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## Side Talk No. 06, How to Construct a Speech

North American Institute

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# EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

SIDE TALK No. 6

HOW TO CONSTRUCT  
A SPEECH



NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
CHICAGO

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CHICAGO**

# OUTLINE OF ASSIGNMENT.

## SIXTH MONTH.

### FIRST WEEK

*First*—Read this Side Talk on “How to Construct a Speech.”

*Second*—Read carefully Lesson No. 21, “How to Develop Compelling Power.”

*Third*—Practice as an Exercise, “The Building of the Ship,” page 103, Text Book, “Training of the Voice.”

*Fourth*—Read carefully the analysis of “A True Fast,” page 96, Text Book, “Analysis of Oratorical Style.”

*Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 21.

### SECOND WEEK

*First*—Read carefully Lesson No. 22, “Values and Relations.”

*Second*—Memorize the speech, “Dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg,” page 87, Text Book, “Selected Speeches for Practice,” and practice it orally.

*Third*—Read carefully the analysis of “The Mysteries,” page 100, Text Book, “Analysis of Oratorical Style.”

*Fourth*—Read carefully and analyze the argumentative method in “Liberty and Union,” page 82, Text Book, “Authorities on Oratory.”

*Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 22.

### THIRD WEEK

*First*—Read carefully Lesson No. 23, “How to Avoid Common Errors.”

*Second*—Practice as an Exercise, “The Rising of 1776,” page 105, Text Book, “Training of the Voice.”

*Third*—Read carefully and analyze the argumentative method in “The Coercion of Delinquent States,” page 94, Text Book, “Authorities on Oratory.”

*Fourth*—Make an original speech and practice it orally.

*Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 23.

## FOURTH WEEK

*First*—Read carefully Lesson No. 24, “Good Taste in Matter of Style and Delivery.”

*Second*—Read carefully Lesson No. 25, “Training the Memory.”

*Third*—Memorize the speech, “City Government,” page 108, Text Book, “Selected Speeches for Practice,” and practice it orally.

*Fourth*—Read carefully Chapter 5, Text Book, “Analysis of Oratorical Style.”

*Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lessons No. 24 and No. 25.

*“The king is the man who can.”*

*—Carlyle.*

# HOW TO CONSTRUCT A SPEECH

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The importance of the careful construction of a speech cannot be made too emphatic. The true phases and divisions of the thought cannot be exhibited with thorough clearness—and therefore with adequate effectiveness—except as they are set forth in their correct order and with precise and exact connections.

The student is urged to make a careful examination of the following speeches in order that this idea may be more thoroughly understood.

## PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

Senator Hayne maintained that “in case of a plain and palpable violation of the



Constitution by the general government, a state may interpose, and that this interposition is constitutional." Webster meets this argument as follows:

1. There yet remains to be performed, Mr. President, by far the most grave and important duty, which I feel to be devolved on me by this occasion. It is to state and defend what I conceive to be the true principles of the Constitution under which we are here assembled. I understand the honorable gentleman from South Carolina to maintain that it is a right of the state legislatures to interfere whenever, in their judgment, this government transcends its constitutional limits, and to arrest the operation of its laws.

2. I understand him to maintain this right, as a right existing under the Constitution, not as a right to overthrow it on the ground of extreme necessity, such as would justify violent revolution.

3. I understand him to maintain an authority, on the part of the states, thus to interfere, for the purpose of correcting the

exercise of power by the general government, of checking it, and of compelling it to conform to their opinion of the extent of its powers.

4. I understand him to maintain that the ultimate power of judging of the constitutional extent of its own authority is not lodged exclusively in the general government or any branch of it; but that, on the contrary, the states may lawfully decide for themselves, and each state for itself, whether in a given case the act of the general government transcends its power.

5. I understand him to insist that if the exigency of the case, in the opinion of any state government, require it, such state government may, by its own sovereign authority, annul an act of the general government which it deems plainly and palpably unconstitutional.

6. This is the sum of what I understand from him to be the South Carolina doctrine, and the doctrine which he maintains. I propose to consider it and compare it with the Constitution. Allow me to say as



a preliminary remark that I call this the South Carolina doctrine only because the gentleman himself has so denominated it. I do not feel at liberty to say that South Carolina, as a state, has ever advanced these sentiments. I hope she has not and never may. That a great majority of her people are opposed to the tariff laws is doubtless true. That a majority somewhat less than that just mentioned conscientiously believe these laws unconstitutional may probably also be true. But that any majority holds to the right of direct state interference, at state discretion,—the right of nullifying acts of Congress by acts of state legislation,—is more than I know, and what I shall be slow to believe.

7. The great question is, Whose prerogative is it to decide on the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of the laws? On that the main debate hinges. The proposition that, in case of a supposed violation of the Constitution by Congress, the states have a constitutional right to interfere and annul the law of Congress, is the proposi-

tion of the gentleman; I do not admit it. If the gentleman had intended no more than to assert the right of revolution for justifiable cause, he would have said only what all agree to. But I cannot conceive that there can be a middle course between submission to the laws, when regularly pronounced constitutional on the one hand, and open resistance, which is revolution or rebellion, on the other. I say the right of a state to annul a law of Congress cannot be maintained but on the ground of the unalienable right of man to resist oppression; that is to say, upon the ground of revolution. I admit that there is an ultimate violent remedy above the Constitution and in defiance of the Constitution, which may be resorted to when a revolution is to be justified. But I do not admit that under the Constitution, and in conformity with it, there is any mode in which a state government, as a member of the Union, can interfere and stop the progress of the general government, by force of her own laws, under any circumstances whatever.

8. This leads us to inquire into the origin of this government and the source of its power. Whose agent is it? Is it the creature of the state legislatures, or the creature of the people? If the government of the United States be the agent of the state governments, then they may control it, provided they can agree in the manner of controlling it; if it be the agent of the people, then the people alone can control it, restrain it, modify, or reform it. It is observable enough that the doctrine for which the honorable gentleman contends leads him to the necessity of maintaining not only that this general government is the creature of the states, but that it is the creature of each of the states severally, so that each may assert the power for itself of determining whether it acts within the limits of its authority. It is the servant of four and twenty masters, of different wills and different purposes, and yet bound to obey all.

9. This absurdity, for it seems no less, arises from a misconception as to the



origin of this government and its true character. It is, sir, the people's Constitution, the people's government; made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people. The people of the United States have declared that this Constitution shall be the supreme law. We must either admit the proposition or dispute their authority. The states are, unquestionably, sovereign, so far as their sovereignty is not affected by this supreme law. But the state legislatures, as political bodies, however sovereign, are yet not sovereign over the people. We are all agents of the same supreme power, the people.

10. I ask the gentleman, therefore, to come forth and declare whether, in his opinion, the New England States would have been justified in interfering to break up the embargo system under the conscientious opinions which they held upon it? Had they a right to annul that law? Does he admit, or deny? If that which is thought palpably unconstitutional in South

Carolina justifies that state in arresting the progress of the law, tell me whether that which was thought palpably unconstitutional also in Massachusetts would have justified her in doing the same thing? Sir, I deny the whole doctrine. It has not a foot of ground in the Constitution to stand on. No public man of reputation ever advanced it in Massachusetts, in the warmest times, or could maintain himself upon it there at any time. Sir, I deny this power of state legislatures altogether. It cannot stand the test of examination. In maintaining these sentiments, sir, I am but asserting the rights of the people. I state what they have declared, and insist on their right to declare it. They have chosen to repose this power in the general government, and I think it my duty to support it, like other constitutional powers.

11. For myself, sir, I do not admit the jurisdiction of South Carolina, or any other state, to prescribe my constitutional duty; or to settle, between me and the people, the validity of laws of Congress for which I



have voted. I decline her umpirage. I have not sworn to support the Constitution according to her construction of its clauses. I have not stipulated by my oath of office, or otherwise, to come under any responsibility except to the people and those whom they have appointed to pass upon the question whether laws, supported by my votes, conform to the Constitution of the country. And, sir, if we look to the general nature of the case, could anything have been more preposterous than to make a government for the whole Union, and yet leave its powers subject, not to one interpretation, but to thirteen or twenty-four interpretations? Instead of one tribunal, established by all, responsible to all, with power to decide for all, shall constitutional questions be left to four-and-twenty popular bodies, each at liberty to decide for itself, and none bound to respect the decisions of others; and each at liberty, too, to give a new construction on every new election of its own members? Would anything with such a principle in it, or rather with such a destitution of all

principle, be fit to be called a government? No, sir. It should not be denominated a Constitution. It should be called, rather, a collection of topics for everlasting controversy—heads of debate for a disputatious people. It would not be a government. It would not be adequate to any practical good, nor fit for any country to live under.

12. Now I wish to be informed how this state interference is to be put in practice without violence, bloodshed, and rebellion. We will take the existing case of the tariff law. South Carolina is said to have made up her opinion upon it. If we do not repeal it, as we probably shall not, she will then apply to the case the remedy of her doctrine. She will, we must suppose, pass a law of her legislature declaring the several acts of Congress, usually called the tariff laws, null and void, so far as they respect South Carolina or the citizens thereof. So far all is easy enough. But the collector at Charleston is collecting the duties imposed by these tariff laws; he,

therefore, must be stopped. The collector will seize the goods if the tariff duties are not paid. The state authorities will undertake their rescue; the marshal with his posse will come to the collector's aid, and here the contest begins. The militia of the state will be called out to sustain the nullifying act.

13. Direct collision, therefore, between force and force, is the unavoidable result of that remedy for the revision of unconstitutional laws which the gentleman contends for. It must happen to the very first case to which it is applied. Is not this the plain result? To resist, by force, the execution of a law generally is treason. Can the Courts of the United States take notice of the indulgence of a state to commit treason? The common saying that a state cannot commit treason herself is nothing to the purpose. Can she authorize others to do it? Talk about it as we will, these doctrines go to the length of revolution. They are incompatible with any peaceable administration of government. They lead



directly to disunion and civil commotion; and therefore it is at their commencement, when they are first found to be maintained by respectable men, and in a tangible form, I enter my public protest against them all.

### ANALYSIS

Par. 1. Note the care used to set forth the real point of discussion. Many speeches move on to the end without its ever being stated to the audience what the main idea of the speech is.

Pars. 2 to 5, inclusive, analyze Hayne's position. Every effort is made to secure a clear understanding of the situation.

Par. 6 opens with a sentence indicating the end of the analysis, thus preparing the minds for the answering argument.

Par. 7. This paragraph is opened by a restatement of the main point of contention, in the briefest possible compass. In the third sentence Webster restates the idea in another form still. Having developed one phase of the thought, the speaker states his first principle.

Par. 8. The opening sentence of this paragraph leads the hearer clearly to the next point of thought development. The new point brought forth in this first sentence becomes the topic of the paragraph, and is fully developed.

Par. 9. The first sentence at once sums up the argument of the preceding paragraph and also suggests the new point of inquiry. So far very close organic connection of paragraphs and thought, and logical unfolding of the thought have been secured.

Par. 10. This paragraph produces illustrations of the argument made in paragraph 9. The fifth word in the first sentence, "therefore," secures the connection between the two paragraphs.

Par. 11. The conclusion suggested by the illustrations used in paragraph 10, becomes the topic for the new paragraph. This first sentence is also the organic connective between the two paragraphs.

Par. 12. The first sentence again indicates the direction the new thought de-



velopment is going to take. The expression "state interference" becomes at once a connective between this paragraph and the preceding thought, and also a new descriptive term of the idea under debate.

Par. 13. The connection between this and the preceding paragraph is indicated by both the thought and a rhetorical connective. "Direct collision" is the logical idea that naturally follows the preceding argument, and the connective, "therefore," is also used to secure the organic joining of the paragraphs.

## FOREIGN POLICY

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

Mr. Gladstone discusses what he calls the "exploded doctrine of protection." He declares that the Conservative party used it as a campaign cry, and when they got into office they threw it to the winds. He then goes on to enunciate his principles of foreign policy.

1. Gentlemen, I will tell you what I think to be the right principles of foreign policy. The first thing is to foster the strength of the empire by just legislation and economy at home, thereby producing two of the great elements of national power—namely, wealth, which is a physical element, and union and contentment, which are moral elements, and to reserve the strength of the empire, to reserve the expenditure of that strength, for great and worthy occasions abroad. Here is my principle of foreign policy—good government at home.

My second principle of foreign policy is this: that its aim ought to be to preserve to the nations of the world—and especially, were it but for shame, when we recollect the sacred name we bear as Christians, especially to the Christian nations of the world—the blessings of peace. That is my second principle.

2. My third principle is this: even, gentlemen, when you do a good thing, you may do it in so bad a way that you may entirely spoil the beneficial effect; and if we were

to make ourselves the apostles of peace in the sense of conveying to the minds of other nations that we thought ourselves more entitled to an opinion on that subject than they are, or to deny their rights—well, very likely we should destroy the whole value of our doctrines. In my opinion the third sound principle is this: to strive to cultivate and maintain, aye, to the very uttermost, what is called the concert of Europe; to keep the powers of Europe in union together. And why? Because by keeping all in union together you neutralize, and fetter, and bind up the selfish aims of each. I am not here to flatter either England or any of them. They are selfish aims, as, unfortunately, we in late years have too sadly shown that we, too, have had selfish aims; but their common action is fatal to selfish aims. Common action means common objects; and the only objects for which you can unite together the powers of Europe are objects connected with the common good of them all. That, gentlemen, is my third principle of foreign policy.

3. My fourth principle is, that you should avoid needless and entangling engagements. You may boast about them, you may brag about them, you may say you are procuring consideration for the country. You may say that an Englishman can now hold up his head among the nations. You may say that he is now not in the hands of a Liberal ministry, who thought of nothing but pounds, shillings, and pence. But what does all this come to, gentlemen? It comes to this: that you are increasing your engagements without increasing your strength; and if you increase engagements without increasing strength, you diminish strength, you abolish strength; you really reduce the empire and do not increase it. You render it less capable of performing its duties; you render it an inheritance less precious to hand on to future generations.

4. My fifth principle is this, gentlemen: to acknowledge the equal rights of all nations. You may sympathize with one nation more than another. Nay, you must



sympathize in certain circumstances with one nation more than another. You sympathize most with those nations, as a rule, with which you have the closest connection in language, in blood, and in religion, or whose circumstances at the time seem to give the strongest claim to sympathy. But in point of right all are equal and you have no right to set up a system under which one of them is to be placed under moral suspicion or espionage, or to be made the constant subject of invective. If you do that, but especially if you claim for yourself a superiority, a pharisaical superiority over the whole of them, then I say you may talk about your patriotism if you please, but you are a misjudging friend of your country, and in undermining the basis of the esteem and respect of other people for your country you are in reality inflicting the severest injury upon it. I have now given you, gentlemen, five principles of foreign policy. Let me give you a sixth, and then I have done.

5. And that sixth is, that in my opinion



foreign policy is subject to all the limitations that I have described; the foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom. There should be a sympathy with freedom, a desire to give it scope, founded not upon visionary ideas, but upon the long experience of many generations within the shores of this happy isle, that in freedom you lay the firmest foundations both of loyalty and order; the firmest foundations for the development of individual character, and the best provision for the happiness of the nation at large. In the foreign policy of this country the name of Canning ever will be honored. The name of Russell ever will be honored. The name of Palmerston ever will be honored by those who recollect the erection of the kingdom of Belgium, and the union of the disjoined provinces of Italy. It is that sympathy, not a sympathy with disorder, but, on the contrary, founded upon the deepest and most profound love of order—it is that sympathy which in my opinion ought to be the very

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atmosphere in which a foreign secretary of England ought to live and to move.

### ANALYSIS

The foregoing furnishes an excellent example of very clear organization. The first sentence gives us the key to the whole discussion: "right principles of foreign policy." Inasmuch as the speaker takes but one paragraph to make clear what he means by each principle he sets forth, there will be found little connection between the paragraphs. But the organic unity is secured by the same mode of beginning each division of thought: "My second principle of foreign policy is," etc. Note that in three of the paragraphs the speaker states again which of the principles he has discussed. This makes for closer construction. The fifth paragraph is concluded with two sentences: one pointing backward, and the other pointing forward.

An ideal construction would have been secured had the speaker summed up at the end of the last paragraph by restating the entire six principles.