

## READING COMPREHENSION

# The Courage to Speak

What makes someone a great speaker? It may seem that some people are just born to speak in public, while the rest of us get butterflies in our stomachs or trip all over our tongues. When we look at the lives of great speakers, though, we find that many of them worked hard to learn the skill. (1) Some of the best orators in history even overcame serious speech difficulties.

Demosthenes (384–322 BC) was the son of a wealthy swordmaker in Athens. When his father died, Demosthenes' guardians stole the inheritance his father had left him. As an adult, Demosthenes brought before a court his case to regain his inheritance. (2) However, a stammer caused him to *garble* his words, and the audience made fun of him. He ended up recovering little of his money.

Demosthenes, who had dreamed since childhood of being an orator, was determined to overcome his speech problem. To learn to pronounce words more clearly, Demosthenes trained by talking with pebbles in his mouth. (3) To ensure that he spoke in an *audible* tone, he practiced while running and while standing beside roaring waves. Perhaps most important, Demosthenes also carefully planned his speeches so that he could present his arguments effectively.

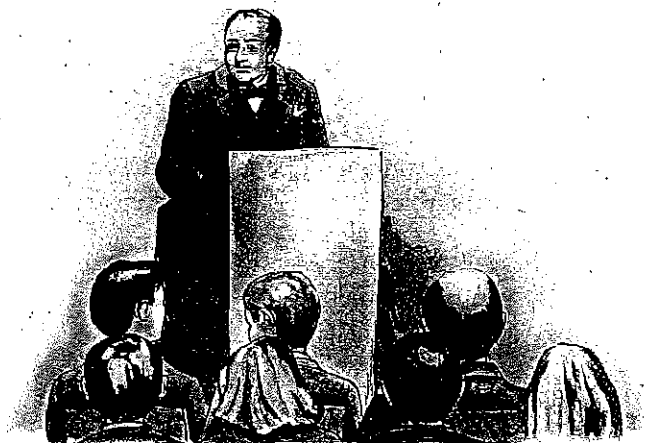
(4) As a result, he developed into an *eloquent* speaker. (5) People were so impressed by the *coherence* of his arguments that they hired him to write speeches for their causes. Demosthenes is now considered one of the greatest orators of his age.

Another great orator, Winston Churchill (1874–1965), suffered from a lisp that can be heard in recordings of his speeches. But he did not let this problem stand in the way of his long and remarkable career as a leader and dynamic speaker. (6) As prime

minister of England, he *proclaimed* the dangers posed by Nazi Germany. (7) Without *digressing* or wasting words, he gave speeches that inspired England during the dark days of World War II. (8) Churchill was known for his *terse* but effective phrases. (9) At times, he *reiterated* simple words. In one speech, he said, "Never, never, never, never give up." In another, he stated, "We shall never surrender."

Through hard work and preparation, Churchill became an inspiring speaker and writer. He was also quite funny. (10) His *impromptu* replies to friends' remarks became nearly as famous as his speeches.

Many other people have overcome stutters to become effective speakers and entertainers. James Earl Jones, Marilyn Monroe, and Carly Simon all succeeded despite this challenge. So did country singer Mel Tillis, who wrote an autobiography entitled *Stutterin' Boy*. These people lived by Winston Churchill's famous words: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts."



Each sentence below refers to a numbered sentence in the passage. Write the letter of the choice that gives the sentence a meaning that is closest to the original sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Some of the best \_\_\_\_\_ in history even overcame serious speech difficulties.  
a. politicians                      b. public speakers                      c. officials                      d. ancient Greeks
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. However, a stammer caused him to \_\_\_\_\_ his words.  
a. rehearse                      b. repeat                      c. jumble                      d. announce
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. To ensure that he spoke in a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ tone, he practiced while running and while standing beside roaring waves.  
a. orderly                      b. persuasive                      c. loud enough                      d. unprepared
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. As a result, he developed into a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ speaker.  
a. confused                      b. loud                      c. unprepared                      d. persuasive

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. People were impressed by the \_\_\_\_\_ of his arguments.  
a. logic                      b. volume                      c. repetition                      d. courage
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. As prime minister of England, he \_\_\_\_\_ the dangers posed by Nazi Germany.  
a. stated quietly              b. stated clearly              c. stated privately              d. stated again
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Without \_\_\_\_\_ or wasting words, he gave speeches that inspired England during the dark days of World War II.  
a. preparing                      b. hearing                      c. straying                      d. repeating
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Churchill was known for his \_\_\_\_\_ but effective phrases.  
a. confusing                      b. persuasive                      c. logical                      d. short
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. At times, he \_\_\_\_\_ simple words.  
a. prepared                      b. repeated                      c. heard                      d. announced
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. His \_\_\_\_\_ replies to friends' remarks became nearly as famous as his speeches.  
a. unrehearsed                      b. official                      c. confused                      d. skilled

Indicate whether the statements below are TRUE or FALSE according to the passage.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Demosthenes and Churchill both overcame speech problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Demosthenes was the king of Athens from 333 BC to 322 BC.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. To be a great orator, you must be born with a natural talent for speaking.

## WRITE THE DERIVATIVE

Complete the sentence by writing the correct form of the word shown in parentheses. You may not need to change the form that is given.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of his reply made me wonder if he was angry with me. (*terse*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Aunt Josephine's frequent \_\_\_\_\_ into stories about her boyfriends were a source of great amusement to the children. (*digress*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The customer's voice was so \_\_\_\_\_ by the intercom that the worker could not understand the order. (*garble*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The \_\_\_\_\_ that there would be no parade stunned the town's residents. (*proclaim*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mr. Dunn was known throughout the county for his magnificent \_\_\_\_\_ skills. (*orator*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. After the third \_\_\_\_\_ of the directions, Pat finally understood how to get to the house. (*reiterate*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Emily's speech was so \_\_\_\_\_ and well delivered that she earned an A. (*coherence*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The rude neighbor's radio was so loud that it was \_\_\_\_\_ through the wall. (*audible*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The entire party was moved by the \_\_\_\_\_ of her toast. (*eloquent*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I'm not very good at \_\_\_\_\_ speeches; I need to think about what I'm going to say ahead of time. (*impromptu*)

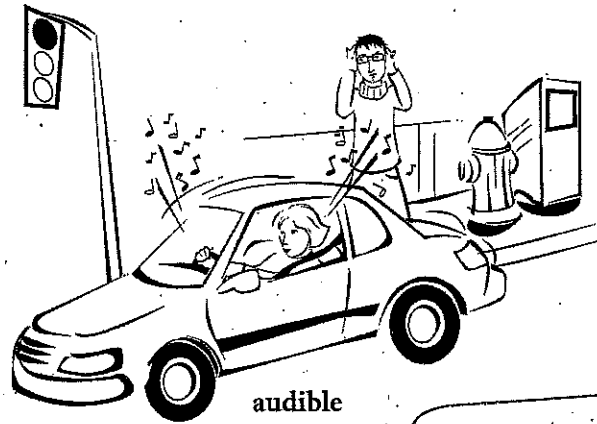
# Communication

## WORD LIST

audible	coherence	digress	eloquent	garble
impromptu	orator	proclaim	reiterate	terse

Communication—speaking, writing, even gesturing—is an essential skill in helping you achieve your goals. As you study the words in this lesson, consider whether they describe good, clear communication or bad, ineffective communication.

- audible** (ô´dä-bäl) *adjective*  
from Latin *audire*, “to hear”  
Able to be heard
  - Dog whistles are too high-pitched to be **audible** to human ears.



- coherence** (kô´hîr´əns) *noun*  
from Latin *cohaerere*, “to cling together”  
The quality of being logical, orderly, and clearly connected
  - Because Josie’s presentation lacked **coherence**, the audience didn’t understand her main points.

**coherent** *adjective* My tutor’s **coherent** explanations of geometry proofs helped me get an A on my last test.

- digress** (dî-grēs´) *verb* from Latin *dis-*, “apart” + *gradi*, “to go”  
To stray from the main subject when writing or speaking
  - The sportscaster **digressed** from calling the game and started to talk about the high cost of tickets.

**digression** *noun* Maria was frustrated by her father’s **digressions** whenever she asked him about dating.

- eloquent** (ël´ə-kwənt) *adjective* from Latin *e-*, “out” + *loqui*, “speak”  
Persuasive and powerful in speaking or writing
  - The United Nations speaker made an **eloquent** plea for peace.

**eloquence** *noun* We admired the actress’s **eloquence** as she spoke about serious issues.

- garble** (gär´bäl) *verb*  
To mix up or confuse so as to make unclear
  - He **garbled** his words every time he tried to talk to girls.

*Incoherent* is the opposite of *coherent*. *Coherent* can also mean “sticking together.”

6. **impromptu** (im-prōmp'tōō) *adjective*

Without preparation or rehearsal

- At the awards ceremony, the crowd urged the singer to give an **impromptu** performance.

7. **orator** (ōr'ə-tər) *noun* from Latin *orare*, "to speak"

A skilled public speaker

- Stephen Douglas was the great **orator** who debated Abraham Lincoln in an 1858 U.S. Senate race.

**oration** *noun* The students analyzed the famous **orations** of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**oratorical** *adjective* Winning a debate requires **oratorical** skill.

8. **proclaim** (prō-klām') *verb* from Latin *pro-*, "forward" + *clamare*, "to cry out"

a. To announce publicly and officially

- "We have a winner!" **proclaimed** the referee as he held up Jeremy's arm.

b. To make clear or plain

- She **proclaimed** her allegiance to the team by wearing green and gold to the game.

**proclamation** *noun* A town **proclamation** declared that letting dogs run loose was illegal.

9. **reiterate** (rē-īt'ə-rāt') *verb* from Latin *re-*, "again" + *iterare*, "to repeat"

To say or to do again or repeatedly

- The teacher **reiterated** the directions for the assignment to make sure that every student understood what to do.

**reiteration** *noun* After a while, the candidate's **reiteration** of his campaign slogan became tiresome.

10. **terse** (tûrs) *adjective*

Brief and to the point

- "No" was the spokesman's **terse** reply to the reporter's long question.

**terseness** *noun* The general was known for **terseness** in conferences.

A person can *proclaim* something without speaking. For example, one could put a bumper sticker on a car or wear a button.

## WORD ENRICHMENT

### A man of few words

We usually think of talkative people as being able to express themselves well. But *terseness* can be just as effective, especially when combined with a sense of humor. Calvin Coolidge, president of the United States from 1923 to 1929, was known as "Silent Cal" for his reluctance to talk.

A famous story highlights Coolidge's terse wit. A White House guest told the president that she had bet her husband that she could get the president to say more than two words. "You lose!" was Coolidge's reply.

On another occasion, Coolidge was presented with a wooden cane. The speaker concluded a long presentation with the words, "The mahogany from which this cane is fashioned is as solid as the rock-bound coast of Maine, as beautiful as the sun-kissed shores of California!" Coolidge took one look at the cane, said the word "birch," and sat down.