

ADVICE ON CHOOSING TOPICS FOR THE INFORMATIVE AND PERSUASIVE SPEECHES

Students often say that choosing a topic for their speeches is the most difficult task, even in some instances more difficult than actually giving the speech. What can you do to choose a topic for each of these speeches?

The best approach to developing a successful topic is to educate yourself on some current issues and events taking place around Korea and the rest of the world. These do not have to be political or economic, if such matters are not of immediate interest to you. You can look at everyday matters, such as new insights in storing and preserving food or the dimensions of a new policy or how to do or make something. These would be informative speech topics. For the persuasive speech, one can take a position in some kind of current debate, like a government approach to a particular problem or a new development in the city.

One of the best places to look for a potential topic is the day's news. One can review the opinion page to see what issues people are arguing about and what kinds of arguments are being presented. However, one should not restrict oneself to just political arguments. One can find other topics and arguments on other pages. In today's *New York Times*, for example, one can look at sections on health, food, books, education, travel, television, and even science for worthy topics for either of the two major speeches. The newspaper also has sections on arts, theatre, and technology where one can find other topics worthy for speeches. On the *Reuters* website, one can find alternative topics in the Life section, where the arts and entertainment are covered, just as one can find worthy topics in the politics section. For example, one could give an informative speech about the Tchaikovsky competition or the Grateful Dead farewell tour concerts in today's newspaper. One could give a persuasive speech on the rights of states, like the US, to extradite FIFA leadership for prosecution. Is such extradition an overextension of legal power?

When choosing a topic for a speech, though, try to avoid topics that are overused and that have been overdone. For the informative speech, we need not see any processes about preparing ramen noodles. For the persuasive speech, topics on abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and plastic surgery are overdone. When you choose a topic, be sure it is sufficiently narrow and focused in order to cover adequately and successfully in 4-5 minutes. Only very narrow topics tend to make for successful speeches. Topics that are too broad become superficial or create the greater likelihood of going overtime. Be sure as well that your topic can be researched with good quality sources available to use (at least three). Always consult with me first before going ahead with a topic so as to avoid any problems.