

Activity Three

Off the Cuff

Project Skill

Giving an impromptu speech

Objective

Participant will choose an item at random and give a brief, unrehearsed speech about it.

Success Indicator

Participant organizes and gives a 2- to 4-minute talk that accurately and interestingly describes an object.

Message Makers

- A variety of objects spread on a table, at least three choices per participant

Set The Stage

Plenty of times, we find we have to do something “off the top of our heads” or “off the cuff.” Someone may have asked you to solve a problem. Or you might be asked to give directions. What other times do you have to quickly organize your thoughts before speaking?

Speak Out



Choose an object that you will give a short speech about. Now brainstorm a brief speech about the object you chose. Remember that even a short speech has a purpose. A speech informs, entertains, or persuades someone. Also, a speech has a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Allow yourself 10 minutes to consider your object and what you will say about it. What is interesting about it? How important is it to your everyday life? What would be a catchy way to start your speech? Organize your thoughts.

Give a 2- to 4-minute talk about the object and its meaning or purpose.

Stretch The Message

Design or draw a fictional object. Give your object a history and purpose. Give a 2- to 4-minute speech that explains its value to an audience.



Open Mike

Share

- What did you say about your object that grabbed the audience's attention?
- What were the hardest and easiest parts of describing it?
- Name one advantage and one disadvantage of extemporaneous speaking.

Process

- What was the purpose of your speech?
- Why did you select the object you did?
- Could you tell how well you were communicating with your audience? How?
- How can being able to quickly organize your thoughts make you a better communicator?

Generalize

- What did you learn about being a "quick study?"

Apply

- When might it be necessary to speak at a moment's notice?

When an actor delivers a line that isn't in the script, he or she is "ad-libbing." When a speaker delivers a speech that is unprepared and unrehearsed, he or she is making an extemporaneous or impromptu address.

