behaviors may reflect their struggles. Thus, race influences attitudes toward controversial issues such as affirmative action, welfare reform, interracial marriage and adoption, and racism. What does race mean to you? Can you boil your thoughts down to a six-word micro-speech that sums up your thoughts, observations, and experiences about race? For example, Susan Goldberg, the editor of *National Geographic*, came up with: “White, privileged, with much to learn.”<sup>12</sup>
- *Religious identity* is at the root of countless contemporary conflicts occurring around the world, including in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, India and Pakistan, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and it sometimes influences receiver and speaker responses to issues and world events. In the United States, for example, evangelical Christians may have a different view of the relationship between church and state than do members of other religious groups.
- *Socioeconomic identity* frames our responses to issues, influencing our attitudes and experiences as well as the way we communicate. The widening gap between the ultra-wealthy and the middle and lower classes in this country contributes to different attitudes on a host of issues, including tax cuts.
- *National identity* refers to our legal status or citizenship. People whose ancestors immigrated to the United States generations ago may still be perceived as foreigners by some Americans.

A speaker should be aware that the culture, economic and social class, and gender of receivers might influence the way audience members will process the examples the speaker employs. For example, based on their personal experience, audiences of mostly women, mostly men, or mixed gender likely would react differently to the examples used in this excerpt from a speech on “Why Girls Matter” by Anna Maria Chavez, CEO of Girl Scouts of the United States of America. How do you react to it, and why?

Our alumnae have made huge impacts on all sectors of our communities. In the world of entertainment, for example, Taylor Swift is a Girl Scout. In the world of athletics, so is tennis star Venus Williams. Media great Robin Roberts is a Girl Scout alumna. Virtually every female astronaut who has flown into space was a Girl Scout. And one successful businesswoman who was a Girl Scout is Ginny Rometty, CEO of IBM. All the former female U.S. secretaries of state were Girl Scouts: Madeline Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton. Fifteen of the 20 women in the U.S. Senate are Girl Scout alumnae. So are more than half of the 88 women in the House of Representatives. And of the five women who currently serve as governors across our nation, four were Girl Scouts.

Embracing the values of tolerance and civility is not a hindrance to success, it is clear, but an asset because it instills the values of character, confidence and courage. That is more than a matter of opinion. According to a recent survey, nearly two-thirds of Girl Scouts view themselves as leaders, compared with 44 percent of other girls, and 52 percent of boys.<sup>13</sup>

Speakers also need to be aware of how different cultures process humor. When integrating humorous stories, keep in mind that humor does not always translate. For example, topics such as sex and dating could be distasteful to Muslims, and “your mama” jokes could be unacceptable to Zambians, because Zambian parents are revered like gods.<sup>14</sup>

By considering ethnic and cultural identity, respecting diversity, and developing our understanding of people who are unlike us, we improve our ability to use public speaking to create community.

### Consider Preferred Learning Styles

Speakers need to be sensitive to how receivers prefer to learn and process information. Some of us are aural learners, others are visual learners, and some of us need to be approached at an abstract level. If a speaker offers a variety of support that appeals to more than one learning style, that speaker will succeed in reaching the audience.

### Understand Difference to Build Bridges and Confidence

Acknowledging that all cultures do not share the same communication rules benefits us both as citizens and as public speakers. The more we know about those from other cultures, the more confident we become speaking or listening to others. Use the following two tips as guides.



**We are unique.** Take into account that diversity means audience members may learn differently.

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### ***Avoid Formulating Expectations Based Solely on Your Own Culture***

When those you speak to have diverse communication preferences, acknowledge them and accept their validity. By not isolating yourself within your own group or culture, you become a more effective speaker.

### ***Make a Commitment to Develop Speechmaking and Listening Skills Appropriate to Life in the Age of Multiculturalism and Globalization***

By talking openly about controversial topics, listening to different viewpoints, and understanding how policies may inequitably affect people belonging to different cultural groups, you take a giant step toward understanding why diversity matters.

Although culture is a tie that binds, the global world grows smaller and smaller each day through technological advancement and ease of travel. Respecting difference, speaking and listening responsibly, and ethics go hand in hand. With this in mind, make it a priority to

- Be a respectful and patient listener.
- Engage and ask questions—rephrase if confusion persists.
- Have empathy and imagine yourself in another’s shoes.

## SPEAK ETHICALLY

**2.2** *Discuss the importance of ethics, identifying ethical principles and guidelines relevant to public speaking.*

**Ethics** express society's notions about the rightness or wrongness of an act, the distinctions between virtue and vice, and where to draw the line between what we should and should not do.<sup>15</sup> For example, what ethical code do we expect college athletes to follow? We expect them to follow the rules and avoid performance-enhancing drugs; to play fair, not cheat. Is it any different in public speaking? The kinds of cheating that speakers and audience members engage in involve breaches in trust similar to those committed by athletes and other performers. Would you cheat to impress an audience? Or would you sacrifice your goals if they turned out not to contribute to the overall well-being of others?

Here are some more ethical quandaries to resolve:

- Is it an ethical breach to speak on a subject about which you personally don't care?
- Is it ethical to use a fabricated story to increase personal persuasiveness but not tell the audience the story is made up?
- Is it right to convince others to believe what you do not yourself believe?
- Is it ethical to refuse to listen to a speaker you find offensive?

When facing ethical dilemmas or potentially compromising situations, our personal code of conduct guides us in making ethical choices.<sup>16</sup> Ethical speakers treat receivers as they would want a speaker to treat them; they do not intentionally deceive listeners just to attain their objectives. You should reveal everything your listeners need to know to be able to assess both you and your message, and not cover up, lie, distort, or exaggerate to win their approval and support. A functioning society depends on our behaving ethically.

**Ethical communication** is honest and accurate and reflective, not only of your best interests but also the best interests of others. **Ethical speechmaking** has its basis in trust in and respect for the speaker and receivers. It involves the responsible handling of information as well as an awareness of and concern for speechmaking's outcomes or consequences.

### Ethical Behavior Audiences Expect of Speakers

When receivers judge a speaker to be of good character, they are more likely to trust the speaker's motives, concluding that the speaker will neither take nor suggest they take any action that would bring them harm. When receivers discover that speakers have been less than candid or truthful, they lose faith in the speaker's trustworthiness, integrity, credibility, and sincerity. Once receivers doubt a speaker, their words soon lose their impact, and trust, once lost, is extremely difficult to restore.

To be perceived as ethical in the eyes of audience members, adhere to the following tips.



**Play fair.** As in sports, being honest and ethical in public speaking is essential for success.

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### Share Only What You Know to Be True

Receivers expect you to be honest. That said,

- Do not misrepresent your purpose for speaking.
- Do not distort information to make it appear more useful.
- Never deceive receivers regarding the credentials of a source.

Avoid committing an **overt lie** (deliberately saying something that you know to be false) or a **covert lie** (knowingly allowing others to believe something that isn't true). Whenever you hope to convey a false impression or convince another to believe something that you yourself do not believe, you are lying.<sup>17</sup> Such deceptive behavior is a violation of the unspoken bond between speaker and receivers.

### Respect the Audience

Your audience doesn't want you to exploit their wants and needs, manipulate their emotions, or trick them into believing a fabrication to fuel your own desire for power or profit. Instead, they expect you to be honest and open—to engage them in dialogue and critical inquiry. Audience members have the right to be treated as your equals. Consider their opinions, try to understand their perspective on issues, respect their right to hold opinions that differ from yours, and acknowledge that you do not know it all.

**COACHING TIP**

*"I'm telling you a lie in a vicious effort that you will repeat my lie over and over until it becomes true."*

*Lady Gaga, singer and songwriter*

Repeating what you want others to believe doesn't make what you are saying any truer! Personal biases can affect the impact messages have. Step back and examine yours. Then add logic and reason to the mix. Be sure to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." If others don't view you as trustworthy, your words won't matter. Truth telling is not necessarily easy. In fact, telling others the truth is often more difficult than lying. But audiences deserve the truth. Telling them lies undermines their best interests. Make truth telling part of your personal code.

**Prepare Fully**

Receivers expect you to be thoroughly informed and knowledgeable about your topic. They should be confident that you will present them with correct information, more than one side of an issue, and not knowingly mislead them by shaping, slicing, and selectively using data. You need to explore all sides of an issue (not just the ones you favor) and "tell it like it is" (not like you want your receivers to think it is).

**Put the Audience First**

Audience members have a right to expect that you will attempt to understand and empathize with them and the situations they face. A person who speaks on the importance of tax cuts for the rich without exploring the impact of such a policy on working families fails in their duty. Receivers also have a right to know that you will not ask them to commit an illegal act or do anything that is destructive of their welfare. For this reason, it would not be ethical to speak on a topic like the virtues of underage drinking or getting out of speeding tickets.

**Be Easy to Understand**

Audience members have a right to expect that you will talk at their level of understanding, rather than below or above it. The audience should come away feeling they have sufficient grasp of your content to make an informed decision. If you use language unfamiliar to receivers, they will fail to grasp your message. And if you talk down to receivers, failing to recognize the knowledge base they have, they will feel insulted or belittled.

**Don't Weaponize Words**

Although your words may not literally wound others, they can do psychological damage. Willfully making false statements about another, engaging in name-calling or other personal attacks, or using inflammatory language to incite panic is unethical. Speak civilly.

## Don't Spin

The audience has a right to expect that you will not manipulate their reactions by providing half-truths or failing to share information that proves you wrong. A speaker who knowingly suppresses information that contradicts their position destroys whatever bond of trust existed between speaker and audience.

## Don't Spread Disinformation

**Disinformation**, the 2019 word of the year, is the deliberate spread of false or inaccurate information with the intention of influencing public opinion. It is deceptive and manipulative. Composed of lies and conspiracy theories, disinformation is insidious, infecting the minds of receivers with false information that is then repeated and shared.<sup>18</sup> The dangers disinformation presents for a democracy are evident in what happened on January 6, 2021, when a mob breached the U.S. Capitol after being fed disinformation about the validity of the 2020 presidential election results. To avoid passing on disinformation use reliable news sources, fact-check websites, and double-check your own confirmation biases (the tendency to accept that information that confirms held beliefs).

## Respect Difference

Audience members may have different ideas about what constitutes an interesting topic, proper language, appropriate structure, or effective delivery. In order to meet their expectations, speakers need to look at the contents of a speech through the eyes of the members of different cultures rather than assume that all audience members see things the same way. By acknowledging the differences among receivers, speakers can accomplish their goals. For example, members of some cultural groups—African Americans, for example—expect to participate overtly in a speech event, even to the point of helping to co-create it, while members of other cultural groups consider such participation to be disrespectful of the speaker.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, U.S. audience members may judge a presentation that is blunt and opinionated acceptable and even preferable, while Chinese audience members may judge it to be rude or insensitive.<sup>20</sup> Whatever their cultural backgrounds, receivers have a right to their attitudes and beliefs. They have a right to expect that you will acknowledge and respect their right to disagree with you.



**Number one.** Putting the audience's needs first will help you deliver a speech that is ethical and has greater impact.

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**TABLE 2.2** ■ Focus on Ethics

An Ethical Speaker	An Unethical Speaker
Is intent on enhancing the well-being of receivers	Is intent on achieving their own goal, whatever the cost
Treats audience members as they would like to be treated by a speaker	Treats audience members strictly in terms of their own needs, ignoring audience member needs
Reveals everything receivers need to know to assess both speaker and message fairly	Conceals, lies, distorts, or exaggerates information to win the approval and support of receivers
Relies on valid evidence	Juices evidence, deliberately overwhelming receivers with appeals to emotion
Informs receivers whom, if anyone, they represent	Conceals from receivers the person or interest groups they represent
Documents all sources	Plagiarizes others' ideas, exhibiting a reckless disregard for the sources of ideas or information

### Hold Yourself Accountable for Plagiarism

Listeners expect you to be morally accountable for your speech's content and to distinguish your personal opinions from factual information. You are not merely a messenger; you bear responsibility for the message.

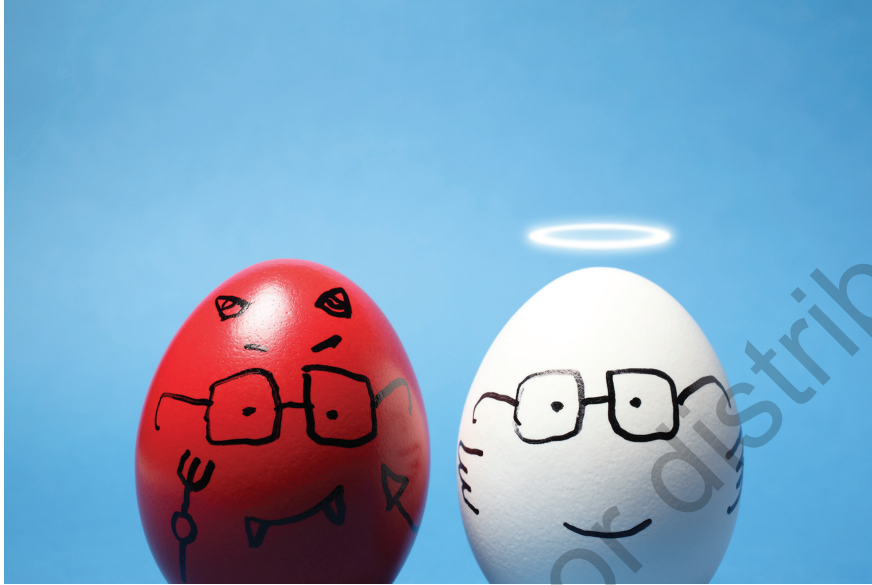
Receivers also have a right to believe that, when uncredited, the words are yours. If you present the ideas and words of others as if they were your own, then you are committing **plagiarism**. The word itself is derived from the Latin word *plagiarius*, meaning “kidnapper.” Thus, when you plagiarize, you kidnap or steal the ideas and words of another and claim them as your own (see Table 2.2). Whether you steal a little or a lot, it's stealing. Whether you plagiarize a lot (pass another person's speech off as your own), filch a few lines verbatim from different sources that you fail to credit, or take a small section of another person's speech to integrate into your own speech, it's plagiarism.

Here are four simple steps to follow to avoid passing off someone else's ideas or words as your own:

1. Attribute the source of every piece of evidence you cite. Never borrow the words or thoughts of someone else without acknowledging that you have done so.
2. Indicate whether you are quoting or paraphrasing a statement.
3. Use and credit a variety of sources.

When students fail to adhere to these guidelines, they expose themselves to serious personal consequences, such as academic probation or expulsion.





**Credit where credit's due.** Citing sources for all your research and anything you borrow is an essential task of ethical behavior.

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### Ethical Behavior Speakers Expect of Audiences

Civility, the act of showing regard for others, should be the watchword of receivers. Even if receivers disagree with a speaker, they should not heckle or shout down the speaker. Instead of cutting off speech, receivers need to hear the speaker out, work to understand the speaker's ideas, and in time, respond with speech of their own.

### Give All Ideas a Fair Hearing

Do not prejudge speakers. Evaluate what they have to say, see it from their perspective, and honestly assess their speech's content based on what they share and not on any preconceptions you may have.

To act ethically, listen to the whole speech and process the speaker's words before deciding whether to accept or reject the speaker's ideas. Do not jump to conclusions and blindly accept or reject the speaker's ideas on the basis of the speaker's reputation, appearance, opening statements, or manner of delivery. Be a patient receiver.

### Be Courteous, Attentive, and React Honestly

Speakers have a right to expect that you will listen and respond honestly and critically, not merely politely or blindly, to a presentation. To do this, you need to focus fully on the ideas being presented. Although you need not agree with everything a speaker says, you do need to

provide speakers with accurate and thoughtful feedback that indicates what you have understood and how you feel about the message.

When questions are permitted after a speech, effective questioners first paraphrase the speaker's remarks to be sure they accurately understand the speaker's intentions, and then go on to ask a question or offer an opinion.

Speakers have a right to expect that you will listen to them regardless of any differences in age, culture, religion, nationality, class, sexual orientation, or educational background. An ethical listener recognizes that not all speakers share their perspective. But above all else, the behavior of ethical listeners does nothing to undermine a speaker's right to be heard.

## THINK CRITICALLY

**2.3** *Demonstrate the role critical thinking plays in public speaking, explaining its significance for speakers and audiences.*

**Critical thinking** is the ability to explore an issue or situation, integrate all the available information about it, arrive at a conclusion, and validate a position. A form of information literacy, it plays a key role in public speaking.<sup>21</sup> Both speakers and their audiences need to be critical thinkers, arriving at a judgment about the plausibility of information only after an honest evaluation of alternatives based on available evidence and arguments.<sup>22</sup> Critical thinkers are honest inquirers who do not accept information without weighing its value.<sup>23</sup>

It is up to you as both public speaker and listener to take an active role in the speechmaking and speech evaluation process so that you practice critical thinking rather than subvert its use. When a speaker makes an emotional appeal for your support, be diligent in determining whether information exists that justifies responding as the speaker requests. Examine the evidence on which conclusions are based to ensure they are valid and sound, to spot weaknesses in arguments, and to judge the credibility of statements.

It is important, however, also to think creatively. Play with existing ideas so they yield new and fresh insights. Work to see the interconnectedness among ideas. It is also up to you to avoid accepting stale or faulty arguments. Look for differences or inconsistencies in various parts of a message. Ask questions about unsupported content. Decide whether conclusions are convincing or unconvincing and whether an argument makes sense. Base your opinion about the message on the evidence.

Critically thinking speakers expand receivers' knowledge, introducing them to new ideas and challenging them to reexamine their beliefs, values, and behaviors. Similarly, the listener who is a critical thinker does not judge a speaker or the speaker's remarks prematurely, is willing to reexamine ideas and beliefs, and refuses to use shoddy thinking habits to substantiate invalid conclusions. Speakers and listeners must hold each other accountable for both truth and accuracy. To accomplish this, follow the guidelines outlined in Table 2.3.

## Set Goals

Prior to attending a speech, consider the speaker's and/or the listener's motivations for being there. Think about the degree to which the speaker is speaking to serve their own interests or the interests of others. Reflect on the degree to which your mind is open to receive the speaker's ideas.



**The thinker.** As a speaker, try to see ideas from fresh perspectives, and as an audience member, don't take all pieces of information at face value.

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**TABLE 2.3** ■ Focus on Critical Thinking

A Speaker Who Thinks Critically	A Speaker Who Thinks Uncritically
Recognizes the limitations of their knowledge	Thinks they know everything
Is open-minded, taking time to reflect	Is closed-minded and impulsive, jumping to unwarranted conclusions
Pays attention to those with whom they agree and disagree	Pays attention only to those with whom they agree
Looks for good reasons to accept or reject others' opinions	Disregards opinions others offer, even if valid
Insists on getting the best information	Picks and chooses information to suit their own purpose
Explores what is stated and unstated, investigating all assumptions	Focuses only on what is stated, ignoring unstated assumptions
Reflects on how well conclusions fit premises and vice versa	Disregards a lack of connection between evidence and conclusions

## Analyze Consequences

After a speech, speaker and receivers evaluate one another's behavior, their own behavior, and the likely consequences of their behavior.

For every speech event, seek to determine

- If honesty prevailed
- If language was used ethically
- If convictions were clearly expressed
- If logical evidence was used
- If emotional appeals added interest, but did not conceal the truth, and
- If selfish interests were disclosed

## Assess Outcomes and Their Effects

Was the speech a success or a failure, and why do you think so? Think in terms of how effective the speechmaker was rather than whether the speaker was *entirely* effective or ineffective.



**Personal record?** Which goals did you achieve, fall short of, or easily surpass?

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For example, seek to

1. Identify what the speaker did to demonstrate respect for difference.
2. Explain what the speaker did to earn your trust.

3. Assess the effectiveness of both the words and support the speaker used. What sources did the speaker use? Were they credible?
4. Recognize the kinds of information the speaker used to support claims. Were they unbiased? Were perspectives other than those held by the speaker addressed?
5. Identify which of the speaker's ideas you accept, which you question, and which you disagree with.
6. Determine the extent to which the speech changed you.
7. Evaluate the extent to which the speech enhanced consideration of an important topic.
8. Identify any questions you would like to ask the speaker and any information you need the speaker to clarify.

## GAME PLAN

### Inclusivity, Ethics, and Critical Thinking

- I have reviewed my speech for derogatory words or statements that might alienate members of the audience.
- The main ideas of my speech are supported by truthful evidence.
- All evidence, ideas, quotes, and statistics from other sources are properly cited with full credits.
- In writing my speech, I accounted for differences of opinion.
- I have reviewed my speech for instances of “spin.”
- I stand behind the words and ideas in my speech—I am accountable for my presentation.

## EXERCISES

### Cultural Diversity, Ethics, and Critical Thinking

Participating in the following exercises will broaden your understanding of what it means to value cultural diversity, live up to high ethical standards, and think critically.

#### 1. The Danger of Overgeneralizing

Sometimes, when faced with people and situations we don't know, we resort to stereotyping—a thinking shortcut that organizes our perceptions into oversimplified categories. Stereotypes exist for short people, blondes, Asians, Black people, Millennials, and older adults, just to name a few. Though many of us have been the unwilling target of others seeking to stereotype us, we likely have done the same. List assumptions you have made about others, what you did to pigeonhole and classify them, and why you now believe the assumptions you made are true or flawed.

Facing up to your assumptions about others should help prepare you to speak before them. Whenever you speak, it is important to treat the members of your audience respectfully and as individuals rather than as members of a category. Doing so demonstrates not only cultural awareness but also sound critical thinking and ethical judgment skills.

## 2. How We Learn Matters

If you were delivering a speech to college students on “The Effects of Grade Inflation,” what kinds of materials would you use to ensure your speech appealed to each style of learner? To facilitate this task, imagine yourself as each type of learner as you consider possible materials.

Similarly, ask yourself how persons from cultures other than your own would respond to the kinds of material you selected. To what extent, if any, do you imagine their responses would differ from your own?

By stepping outside of who you are and considering your speech from the perspective of others who differ from you, you gain fresh insights and facilitate the establishment of common ground.

## 3. Analyze This Speech: Thinking Critically About Diversity and Inclusion

Holger Kluge was president of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. He delivered the following remarks during a speech made to the Diversity Network Calgary, Alberta, Canada. As you read his words, consider these questions:

- What assumptions did the branch manager make?
- What did Holger Kluge learn about diversity? What have you learned?
- What ethical issues are exposed in this excerpt?
- How might critical thinking skills have avoided the problem altogether?

I'd like to begin my remarks with a story. A number of years ago we hired an employee as a teller in one of our branches. A few weeks after this individual began work, he was called into the branch manager's office for a discussion.

*SN 1*

*Kluge uses a story to involve the audience.*

The manager was a good boss and a good mentor, and he wanted to tell the employee the facts of life about working for the bank.

He told him not to expect to rise too far in the organization.

*SN 2*

*Kluge uses the manager's words verbatim before paraphrasing the remainder of the manager's comments.*

When the young man asked why, the manager replied:

“You’ve got an accent. You weren’t born in Canada. And you’re not Anglo Saxon. Basically, you’ve got the wrong name and the wrong background for advancement.”

He went on to say that the best the employee could hope for was to someday become a branch manager.

I was that employee.

SN 3

*The speaker identifies himself as the subject, surprising the audience.*

The irony is, that at the time I was considered an example of the bank’s progressive hiring practices.

SN 4

*The speaker explains why he is sensitive to diversity, providing receivers with an important lesson.*

Somehow, the significance of this honor eluded me. In the space of a few moments, I had been banished to a wilderness of diminished expectations all because of my name, the way I spoke, and my country of origin.

That’s one experience that shaped my views on diversity, knowing what it’s like to be on the outside, having to overcome obstacles which others don’t, simply because you’re different.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. Approach the Speaker’s Stand

Speakers need to educate receivers, not merely tell them what they want to hear or serve their personal self-interests; but politicians, public relations practitioners, advertisers, talk show hosts, and other public figures often seem to violate this advice. Indeed, the use of deception by those in the public arena is not new. Keeping this in mind, choose one of the following three- to four-minute speaking assignments or one of your instructor’s choosing.

- a. Identify a public figure who you believe deliberately deceived the public. Describe the alleged deception for the audience, and offer your opinion of the public figure’s behavior, specifying how you believe the person ought to have behaved.
- b. Describe an ethical choice that you had to make, how you decided what to do, and why you believe your decision was right.
- c. Prepare an ethical analysis of a recent speech, commercial, tabloid news report, or infomercial.

## RECAP AND REVIEW

### 2.1 Explain why cultural understanding enhances the effectiveness of speakers and audiences.

It is likely you will speak before audiences whose cultural backgrounds and values differ from your own. By respecting and adapting to difference, speakers and audiences are inclusive, bridging their diversity.

### 2.2 Discuss the importance of ethics, identifying ethical principles and guidelines relevant to public speaking.

Ethics reflect a society's feelings about right and wrong. Questions of ethics arise whenever speakers and audiences interact. Receivers expect speakers to share only what they know to be true, to be fully prepared to present a speech, to consider what is in the best interests of receivers, to make it easy for others to understand them, to refrain from using words inappropriately, to refrain from putting either a positive or a negative spin on information just to win a point, to respect cultural diversity, and to be accountable for the message. Plagiarism includes both misrepresentation and lying. A plagiarist steals the ideas and words of another and claims them as their own. Speakers expect receivers to give them a fair hearing and to be courteous, attentive, and honest about their responses.

### 2.3 Demonstrate the role critical thinking plays in public speaking, explaining its significance for speakers and audiences.

Critical thinking is the ability to explore an issue or situation by integrating all available information, arriving at a conclusion, and being able to validate the position taken. Both speakers and receivers need to arrive at judgments only after honestly evaluating alternatives rather than on the basis of faulty assumptions. By broadening the lens through which we process people and experience and working to ensure that emotion does not overcome rationality, we demonstrate our ethical commitment to and respect for the speechmaking process.

## KEY TERMS

Co-culture (p. 36)

Covert lie (p. 43)

Critical thinking (p. 48)

Cultural diversity (p. 33)

Cultural identity (p. 39)

Culture (p. 36)

Disinformation (p. 45)

Ethical communication (p. 42)

Ethical speechmaking (p. 42)

Ethics (p. 42)

Ethnocentrism (p. 36)

High-context communication (p. 38)

Inclusion (p. 33)

Low-context communication (p. 38)

Marginalized group (p. 37)

Overt lie (p. 43)

Plagiarism (p. 46)