

# IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

A Guide to Effective Preparation  
and Presentation

by

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(Adapted for use in Oregon by Darren Eckstein)

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 1: Read the Unit on the Basics of Impromptu Speaking

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 2: Take the Impromptu Speaking Theory Quiz

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 3: Give 2 practice speeches to your coach or varsity impromptu speaker

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 4: Correct problems with basic format. Repeat step 3.

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 5: Collect content for future impromptu speeches

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 6: Practice Speeches--Hundreds of them!

\_\_\_\_\_ 25 \_\_\_\_\_ 50 \_\_\_\_\_ 75 \_\_\_\_\_ 100

\_\_\_\_\_ 125 \_\_\_\_\_ 150 \_\_\_\_\_ 175 \_\_\_\_\_ 200

\_\_\_\_\_ 225 \_\_\_\_\_ 250 \_\_\_\_\_ 275 \_\_\_\_\_ 300

## BASICS OF IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

Webster's defines "impromptu" as "something done offhand, at the moment without previous preparation." Technically, that is what impromptu speaking is all about--speaking 'off-the-cuff'. But, in reality, impromptu speaking involves extensive preparation to increase your knowledge base so that you will have some useful material no matter what you draw as a topic.

In Impromptu Speaking, the speaker draws a slip of paper with three potential topics on it. The speaker then thinks about the topics, selects one, prepares some basic ideas on the topic, and then presents a five minute speech on that topic.

The most common type of organization used in impromptu speaking assigns 6 or 7 speakers to a room. The speakers report to the room where a judge is waiting with topics. The speakers are given a speaking position by the tournament committee. The judge will ask for the first speaker and present the contestant with a slip of paper containing three topics. From that time, the speaker has a few moments to select the topic, compose his/her thoughts and present the five minute speech. The judge then calls for the next speaker and repeats the process until all contestants have had an opportunity to speak. The judge then rates the speakers 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th. Ties are allowed for 4th place, but not for 1st through 3rd, except at the District and State Tournaments, at which no ties may be given.

This process is repeated for a number of rounds, most commonly three. Then the tournament committee selects the contestants with the best overall ratings. For example, a contestant receiving a rating of '1st' in all three rounds would have a total rating of '3' by adding the three ratings together. If the tournament includes semifinals, the tournament committee will select the 12 to 14 top contestants and place them in the semifinal rounds. The top contestants in each semifinal would then progress to a final round. Places in the final round would determine overall places in the tournament. Some tournaments base overall place on the final round only. Most base overall place on the scores of all preliminary rounds added to the scores of the elimination rounds.

# TOPICS

There are a number of types of topics which are very common at tournaments. There really are no restrictions on what an impromptu contestant may draw for a topic at other invitational tournaments.

Wise Sayings are one category of topic. Examples are: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," and "A rolling stone gathers no moss." With this type of topic, the speaker must first decide what the topic means, not just on a literal level, but on an abstract level as well. For example, with the topic "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," the literal meaning is that if the heat in the kitchen is too great for you to tolerate, you should leave the kitchen. But if that is all the impromptu speaker talks about, the rating would not be very good. In reality, the good impromptu speaker will try to determine the abstract meaning of the saying and use that meaning as the topic of the speech. On an abstract level, this topic really deals with how we handle stress and pressure. It suggests that you should not put yourself in positions of pressure if you aren't the type of person who can handle it. From this, a speaker might include discussion about the pressure to get good grades, the pressure on public figures, or the stress of leadership, as well as providing solutions for handling stress. Each of these areas would allow the speaker to use specific illustrations and examples, as well as other types of support materials. These would make the speech far more interesting than one which analyzed the topic only on a literal level.

Famous quotations are a similar type of topic. An example might be "That government is best which governs least"--Thomas Jefferson. Many of the quotations used are so common that this type of topic becomes confused with the wise old sayings. Again, the speaker must decide what the quotation means, and that meaning then becomes the subject of the speech.

One word abstracts are a third type of topic commonly used in impromptu speaking. These are topics like love, honesty, courage, integrity and success. These topics allow the speaker a great deal of range in the specific content of the speech. For some speakers, this is an advantage because it allows them to apply specific knowledge and content to build an interesting speech. For other speakers, this range becomes a disadvantage because it doesn't provide direction for the speech, so the speech tends to wander and ramble, without making a specific point. For example, with the topic "love," one speaker might ramble and talk about everything related to love which comes to mind. But a more focused speaker might choose to talk only about the difference between love and infatuation. This would be a much better speech.

One word topics can include any single word. Some examples include rock, tree, song, and blue. Again, some speakers will talk about everything which the topic calls to mind, while a more experienced speaker will tend to isolate a single thesis statement from the topic and concentrate only on it. With the topic "blue," I have heard a speech in which the speaker simply began listing all the blue things that came to mind. How boring and pointless! A stronger speaker with the same topic might choose to talk about the thesis: Pollution is robbing us of the ability to enjoy our blue skies. Or the speaker might interpret blue to mean "having the blues" and talk about

depression. Again, these would be better speeches, because they are focused and each has a specific thesis.

Social value topics are another commonly used type of topic. These topics deal with current events, but in a general way. Examples might include "How can America's educational system be saved?" and "Are we winning the war on drugs?" These topics allow a speaker to call on some background knowledge of current issues, while adding an editorial slant from personal opinion. For many speakers, these are the toughest type of topics, because they lack current events knowledge--they aren't well-informed. But for speakers willing to do a little preparation, these topics can be a source of consistently strong rankings.

While those are the most common types of topics, they are by no means the only types. The Copper Classic Tournament, hosted at Bingham High School, always uses song titles for final round topics. The Weber State University Tournament has used political cartoons as topics. And a couple of tournaments have used objects as topics. The speaker would reach into a bag, pull out an object, and that object would become the topic. At least one tournament put fortune cookies in a bag and the topic inside the cookie was used as the topic for the speech!

These categories of topics suggest that impromptu speakers can draw just about anything for a topic. It is up to the speaker to decide the meaning of the topic and how s/he will structure a speech around that meaning.

## STRUCTURE OF IMPROMPTU

A good speech always has three distinct parts--an introduction, the body of the speech, and a conclusion. While an impromptu speech may sacrifice some of the quality of a normal speech due to limited preparation time, it still contains these basic requirements.

The Introduction--Before a speaker can develop an adequate introduction for an impromptu speech, it is useful to review the purposes for an introduction. An introduction serves to light a fire under the audience and motivate them to listen. It provides the thesis statement to direct the content of the rest of the speech. It provides the basic organization, which sets up the direction for the rest of the speech. And, in the case of impromptu speaking, it also provides the speaker with a little extra time to do some thinking about additional content to be developed as the speech progresses.

With these purposes in mind, an impromptu speaker will generally begin with some kind of epigram--for example, a story, a joke, a quotation or an analogy--which has as its main theme the basic point the speaker has decided to make in the speech. The speaker will then explain this point as a means of setting up the thesis statement, which is presented next. After the thesis statement, an impromptu speaker will generally provide a preview of the main ideas which will be developed in the body of the speech. A speaker will use between 2 and 5 of these ideas, with 3 being the most common. This preview helps structure the speech by providing the judge with the

organization which will be used in the body of the speech. It also helps the speaker remember the ideas to be developed. By following the simple 'roadmap' the speaker has established in the preview, the speaker provides direction and purpose to the rest of the speech. If the areas are chosen well, they help the speaker logically develop the point provided in the thesis statement.

Some speakers choose to omit the preview. Instead, they develop the areas of the speech as they unfold during presentation, but without the prediction and roadmapping provided by a normal preview. They do so because this structure allows more flexibility (what happens if you change your mind after presenting a preview?) and because it adds a slight element of surprise since the preview gives away the conclusion you will try to reach from the start. While this method has some slight advantages, it is also more difficult and is not recommended for beginning speakers.

The Body of the Speech--The speaker then makes a transition into the first of the three areas of the body of the speech. In each major area, the speaker will try to offer further analysis by providing subpoints which help to develop this idea. At each step, the speaker will try to include stories, illustrations, quotations and other support material to help the audience understand the point being made, and to make the speech more interesting.

The speaker will then make a transitional statement leading to the second area of the body of the speech and repeat the process followed in the first area. Repeating the process for the third area concludes the development of the body of the speech.

Many speakers will use standard patterns for the organizational structure of the body of the speech. For example, on some subjects, impromptu speakers might use the 'pro-con-opinion' pattern. With this organizational structure, the speaker presents reasons in favor of some controversial idea as the first major area of the body of the speech, reasons against the idea as the second area, and develops his/her own personal opinion on the issue as the third area of the speech. Other standard patterns include the 'past-present-future' pattern, and the 'causes-effects-solutions' pattern. Many experienced speakers develop their own patterns, adapting them to the specific requirements provided by changing topics. And many choose a standard third area in which they apply the issue raised by the topic to our own lives. They do this because the ballot for impromptu speaking asks the judge to rate the speaker on how well s/he applies the material to real life.

The Conclusion--The third and final component of a speech is the conclusion. In Impromptu Speaking, the conclusion will usually attempt to do two things: summarize the basic point the speaker has been trying to make, and tie the speech together by referring back to the story or epigram used in the introduction.

## PRE-TOURNAMENT PREPARATION

While the title of the event suggests that no preparation goes into an impromptu speech other than that done during the one minute after drawing the topic, the reality is that the best

impromptu speakers dominate the tournaments because of the amount of work they do before and between tournaments. There are many things a good speaker can do to improve the quality of the speeches given at tournaments.

First, a good impromptu speaker understands the basics of the event. The best way to do this is to PRACTICE! A good impromptu speaker who wishes to qualify to State in March should set a goal of 300 practice speeches between the time s/he is assigned to impromptu speaking and the District Tournament. While this seems like a huge number of speeches, remember that each requires only 5 minutes maximum. And remember that you have a lot of time--if you begin now. If you wait until February, it will be impossible to finish 300 practice speeches, and impossible to develop enough as a speaker to be a real threat in this event.

When doing practice speeches, remember to do the things that will eventually make you a tournament winner in this event. First, use different types of topics. It does little good to practice one type of topic so often that you get strong ratings on that type, but poor ratings on all other types. Instead, practice all types of topics so that you can develop the ability to give strong speeches on all types of topics. In fact, you should concentrate more practice time on your weaknesses than your strengths. If you do, some of these weaknesses may become strengths. Only when you can get strong ratings on all types of topics will you be the speaker who can win tournaments and command the respect of other speakers in your event.

Second, practice different techniques. For example, practice using poetry as your introduction. If you aren't comfortable with poetry, keep practicing until it is easy and until you have the flexibility to use it any time the topic requires it. Practice using jokes, stories, different voices, characters, singing and any other technique you can imagine. You may find that some of these techniques don't fit your style. But you may expand your abilities to include some of these techniques and make your style that much stronger. But at least you will develop and define your style so that you know what you can do well.

You will discover that some topics recur. While the wording of the topic may change from time to time, certain areas will surface as topics over and over. For example, topics dealing with success, effort, self improvement and overcoming obstacles seem to surface at every tournament. A good impromptu speaker will begin to make a list of these areas and will research and develop stock speeches on these topics. Then, if the topic surfaces again, you will have a strong speech all ready to go! CAUTION! Some speakers try to make a stock speech work in situations where it is not appropriate. They stretch and distort the speech or the topic to try to get the speech to fit the topic. Do not do this! If you do, you will likely receive ballots with poor ratings which indicate that you only marginally dealt with your topic.

The second thing a good impromptu speaker will do is to collect content. I'm sure you have heard speeches in which the speaker does not illustrate or provide examples, but just drones on and on analyzing the subject. These speeches tend to be very boring. Support materials (stories, examples, jokes, illustrations, quotations etc.) provide the interest in speeches and help the audience better understand the point you are trying to develop. So go looking for them! Get a 3

by 5 cardfile box and write down anything you read which could be useful as an introduction or as content in your speeches. The act of writing them down will commit many of them to memory. Work on memorizing the others, and practice delivering them so that they are smooth and effective. Memorizing stories, jokes, examples and other types of support material is the single most important step you can take in improving the content of your speeches. Then, read through your file of materials occasionally so that you become comfortable with more and more of the material you have collected.

There are some standard places to look for this kind of material. Look in books which give short illustrations of this kind. For example, biographical dictionaries tend to provide short summaries of important figures and their lives. Look in the newspaper and look for the small boxes which contain human interest stories. Try to locate books which give short stories about people doing exceptional things under exceptional circumstances. Collect good poetry and quotations and add them to your file. When you hear a good story in a speech given by someone else, write it down and add it to your file. For example, at the 1992 Salt Lake Country Democratic Convention, Phil Riessen, formerly a news anchorman for a local TV station, told this story:

Once while walking home, a man found a large cocoon. He decided to take the cocoon home to watch the miracle of change as the worm which had spun the cocoon turned into a beautiful butterfly. He watched each day and, for many days, saw no change. But then, one day the butterfly began to emerge from the cocoon. But the struggle was difficult, and the butterfly began to tire. The man, fearing that the butterfly would not be able to break out of the cocoon, took a small knife and broke open the shell to allow the butterfly to emerge without the struggle. But what emerged was a misshapen, bloated body with tiny little undeveloped wings. The butterfly was doomed. For the struggle to free itself from the cocoon was intended by nature to force liquid into the wings to force them to expand and develop. But without the struggle, the wings would never develop and the creature would soon die. Sometimes the struggles of life can bring out the true power and beauty that lies hidden in each of us.

What a great story! And what an unlikely place to find it. Get the basics of your event down through lots of practice and you will find that appropriate materials are all around you.

Finally, practice for audiences as often as possible. And get feedback from the audiences. If you can learn your weaknesses and strengths in practice situations, you can remediate your weaknesses without the pain of low tournament ratings, and you can learn to capitalize on those things you do well.

## Tournament Procedure

So now you are at the tournament and it is your turn to speak. What do you do now?



First, concentrate on the task at hand. Don't panic! Think "What am I going to say?" not "What am I going to do?" If you concentrate on what you want to use as content, you will be less likely to panic and more likely to be able to think of effective and interesting materials to include.

Second, after receiving your topic slip, turn your back to the judge and the audience. This will allow you to concentrate and eliminate many distractions. Some speakers also close their eyes for the same reason. If this improves your ability to concentrate on the task at hand, then do so.

Third, select the topic on impulse. You don't have time to think about each topic and what you could do with it. Your preparation time will expire and you will still be trying to pick your topic. Instead, simply read the topics through once, and pick the topic on impulse. Usually your impulses will suggest the topic in which you are interested or about which you already have a significant body of knowledge or a strong opinion. Any of these reasons will make it possible for you to give an effective speech on that topic. So don't spend valuable time selecting the topic. Simply pick on impulse and devote your limited preparation time to developing something to say about the topic. As a rule of thumb, spend no more than five seconds to select the topic after reading the three choices.

Fourth, try to decide what point you will make. Remember that topics usually suggest areas of discussion, but do not give a specific thesis. It is the speaker's responsibility to decide the point s/he will try to make as the thesis of the speech.

Fifth, think of the introduction/conclusion tool that you will use. Pick the story or joke or illustration that you will use so that it sets up the thesis and provides a smooth and entertaining beginning for the speech.

Sixth, think of the three major subtopics that you will use as the body of your speech. Try to phrase each one with specific language (not just as a hazy idea), and try to phrase them in similar ways so that they will be easier to remember.

Spend the remainder of your preparation time repeating the 5 major items you have developed: the thesis, the introduction and conclusion tool, and the three areas of the body of the speech. It is unlikely that you will be able to develop much beyond these five things in the short time you are allotted to prepare. And, even if you could, it becomes more difficult to remember them. The rest of the content in your speech will be off-the-cuff. Remember that the more work you have done in collecting and memorizing content the more likely it is that some of the things you have collected will come to mind as appropriate content as you are speaking.

When you are ready to begin, turn back to the judge and the audience and begin delivering your speech.

## Delivery

In delivering the speech, remember that the initial impression you make with the judge is very important. This begins from the moment the judge sees you, not just from the point at which you begin your speech. So you should always practice courtesy and control. The speaker who laughs and giggles and acts inappropriately may receive low ratings from many judges even though the speeches s/he gives are effective. Remember, too, that your personal appearance is part of your initial impression. So you should always be clean and neat and dressed appropriately.

Next, concentrate on the physical end of delivery. Try to maintain a confident expression, even if you do have butterflies in your stomach. Keep gestures under control. Use your hands when appropriate, but all gestures should be definite and should have a stop to them to show strength and control. Remember that facial and body animation contribute to the speech. Your face should always express the same emotion as your speech. If you are talking about death and starvation, you should not be smiling. If you are talking about joy and happiness, your face should not reflect fear or sadness.

Work on voice control. Try to have strong, forceful delivery. Don't sound weak and uncontrolled. Try to imagine famous people as good impromptu speakers. Imagine Robin Williams as an impromptu speaker. Do you think he would be weak and wimpy? Or would he be fun, strong, entertaining, energetic and confident? Now try to imitate the things about his style you admire and make them part of your own effective style. Remember that vocal inflections are used to show emotions or to provide stress on a significant point. So use your voice to make some points stand out or to show the emotion needed to convey the proper meaning or to persuade the judge to your point of view.

Remember that this is a personality event. A judge will vote for someone s/he likes. So let the judge see your personality. Have fun with the speech and work hard to say something in a smooth and entertaining fashion. Also, give the judge credit for basic intelligence. Don't seem to doubt his/her intelligence.

Next, understand the importance of choice of language. This is a formal speaking event, so formal language is appropriate. That means you should eliminate slang. And it means you should try to select language that is definite, concrete and colorful. Paint pictures with words and your judge will be impressed.

Avoid introducing anything which might divert the minds of your audience from your main point. You have heard speakers who got sidetracked on some unimportant detail and forgot about the main point s/he was trying to make. Stay on course, with definite steps and progress toward the goal of your speech.

Finish one thought at a time. Impress it clearly on the minds of your audience and then move on to your next point. If you get bogged down trying to present several ideas at once, you will lose clarity and direction.

Next, avoid hesitation, delay and uncertainty. You should always be in control. When you hesitate, it makes the judge believe you don't have a plan for the speech.

Finally, try to read your judge. If the judge seems bored with your presentation, you might need to increase your energy level or change the direction of your speech. You might also want to offer examples or illustrations to increase the judge's level of understanding.

In summary, winning speakers in impromptu, as in any other speaking situation, do three basic things. First, they make an interesting point. You can do this by selecting a specific thesis statement and by using varied and plentiful illustrations, examples and other support materials. Second, they are organized. You can do this by using and following a preview to set up the major areas of the body of the speech. Finally, they have effective delivery. Fluency will be easy if you have an effective introduction and organization to point you in a specific direction. Also, you might want to consider speaking just a bit slower than normal, so that your mind can keep up with your mouth. In addition, effective delivery should be confident and energetic.

Impromptu is much easier than you might initially believe! You are trying to accomplish three things: Just say something (a specific thesis statement will insure this) interesting (memorizing content stories and examples will insure this) in an organized (three-point previews will provide this), energetic (show some pizzazz and style and have fun!) and fluent manner (slow down a little so that your brain can stay ahead of your mouth), and you will be a champion!

## IMPROMPTU SPEAKING: BASIC THEORY QUIZ

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. List three things an impromptu introduction tries to accomplish.

2. An introduction usually begins with what?

3. What is a preview? What is its purpose?

4. What is a thesis statement?

5. What 5 things does an impromptu speaker develop during the few moments of prep time?

6. Speeches without content are boring. What makes speeches interesting?

7. An impromptu speaker tries to accomplish three things. List them.

8. Explain the basic procedure in an impromptu speaking tournament.

9. List four types of topics an impromptu speaker might be given.

10. Using the topic "Winning," outline an impromptu speech on the back of this test.

## IMPROMPTU TOPICS--ONE WORD TOPICS

silver

oranges

marriage

infinity

shapes

self-esteem

politics

poetry

intelligence

capability

discrimination

youth

window

clock

ballet

money

guns

storms

wheels

disaster

prejudice

friendship

blue

rapid

jealousy

home

war

reminisce

freedom

rain

death

shy

hair

advice

heart

triumph

sun

clock

valiant

daring

show

earth

expert

togetherness

heaven

impression

special

faith

gray

natural

fear

aging

mud

harm

child

honor

foreign

genius

nude

dumb

duties

dynamic

impromptu

elevation

chocolate

king

foundation

center

apples

heart

success

original

individuality

decision

sacrifice

hell

eggs

books

will

originality

snakes

exercise

laziness

clocks



stress

space

celebrations

hate

youth

silence

personal

gain

paid

green

shadow

depression

window

passion

scavenger

sand

pink

knowledge

true

fads

red

vandal

hopefulness

garbage

circle

exception

loyalty

wall

behavior

establish

balloon

ceilings

enthusiasm

height

action

yellow

energy

happiness

burden

pledge

educational

guard

elegant

purple

fortune

sudden

flake

trees

intruding

silence

education

nutrition

poverty

heritage

communication

taxes

computer

survival

pen

daydream

anger

nose

loneliness

parade

noise

flowers

center

peak

courage

eggs

solitude

record

procrastination

carpet

sly

apathy

books

marriage

scholar

heat

sky

emotion

under

crusade

television

wise

hope

white

shapes

evolve

trust

friend

evaluate

balance

wallpaper

protest

hazard

brave

fog

black

horror

economy

society

hostess

hot

force

foolish

seashells

war

death

emotion

earth

vertical

provocative

adventure

nightmare

greed

pink

passion

ignorance

oscar

memories

persistence

history

time

ocean

philosophy

fugitive

lightbulbs

health

listen

socks

condescend

heed

kill

pillow

perpetual

junk

bricks

tentative

love

ability

prejudice

blue

clock

fog

paper

fish

rivers

stars

integrity

character

sun

balance

brave

brilliant

clouds

fame

boundary

fulfillment

hearty

limits

peak

record

under

harm

stairs

instinct

agree

promise

octopus

capability

portray

judge

desk

abusive

hatred

worth

relationship

destroy

liberty

equality

youth

window

will

honor

duty

rock

sand

daring

child

forward



heavy

real

triumph

valid

grief

hazard

prepare

expert

valiant

true

scavenger

personal

equality

relation

just

heed

burden

extreme

pride

coke

openminded

worship

hero

survive

hunger

despair

pride

guest

folder

necessary

leisure

quest

practice

worth

chicken

democracy

honor

glory

learn

music

thunder

storm

sanction

corruption

government

election

vote

hats

step

wheel

pledge

perpetual

cost

design

instant

quick

future

power

drugs

sailing

water

copy

tentative

tickle

mouse

bear

show

mankind

secret

smile

art

bridge

invention

ladder

picture

print

sports

phone

ozone

invisible

wire

drink

sadness

decoration

plumbing

horse

shade

mow

## IMPROMPTU TOPICS--WISE SAYINGS & QUOTATIONS

Wars were never started by those in earnest search of the true bond of friendship.

Friendship is a good knot, not tangled with selfish emotions, but tied properly with genuine concern.

A smooth path might get you there faster, but a rough trail teaches you more.

He who reaches for things beyond his grasp may find more happiness than one who strives only for things within his reach.

A persons is just about as happy as he makes up his mind to be.

Good, better, best. Never let me rest until my better's best.

If you think you'll lose, you've lost.

Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn!

I have not yet begun to fight.

Give me liberty or give me death.

On, beware my lord, of jealousy. It is the green-eyed monster.

Trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmation strong.

She was false as water.

It there's a gateway into Hell, there's a gateway out.

By and by never comes.

Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday.

As he rose like a rocket, he fell like a stick.

He who can bear fortune, can also beware of fortune.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

If we don't change direction we will arrive at where we are going.

You can not do wrong and feel right.

The world owes you a living only when you have earned it.

Your destiny is in your own hands and your important decisions are your own to make.

We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life.

No snowflake in an avalanche feels responsible.

When everyone thinks alike, no one thinks very much.

If I am not happy with me, other people will suffer.

Let every man sing his own song in life.

When a fellow begins to understand that he doesn't understand, he is beginning to understand.

Never point a gun at anything you don't intend to shoot.

Success is never final.

The past is to learn from and not to live in.

Do you want to repent or rationalize?

He who stops being better stops being good.

The truth never hurts unless it ought to.

The young, whether or not they know it, live on borrowed property.

People who say the show must go on have never seen the show.

Everyone can deal with perfect people, but our goal should be to work with imperfect people.

Experience is a hard teacher; she gives the test first and the lesson afterwards.

A true friend is as a flower in the desert.

People can't change the truth, but truth can change the people.

If anything can go wrong, it will.

A stitch in time saves nine.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Happiness is not getting everything you like, but liking

everything you get.

As a man thinketh, so is he.

On every road to success, there is always a McDonalds.

Things that are easy are seldom worthwhile.

To have a friend you must first be a friend.

Make hay while the sun shines.

He who laughs last laughs best.

Experience is not what happens to you, but what you do  
with what happens to you.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Time is a circus, always packing up and moving on.

When people are free to do as they please, they usually  
imitate each other.

If you wish to reach the highest, begin at the lowest.

I was born an American; I live an American; I shall die an  
American.

When angry, count four; when very angry, swear.

Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.

Apathy is a sort of living oblivion.

You are only what you are when no one is looking.

A jury is a group of twelve people of average ignorance.

The reason the way of the transgressor is hard is because it's so crowded.

Blood will tell, but often it tells too much.

Man is the only animal that blushes--or needs to.  
Who bravely dares must sometimes risk a fall.  
Who escapes a duty, avoids a gain.  
Many a man never fails because he never tries.  
Complete equality means universal irresponsibility.  
The only real equality is in the cemetery.  
A burnt child dreads the fire.  
He's no failure; he's not dead yet.  
Believe half of what you see and none of what you hear.  
I would rather start a family than finish one.  
The only thing we need fear is fear itself.  
Force is not a remedy.  
Never trust a smiling cat.  
A hungry man is not a free man.  
Sometimes the best gain is to lose.  
One should eat to live, not live to eat.  
When nature has work to be done, she creates a genius to do it.  
Acorns were good until bread was found.  
We are shaped and fashioned by what we love.  
God heals and doctors take the fee.  
Money often costs too much.  
Youth comes but once in a lifetime.  
Cleverness is not wisdom.  
Communism means barbarism.



There's a sucker born every minute.

Society prepares the crime, the criminal commits it.

Set a thief to catch a thief.

Even the lion has to defend himself from the flies.

As soon as there is life there is danger.

He who hesitates is lost.

Honesty is the best policy.

The third time is the charm.

Love is blind.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Pretty is as pretty does.

When in doubt, tell the truth.

Turn the other cheek.

Beauty is only skin deep.

Don't count your chickens before they hatch.

You can't have your cake and eat it too.

Look before you leap.

Good fences make good neighbors.

The grass is always greener on the other side.

Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

Blood is thicker than water.

All's fair in love and war.

The course of true love never runs smooth.

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

It's not enough to aim, but to hit.

A good soldier is not warlike.

The dictionary is the only place where you can find success before work.

Today is the early memory of tomorrow.

To borrow is to give up your freedom.

If you aim to hit the stars, you'll hit the mountain tops; if you aim for the mountain tops, you'll hit the roof tops; if you aim for the roof tops, you'll never get off the ground.

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Success is not found in never failing, but in rising every time you fail.

Happiness consists of three things; work to do, a clean conscience, and someone to love.

He who says little in his actions says much.

Murphy was an optimist.

Life is just a bowl of cherries.

If life is just a bowl of cherries, how come I'm in the pits?

If at first you don't succeed, you're fired.

## IMPROMPTU TOPICS--QUOTATIONS

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

--John F. Kennedy

The computer is a moron.

--Peter Drucker

The cost of living is going up and the chance of living is going down.

--Flip Wilson

Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.

--John F. Kennedy

Don't complain. Don't explain.

--Henry Ford II

Nothing is illegal if one hundred businessmen decide to do it.

--Andrew Young

There's no reason to be the richest man in the cemetery. You can't do any business from there.

--Colonel Sanders

History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing to the future. To try to hold fast is to be swept aside.

--John F. Kennedy

All currency is neurotic currency.

--Norman O. Brown

The more money an American accumulates, the less interesting he becomes.

--Gore Vidal

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

--Milton Friedman

The United States has to move very fast to even stand still.

--John F. Kennedy

The only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn.

--Earl Warren

We develop the kind of citizens we deserve.

--Robert F. Kennedy

Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value.

--Albert Einstein

Nothing recedes like success.

--Walter Winchell

One fifth of the people are against everything all of the time.

--Robert F. Kennedy

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.

--John F. Kennedy

Never get angry. Never make a threat. Reason with people.

--Don Corleone

The reason why worry kills more people than works is that more people worry than work.

--Robert Frost

To be successful, a woman has to be much better at her job than a man.

--Golda Meir

If we cannot now end our differences at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.

--John F. Kennedy

Wealth is the product of man's capacity to think.

--Ayn Rand

Choice has always been a privilege of those who could pay for it.

--Ellen Frankfort

The buck stops with the guy who signs the checks.

--Rupert Murdoch

If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

--John F. Kennedy

Money is the barometer of society's virtue.

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

--Bill Cosby

Yesterday I was a dog. Today I'm still a dog. Tomorrow I'll probably still be a dog. SIGH. There's so little hope for advancement.

--Snoopy

Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind.

--John F. Kennedy

If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments.

--Earl Wilson

An honest man is one who knows that he can't consume more than he has produced.

--Ayn Rand

I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive.

--Henry Miller

Victory has a hundred fathers and defeat is an orphan.

--John F. Kennedy

We can never have enough of that we all do not want.

--Eric Hoffer

Money is like manure. You have to spread it around or it smells.

--J. Paul Getty

The world at large does not judge us by who we are and what we know; it judges us for what we have.

--Dr. Joyce Brothers

The man who damns money has obtained it dishonestly; the man who respects it has earned it.

--Ayn Rand

We would like to live as we once lived, but history will not permit it.

--John F. Kennedy

People who bite the hand that feeds them usually lick the boot that kicks them.

--Eric Hoffer

The best minds are not in government. If any were, business would hire them anyway.

--Ronald Reagan.

The government solution to a problem is usually as bad as the problem.

--Milton Friedman

To succeed it is necessary to accept the world as it is and rise above it.

--Michael Kordo

A bank is a place where they lend you an umbrella in fair weather and ask for it back again when it begins to rain.

--Robert Frost

If women didn't exist, all the money in the world would have no meaning.

--Aristotle Onassis

Half the world is composed of idiots, the other half of people clever enough to take indecent advantage of them.

--Walter Kerr

People are not born bastards. They have to work at it.

--Rod McKuen

Slump, and the world slumps with you. Push and you push alone.

--Laurence Peter

Be awful nice to 'em going up, because you're gonna meet 'em all comin' down.

A lot of fellows nowadays have a B.A., M.D., or Ph. D. Unfortunately, they don't have a J.O.B.

--Fats Domino

Nowadays people can be divided into three classes--The Haves, the Have-Nots, and the Have-Not-Paid-For-What-They-Haves.

--Earl Wilson

A genius is one who can do anything except make a living.

--Joey Adams

Work is the curse of the drinking classes.

--Mike Romanoff

The world is full of willing people--some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.

--Robert Frost

Where all think alike, no one thinks very much.

--Walter Lippman

The real problem is what to do with the problem-solvers after the problems are solved.

--Gay Talese

Obviously, the answer to oil spills is to paper-train the tankers.



--Ralph Nader

Man cannot live by incompetence alone.

--Laurence Peter

The feminine mystique has succeeded in burying millions of American women alive.

--Betty Friedman

A liberated woman is one who feels confident in herself, and is happy in what she is doing. She is a person who has a sense of self--it all comes down to a freedom of choice.

--Betty Ford

If I have to, I can do anything. I am strong; I am invincible; I am a woman.

--Helen Reddy

Anatomy is destiny.

--Sigmund Freud

Boys will be boys these days and so, apparently, will girls.

--Jane Howard

If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament.

--Florynce Kennedy

All men are rapists and that's all they are. They rape us with their eyes, their laws, and their codes.

--Marilyn French

The image of a woman as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs.

--Kate Millett

The notion that the maternal wish and the activity of mothering are instinctive or biologically predestined is baloney.

--Betty Rollin

The biggest sin is sitting on your ass.

--Florynce Kennedy

I don't think that man is a woman's natural enemy. Perhaps his lawyer is.

--Shana Alexander

They say women talk too much. If you have worked in congress you know that the filibuster was invented by men.

--Clare Boothe Luce

Don't agonize. Organize.

--Florynce Kennedy

God made man, and then said I can do better than that and made women.

--Adela Rogers St. John

Women's virtue is man's greatest invention.

--Cornelia Otis Skinner

Work is not really new for women; what is new for women is the chance to be leaders.

--Clay Felker

You cannot decree women to be sexually free when they are not economically free.

--Shere Hite

No gesture is more gallant than the courage to spit in the eye.

There is a fine line between being sweet and innocent and being a tough broad.

--Phyllis George

A sharp knife cuts the quickest and hurts the least.

--Katherine Hepburn

Women--the greatest natural resource in the world today.

--Edward Steichen

Freedom, especially a woman's freedom, is a conquest to be made, not a gift to be received. It isn't granted. It must be taken.

--Federico Fellini

We have the right to our own bodies.

--Shere Hite

All too many men still seem to believe in a rather naive and egocentric way, that what feels good to them is automatically what feels good to women.

--Shere Hite

Free to be you and me.

--Marlo Thomas

All human life on the planet is born of women.

--Adrienne Rich

The woman is the fiber of the nation. She is the producer of life. A nation is only as good as its women.

--Muhammad Ali

I'd like to thank God, because SHE makes everything possible.

--Helen Reddy

The basic and essential human is the woman.

--Orson Wells

Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves.

--Betty Friedman

When you win, nothing hurts.

--Joe Namath

A spur of the moment is the essence of adventure.

--Anthony Armstrong-Jones

Man is not made for defeat.

--Ernest Hemingway

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.

--Carl Sagan

American youth is looking for a reason to die.

--Jerry Rubin

Violence is as American as cherry pie.

--Stokley Carmichael

High school students are the largest oppressed minority in America.

--Mario Savio

If you want a symbolic gesture, don't burn the flag, wash it.

--Norman Thomas

If you want to make beautiful music, you must play the black and the white notes together.

--Richard Nixon

A black person never leaves the ghetto.

--Sammy Davis Jr.

Nobody will save us from us but us.

--Reverend Jesse Jackson

A man who won't die for something is not fit to live.

--Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

We are a feelingless people. If we could really feel, the pain would be so great that we would stop all the suffering.

--Julian Beck

Oh, my friend, it's not what they take away from you that counts--it's what you do with what you have left.

--Hubert Humphrey

You can kill a man but you can't kill an idea.

--Medgar Evers

Politics is the art of the possible.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

A man without a vote is a man without protection.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

You never want to give a man a present when he's feeling good.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

What convinces is conviction.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

You ain't learnin' nothin' when you're talkin'.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

We are going to have peace even if we have to fight for it.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

We did not choose to be the guardians at the gate. But there is no one else.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

War is not healthy for children and other living things.

--Antiwar Poster

All wars are popular for the first thirty days.

--Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Wars have never hurt anybody except the people who die.

--Salvador Dali

We need to devise a system within which peace will be more rewarding than war.

--Margaret Mead

Love means never having to say you're sorry.

--Erich Segal

Love never makes demands. Love is unconditional acceptance of him and his feelings.

--Marabel Morgan

Men are always ready to respect anything that bores them.

--Marilyn Monroe

The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love.

--Hubert Humphrey

A successful marriage is not a gift; it is an achievement.

--Ann Landers

It takes two to destroy a marriage.

--Margaret Trudeau

No one ever filed for divorce on a full stomach.

--Mama Leone

I never loved another person the way I loved myself.

--Mae West

Marriages are like diets. They can be ruined by having a little dish on the side.

--Earl Wilson

Divorce is defeat...It's an adult failure.

Illusion is the secret of beauty.

--George Masters

We should all just smell well and enjoy ourselves more.

--Cary Grant

The only thing people are interested in is people.

--Diana Vreeland

Pleasure is everything.

--Diana Vreeland

A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself.



All advertising is good news.

--Marshall McLuhan

The real news is bad news.

--Marshall McLuhan

Love is more important than what we can take...Please say with me three times--Love! Love!  
Love!

--Pele

Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing.

--Vince Lombardi (misquoted)

Winning isn't everything. It's how you react to losing.

--Vince Lombardi

Sports do not build character. They reveal it.

--Heywood Hale Broun

A school without football is in danger of deteriorating into a medieval study hall.

--Vince Lombardi

I'm not a stunt man. I'm not a dare devil...I'm an explorer.

--Evel Knievel

Sports is the toy department of human life.

--Howard Cosell

If you drink, don't drive. Don't even putt.

--Dean Martin

Drinking is not a spectator sport.

--Jim Brosnan

Hurt is in your mind.

--Henry Lombardi to his son Vince

No one knows what to say in the loser's room.

--Muhammad Ali

Every time you win, you're reborn; when you lose, you die a little.

--George Allen

Becoming number one is easier than remaining number one.

--Bill Bradley

When you win, you're an old pro. When you lose, you're an old man.

--Charley Conerly

Sweat plus sacrifice equals success.

--Charles O. Finley

All coaches are thinking men, or else they wouldn't survive.

--Joe Paterno

I don't want to be liked. I want to be respected.

--Reggie Jackson

Everybody's negotiable.

--Muhammad Ali

All I have is natural ability.

--Mickey Mantle.

Read my lips. No new taxes!

--George Bush

## IMPROMPTU TOPICS--SOCIAL ISSUE TOPICS

1. Is democracy really on the rise?
2. Should music be censored?
3. Should staying in school be a requirement for having a driver's license?
4. Should wearing motorcycle helmets be a national law?
5. Should the U.S. extend more foreign aid?
6. Does America really believe in democracy?
7. Should a national abortion policy be adopted?
8. Are American politicians corrupt?
9. Should books be banned?
10. What messages are we getting through the media?
11. Is America's political system moral?

12. What could be done to improve the American educational system?
13. Is censorship a violation of freedom of expression?
14. Should the U.S. invade Iraq again to get rid of Saddam?
15. Is the two-party system dead?
16. Should more legal services be available for battered wives?
17. Should rapists and child molesters receive the death sentence?
18. What's wrong with our justice system?
19. Should teenagers accused of capital crimes be tried as adults?
20. Should the drinking age be lowered to 18?
21. Do morality and politics mix?
22. Is capital punishment ever justified?
23. Is TV worth watching?
24. Is racism still a problem in the United States?
25. Should the U.S. increase aid to the former Russian republics?
26. What should be done to curtail gang violence?
27. Is communism still a threat?
28. Should the budget for the space program be increased?
29. How can we decrease pollution in the U.S.?
30. Should all nuclear weapons be eliminated?
31. How can we solve the problem of family violence?
32. Are politics and honesty incompatible?
33. Should juvenile offenders be tried as adults?
34. Should states have the right to refuse hazardous wastes from other states?
35. Are prisons the answer for solving crime?

36. Should we be allowed to refuse life-prolonging medical treatment?
37. Is the death penalty used too much?
38. How can the cost of health care be contained?
39. Are the courts too lenient on criminals?
40. Should handguns be banned in the U.S?
41. Are we doing enough to solve child abuse?
42. How can we solve the problem of drug abuse?
43. Should we be allowed to burn the flag?
44. Is violence ever the answer?
45. Is recycling the answer to solid waste?
46. Do we still need to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on defense?
47. How can we eliminate racism in the U.S?
48. Should the movie rating system be revised?
49. Are parents too lenient with their children?
50. Are we becoming a nation of illiterates?