

Short and Easy Impromptu Frameworks: The PREP Framework

A while back, I did a blog post called “5 Steps to Think Fast and Speak Easily”, in which I outlined some general tips for impromptu speaking. These tips are helpful for being comfortable speaking on your feet. However, as you get more and more practice with this kind of speaking, you may notice that once you start speaking, it can be hard to outline all of your points effectively in the time you have. You might unintentionally repeat yourself, or not make your reasoning clear in your response. That’s where frameworks come in!

A framework is the supporting structure of something, like the wood beams that hold a house up while it’s being built. Similarly, you can think of the PREP framework as the beams that hold up your overall message as you speak.

You can apply the PREP framework anywhere... in the classroom, in a Toastmaster club, or even when you’re trying to convince your parents to give you something! You can use this framework to make a convincing argument that can last up to a full minute or two.

The PREP framework goes like this:

Point – This is where you can answer a question or make a very clearly said opinion. For example, if you were asked “Do you like dogs or cats better?”, you can say “Dogs/Cats are better” to start off.

Reason – This is the part of your response where you *explain why* you believe your point. Make sure to separate your point and your reason in complete, clearly stated sentences. While you could say “I like dogs better because they’re fun” at the

start of your speech, it's easier to process what someone is saying in a short speech if they clearly define their point and reason. (Of course, it still works either way, so it's your choice!) For example, you could instead say "(Point) Dogs are better than cats for many reasons. (Reason) Firstly, they are energetic pets, always up for a little fun."

Example – This is where you give a helpful example that shows why your reason applies to your point. This example could be a personal anecdote, a quote, or a statistic. (I would suggest an anecdote because personal stories usually help you connect with your audience the best.) Continuing the dog example, your example could be a story about your own dog, Fido, and how he's always up for a game of fetch. You could even go into how you can depend on him to always make you feel better when you're sad or bored.

Point – Now that you've swayed the audience to your side, you can summarize what you've just said and connect it back to your original point. To finish up the dog example, you can say, "Dogs make better pets than cats because unlike cats, they are playful, loyal, and sweet."

There are a few other variations of the PREP framework, and these can help you in other occasions where you must speak impromptu. Here's a couple of the ones that I like the best:

PREREREP Framework:

In the instance you do have a little more time to fill with your impromptu framework, you can outline more reasons and examples. Even if you don't have a lot of time, you can make your points more succinctly and outline more points in total to show just how much support you have for your point of view. In the previously shown Dogs vs. Cats example, you could repeat the Reason and Example sections two more times to make a case for why dogs are loyal and sweet (which I mentioned in my final summarizing point).

APREP Framework:

As you might have guessed, the “P-R-E-P” part of APREP remains the same: “Point, Reason, Example, Point”. In this variation, the “A” stands for “Acknowledgement”. Before you launch into your own explanation of why you’re right, you can acknowledge why the other person believes what they do, and how it is reasonable. This framework is very helpful in debates where you want to seem respectful and reasonable while effectively making your own point. While it isn’t guaranteed to make you win a debate, or prove the other person wrong, it can help you get your point across during a point of disagreement. Instead of basically implying “you’re wrong and I’m right”, you can start off your argument by using phrases like the following examples:

- “I can see why you’d say that because ____, but____...”
- “That is true in many cases, but I’d like to point out ____...”
- “Thanks for explaining your point of view! From where I stand, it does seem like ____...”

In conclusion, frameworks like PREP are really helpful to quickly structure your response in any impromptu speaking situation and if practiced often and used well, it can be a very effective tool in your ability to communicate in a compelling fashion at school, home or elsewhere.

In the future, we will continue examining frameworks and look at another useful framework similar to PREP. Until then, take care.