

Persuasive speech techniques: Martin Luther King - I have a dream

Introduction engages
the audience

Moves through first person
(I), second person (you)
and returns to first person
Plural (we) to engage and
draw in listeners

Use of a 'catchy' phrase
to stick in memory

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation!

Short sharp sentences - particularly those combined with repetition create impact

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi. Go back to Alabama. Go back to South Carolina. Go back to Georgia. Go back to Louisiana. Go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

And when this happens; When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Imperative commands

Use of repetition

Vocabulary & ideas which appeal to the audience involved.

Rule of Three: repetition of a phrase three times helps it to slip into the memory.

A rousing closing - virtually invites the audience to applaud