

Creating Speaking Notes

4X6 note cards are required, not merely recommended, for the rest of the speeches in this class. They are easier to hold and do not hinder gestures the way that full or half-size sheets of paper do. (3X5 are discouraged, but if there is a reason you feel you must use this size, please come talk to me.)

I. CREATING SPEAKING NOTES

A. Write legibly; the printing or writing on your note card should be clear and easy to read BY YOU when held at waist height.

B. Create no more than one card for each minute of speaking. More cards tend to hinder your eye contact.

C. Use only one side of the card – speakers can become confused using both sides.

D. Number the cards in the upper right corner and put your name on the back of the cards.

E. Use no more than six or seven lines per card, and space your lines so that you can find your place instantly.

F. Keep in mind that you are preparing notes. Write down the minimum – only what you find during your practices that you need as a prompt. Use key words and short phrases.

G. Include visual cues:

- 1) highlight important ideas or main points
- 2) use circles to help you remember to emphasize certain material
- 3) underline, draw a star, make arrows --- whatever you need to help you.

H. Include delivery reminders on your card as well, such as “slow down” or “pause between main points.”

II. PRACTICE USING YOUR SPEAKING NOTES

A. You should be able to look down to see what is next, and then talk about it.

As you practice, work on trying to think of what comes next without looking at your card.

If you find that you are remembering much of the speech without notes, rewrite your notes to eliminate what you are able to recall in practice – this will eliminate the temptation to look at the cards too often.

Continue to revise the cards until they are as helpful as possible.

Note cards should never be read from. Exceptions would include quotations, dates or statistics that you are not able to memorize.

III. GIVING YOUR SPEECH USING SPEAKING NOTES

A. Don't try to hide your cards from the audience. They know you have them.

B. Try to refrain from gesturing with the hand holding the cards. Instead, gesture with the opposite hand.

C. When you read a direct quotation or give complicated statistics, it is acceptable (in fact, preferred) to hold the card where the audience can see you referring to it, and to look at it more frequently. This visual cue indicates that you are attempting to be as accurate as possible.