

Analogy, Stories, Examples and Illustration

Use These Tools to Enhance Public Speaking

Analogy, illustrations, stories and examples are powerful ways to punch up your speech. They can stir the emotions, stimulate thinking, persuade a change in thought and motivate to action. Because of the way our minds work, they are a great tool to enable the audience to remember the speech.

It is believed there is a relationship between **analogy** and the mental functions and processes such as, comprehension, inferencing, decision-making, planning and learning.

Human cognition which includes the capacity of abstraction, generalization, specialization and reasoning is the foundation of the creation of analogy in speech.

Here are five types.

- [Simile](#)

Definition of Simile

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A **simile** is a figure of speech in which the subject is compared to another subject. Frequently they are marked by use of the words like or as, "The snow was like a blanket". However, "The snow blanketed the earth" is also a simile and not a metaphor because the verb blanketed is a shortened form of the phrase covered like a blanket.

A few other examples are "The deer ran like the wind", "The raindrops sounded as popcorn kernels popping", and "the lullaby was like the hush of the winter."

The phrase "The snow was a blanket over the earth" is the metaphor in this case. Metaphors differ from similes in that the two objects are not compared, but treated as identical, "We are but a moment's sunlight, fading in the grass." Note: Some would argue that a simile is actually a specific type of metaphor. See Joseph Kelly's *The Seagull*.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SimilesReader> (2005), pages 377-379.

Note...This is where the learning of how to create analogies and illustrations starts. Comparing two different things by highlighting something they have in common will start the creative process in the mind. This is the start of an important creative mental process in learning Speechmastery.

As an exercise, start looking at different things and identify commonalities. Look at the plant kingdom, animal kingdom, the stars, the earth, even human experience.

Upon seeing the commonality in the different things, frame it into a beneficial or motivational thought. How would noticing this relationship be of benefit to know. How does it help illustrate a point or thought.

It may take minutes or days to work out a great illustration. Don't rush the process.

The more you do this exercise, the easier it will become to do it with even larger illustrations.

Then keep practicing, practicing, practicing and it will become second nature.

A Word of Caution

In exercising this new aspect of speechmastery, you will need to use some caution. Although some comparisons may seem logical, they may not be appropriate.

Saying that your CEO is faithful to the employees like the dog your family may have had as a child although true may not be the best way of describing the person.

Likewise to compare someone as having a great memory like an elephant if they are facing weight challenges may not be the best comparison.

When using this on people, use caution that it does not demean or detract from the dignity of them as a person or the office they hold.

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- [Metaphor](#)

Definition of Metaphor

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about **metaphor (M)** in language and rhetoric.

In language, a metaphor (from the Greek: metapherein) is a rhetorical trope defined as a direct comparison between two or more seemingly unrelated subjects. In the simplest case, this takes the form: "The [first subject] is a [second subject]."

More generally, **M** describes a first subject as being or equal to a second subject in some way. Thus, the first subject can be economically described because implicit and explicit attributes from the second subject are used to enhance the description of the first.

This device is known for usage in literature, especially in poetry, where with few words, emotions and associations from one context are associated with objects and entities in a different context.

M comprises a subset of analogy and closely relates to other rhetorical concepts such as comparison, simile, allegory and parable.

Note...Mastering the use of **M** will require practice. When using a **M** because of the economy of words, slow down so the audience has time to mentally digest it's import.

The **M** can lay the foundation for or even be the illustration that is the thread that extends through the entire talk.

One word of caution. Do not use this device too often in any one speech or it will lose it's value. You will risk the audience remembering the artful use of words and not the speech or your point.

Remember, your most wanted response is the most important focal point of your talk. Every thing should build on, support, or point to your most wanted response.

• [Comparison](#)

Comparison

Definition of Comparison in Public Speaking

Comparison, in grammar, is a property of adjectives and adverbs in most languages; it describes systems that distinguish the degree to which the modifier modifies its complement.

English, due to the complex etymology of its lexicon, has two parallel systems of comparison. One involves the suffixes -er (the "comparative") and -est (the "superlative"). These inflections are of Germanic origin, and are cognate with the Latin suffix -ior.

To use these inflections requires adding them to shorter words, words of Anglo-Saxon origin, and borrowed words that have been fully assimilated into the English vocabulary.

Usually the words that take these inflections have fewer than three syllables. This system contains a number of irregular forms, some of which, like good, better, best.

These irregular forms include:

good
better
best

well
better
best

bad
worse
worst

far
farther
farthest

far
further
furthest

little
less(er)
least (also has regular forms)

many
more
most

learn more by typing it in as a key word at <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

Note...This is an excellent tool to create word pictures and to enhance your ability to reach the listening style of the audience.

Some words do not lend themselves to clear speech like worst. Better to avoid those words in public speaking.

As with all parts of speech, do not over use or they will lose their value. It will be like eating too much wedding cake. After a while it will make you sick.

Do not to make the audience sick or the choice of words we make into a speech.

Better yet, avoid making them the cake. Think of these as a small edible decoration on your cake which is your speech. They need to be tasteful but not over done or they will ruin the taste of the speech.

Take it a step farther and incorporate gestures as you use these and have a one two punch in your public speaking. This will make your speech come to life.

Can you use these to improve your speaking ability? Give it a try.

• [Allegory](#)

Definition of Allegory

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An allegory (A) (from Greek allos, "other", and agoreuein, "to speak in public") is using words to convey a meaning other than (and in addition to) the literal. It is a representative type of communication.

Allegory is generally treated as a figure of rhetoric, used by both public speakers and writers.

The etymological meaning of the word is broader than the common use of the word. Though **A** is similar to other rhetorical comparisons, it is sustained longer and more fully in its details than a [metaphor](#). It will appeal to the imagination, while an [analogy](#) will appeal to reason or logic. The fable or parable is a short **A** with one definite moral.

Since meaningful stories are nearly always applicable to larger issues, allegories are read into many stories, sometimes distorting their author's overt meaning.

An example of how this has happened is in suggesting that The Lord of the Rings was an **A** for the World Wars. This is an interpretation for which the author sharply denied, stating, "I cordially dislike **A** in all of its manifestations."

Northrop Frye discussed what he termed a "continuum of allegory", ranging from what he termed the "naive allegory" of *The Faerie Queen*, to the more private use in modern paradox literature. In this perspective, the characters in a "naive" **A** are not fully three-dimensional, for each aspect of their individual personalities and the events that befall them embodies some moral quality or other abstraction; the **A** has been selected first, and the details merely flesh it out.

Note...This is an excellent tool for weaving illustrations into your public speaking. However, as stated above, use care in how it is done lest someone in the audience takes offense to your use. Even worse, you may make an application that would be offensive to the entire audience. It is important to know the audience your speaking to.

Use requires right brain thinking or abstract creative thinking. The benefits could be limited to a group of left dominant scientists. Likewise children under 10 may not understand the meaning either.

Also be careful in using it where common use has resulted in an Urban Legend that distorts the truth. Failure in this area can cost a speaker credibility.

To get a more in depth consideration go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory> where you can get additional examples.

[The Mind](#) will take a deeper look at how you can reach the audience mind with allegories and other tools public speakers use.

• [Parables](#)

Definition of Parable

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A parable (**P**) is a story in prose or verse that is told to illustrate a (perhaps covert) religious, moral, or philosophical idea.

The word comes from the Greek *πᾶράβολον*, which was the name given by Greek rhetoricians to any fictive illustration in the form of a brief narrative. Later it came to mean a fictitious narrative or allegory, generally but not always to something that might naturally occur, by which moral or spiritual matters are conveyed.

In particular, the term is applied to the **P** of Jesus, but could also be like *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck.

The prototypical **P** differs from the parable in that it is an inherently probable and realistic story, one taking place in some familiar setting of life. In its brevity and succinctness a **P** is like a fable; It differs from the fable by excluding animals that assume speech and other powers of humankind, as in Aesop's Fables.

In a preface to his translation of Aesop's Fables George Fyler Townsend defined **P** thus: "The Parable is the designed use of language purposely intended to convey a hidden and secret meaning other than that contained in the words themselves, and which may or may not bear a special reference to the hearer, or reader".

A **P** is like a metaphor that has been extended to form a brief, coherent fiction. Unlike a simile, its parallel meaning is unspoken, implicit, but not ordinarily secret, though "to speak in parables" has come to suggest obscurity.

Parables are the simplest of narratives: they sketch a setting, describe an action and its result; they often involve a character facing a particular moral dilemma, or making a questionable decision and then suffering the consequences of that choice.

Though not every moral narrative is a **P**, many fairy tales would be viewed as extended parables, except for their magical settings. Though parables often have a strong prescriptive subtext, suggesting how a person should behave or believe, many **P** simply explore a concept from a neutral point of view. Aside from providing guidance and suggestions for proper action in life, **P** offer a metaphorical language which allows people to discuss difficult or complex ideas more easily.

Recently there has been some interest in the field of contemporary **P**, exploring how modern stories can be used as **P** in our current culture. For a mid-19th century contemporary parable, see the **P** of the broken window that exposes a fallacy in economic thinking.

Parables are strongly favored in the expression of spiritual concepts. The best known specific source of **P** is the Bible, which contains numerous parable. Besides the familiar parable of Jesus in the New Testament, such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, there are many beautiful examples of **P** in the Old Testament, for instance the **P** of the ewe-lamb told by Nathan in 2 Samuel 12:1-9, or that of the woman of Tekoah in 2 Samuel 9:1-13.

Parable and allegory are often treated as synonyms, but are well distinguished by H. W. Fowler, in *Modern English Usage*. "The object in each" said Fowler, "is to enlighten the hearer by submitting to him a case in which he has apparently no direct concern, and upon which therefore a disinterested judgment may be elicited from him." It then dawns upon the listener or reader that the conclusion applies equally well to his own concerns. As Fowler distinguished them, **P** is more condensed than allegory: a single principle comes to bear, and a single moral is deduced.

Medieval biblical criticism often treated Jesus' **P** as detailed allegories, with symbolic correspondences found for every element in the brief narratives, but modern critics universally regard these interpretations as inappropriate and untenable.

Like a fable's narration, a **P** should relate one simple, consistent action without extraneous detail nor distracting circumstances. In Plato's *The Republic*, **P** like the shadows in the cave encapsulate an abstract argument into a concrete, more easily grasped narrative.

Note...by combining intellectual appeal with emotional impact you will be able to add power to your message and increase the persuasiveness of your message.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parables>

Here we will only deal with parables, exemplification, and allegories as types of analogies, word illustrations, or examples.

Analogies, illustrations, and examples can be from life or fiction. They work best if they have some emotional or spiritual significance and reach the intellect of the listeners. They go beyond logic in motivating and persuading.

How many times have any of us done something that was not logical.

Emotions on the other hand have greater power to move individuals. If both intellect and emotions are addressed, you have a one-two punch that will help you succeed in your public speaking.

The apology can start at the introduction and be woven through the talk or it can be used as an explanation of a point to be reinforced.

Should draw the listener in

In the best instances, the speaker is able to draw each individual in the audience into the analogy or illustration so that a personal connection or relationship is made to the characters of the illustration.

If inanimate objects are used, these have to have a relationship to peoples every day life, desires, longing, or resolves.

For instance talking of how each of us can be like a brick of gold will have little meaning to most. Outside of pictures, most have never seen nor will never own one.

On the other hand describing how we can become even more precious to our marriage mate and our family by our persistent loyalty could be likened to the formation of a diamond.

Take a piece of coal, put pressure on it and in time that frail lump will become something durable, beautiful and priceless. So to in marriage, if we endure the stress and continue to allow it to make us better, we will become even more precious to our mates.

Listener should be able to relate

The analogy involved diamonds, coal, pressure and a moral. The elements most are familiar with.

To incorporate analogies, illustrations and examples in a speech requires some basic ground rules to prevent them from overwhelming or losing their import.

I heard a wonderful illustration about the harm of gossip over two decades ago. It told of how someone had been spreading a story about someone to all in the community. Upon hearing what was being said about him, the old man who was the subject of the gossip went to the person who started it and kindly explained the truth of the matter.

The gossip was cut to the heart. The emotions tore at this person so much so that they asked what could they do to make it up, to make things right.

The old man suggested to the gossip to take his feather pillow and go to the top of the World Trade Center. Then take a knife and cut it through. "Cut it from one side to the other on the end" he kindly made the request and then after a pause that seemed like an eternity he continued, "Then I would like you to take the feathers and shake them out in the wind. Shake a little on each side. A little here, a little there.

Once you have completed your task, and each and ever feather is gone, then I would like you to go and pick them all up."

The gossip said that would be impossible to do. The old man said, "Likewise, it is impossible for you to do anything more for me for because of what you have already done.

Perhaps instead, you could make sure you never let any feathers out of anyones else's pillow."

If you have ever had someone say something untrue or even hurtful about you, then this illustration will have a special meaning to you. If you have ever been wrong about someone in something you said, this will no doubt move you to use care in talking about others outside their presence.

Analogy caution

Care must be exercised otherwise the analogy will be remembered but not the persuasive or motivational purpose of the speech. The illustration needs to be on purpose and on point. Avoid needless details that detract from the purpose you hope to accomplish.

Illustrations or analogy need to be appropriate.

They need to be readily understandable by the audience.

Use care that they would not embarrass anyone or demean any one in the audience.

If you invest the time in learning how to create analogies, illustrations, and the like, the dividends will pay you handsomely. This is because the power they have to move the audience beyond just words alone.