



# Extemp Primer

## Basic Extemp Structure

### **Introduction**

**Introductory Device** (Usually a story of some kind or make an analogy between the situation described in the question and something more familiar to the audience.)

**State and Answer the Question.** State it verbatim and answer it definitively.

**Establish the importance of the subject.** Tell the audience why we should be examining this question. How will it affect or lives or affect the world?

**Preview Step** Overtly preview the structure of the body of the speech, usually three main points. Options for organization include....."There are three main reason why...(and state the reasons)...or organize chronologically, "First we'll look at the historical perspective to see how this situation came to be, then we'll look at the nature of the current situation and then, finally, we'll examine what is most likely to happen in the future.)

### **Body**

Return to each of the main points that you previewed in the preview step in the same order that you stated. If you go with the "reasons" organization, prove that each of the reasons is valid, by offering evidence, quotations, etc. from your research. Make sure that you orally document each of your sources. (Example: According to an article in *Time* magazine, or "According to an article in *The Economist*...") In Varsity, people generally use 7 or 8 sources. If you can cite three or four at this point, I'd be happy.

### Conclusion

**Summary** Briefly re-state the contents of the body of the speech. It's usually similar in structure to the preview step. (Example: First we examined. \_\_\_\_\_ and we saw that\_\_\_\_\_, Next we looked at \_\_\_\_\_ and we know that\_\_\_\_\_ and, finally, we talked about \_\_\_\_\_ and we proved that \_\_\_\_\_.)

**Appeal Step** Give the audience a sense of closure. At some point re-state and re-answer the question. Often, speakers refer back to the introductory device in some way to give a speech a "circular" structure.

The intro should take around 1 min to 1 1/2 minutes. The conclusion is usually anywhere between 30 seconds and a minute in length....just some ballpark figures.

# Extemp Primer

## *Organizing an Extemp File on a Laptop*

First, the most important thing to understand about extemp is that you don't really have to know what you are talking about. You just have to sound like you do (Even though it is WAY better if you actually do). To do this you will need research on just about every topic imaginable, but more importantly you will have to be able to quickly find specific topics within your mountains of information.

The main program that you will be using to gather, store, and organize your data is Mozilla Firefox with the scrapbook extension, which can be found here <http://amb.vis.ne.jp/mozilla/scrapbook/> This program allows you to download complete web pages and even websites and organizes them into a simple folder system. If more than one web page is captured at a time, Scrapbook will link them together just like they originally were, so one can browse through a website while being offline. It is important to note that this process of rebuilding links is the last thing that the program does when it captures pages, so for this to happen, the process has to finish.

This isn't a problem when someone is capturing just a few pages, like scrapbook was meant to do, but when using it to prepare an extemp file, you may be downloading thousands of pages at once. If the process crashes then links cannot be rebuilt. Also, if a page cannot load, the program does not know enough to skip the page, this causes delays that last until the file is manually skipped. Because it can take hours to download these files, it is most convenient to do it over night, but then you cannot monitor delays. To get around this problem, a mouse bot needs to be used that will automatically skip files every minute or two. True, this does end up skipping files that you want to download, but the benefit is worth the loss. A mouse bot can be found here

<http://www.brothersoft.com/auto-mouse-click-269411.html>

Now, how many files can you download at a time? It depends on the computer, specifically the RAM. It takes a little experimentation. A fast computer with 4GB of RAM can handle over 9. A netbook can handle 3 max, 2 to be safe.

The last program that needs to be set up to build an extemp file is a search program. In Windows XP, the built in search engine works fine. Just make sure that the folders that contain the scrapbook data (and any other files you want included in your file) are set to be indexed, and that they are the ONLY files that are indexed.

Those are the programs you need, but what types of data should be downloaded, and what are the best ways of finding it? There are a few different ways, all with their upsides and benefits.

# Extemp Primer

First, there is the mass capture. This captures the most data, takes the most computing time, is fairly unorganized, and leaves the extemper with the least familiarity with the data. The idea of a mass capture is to cover all of your bases, just in case you draw some obscure crazy topic. What you do is open up the international politics page of a website, and set scrapbook to capture that page and anything 2-4 links deep. When you do this set the filter to domain or string (some websites are structured differently and respond best to one type of filter). This will stop scrapbook from downloading ads, and links to other websites. This will capture many thousands of files and the mousebot has to be used with it. To find data captured in this manner, you are left to the mercy of windows search.

Second, There is the google news capture. Although every method is useful, by the end of my extemp career I found this to be my favorite method. This is the most organized way of capturing news. It leaves the extemper familiar with his file, but it does require more time from you to make it work. It also requires the extemper to have some knowledge of world affairs. First, set up folders within scrapbook with every continent, and then make folders within those with every country of importance, then fill those folders with folders pertaining to specific issues within that country (economy, military, nuclear weapons, etc.) Obviously this is flexible, for example it would probably be a good idea to have a middle east folder on the same level as the continents and within that have countries from that area of the world including Israel, Palestine, and another folder labeled Israel-Palestine Relations. Sometimes you need files on specific people e.g. Sarah Palin, Hilary Clinton, or files on departments of government. Then, simply type those headings into google news and see what comes up. Open up every relevant article from good sources in separate tabs. Use the capture all tabs command to capture them all and place them in the folder they belong in. This way, you get to at least read the headlines of every file that is captured and you know exactly what you have info on. It also helps diversify sources and get the most info on specific topics.

The third method of data collection involves going to portal websites and downloading the webpages that are referenced. Set up a google homepage that has headlines from all of the important news sources, open up every one in different tabs, and capture them. It won't be too organized, but you can go back and organize them later if you want. This is also good to do with extemp central. Every few days or so they put up fairly obscure topics with and without articles attached. This helps you catch the obscure topics that other people may miss.

All three methods of collecting data are important and should be used together to make the best extemp file possible. Of course reading newspapers and magazines are useful as well, but are much harder to organize.

Now that you know how to get the data, what data should you get?



# Extemp Primer

Local tournaments focus primarily on national and international politics. So this should be the focus of your research. State and national tournaments, however, have questions regarding sports, technology, science, and even pop culture. Questions at a tournament usually include the most popular information that was in the news for about the past month before the tournament, so it is important to start preparation early. Elections (in any country) are always a big deal. Make sure you understand them completely.

## ***Good Resources (with comments)***

Time

Newsweek

Businessweek

Associated Press

C-SPAN (very useful, especially for domestic)

BBC News (very useful)

New York Times

USA Today

Reuters (very useful)

The Heritage Foundation

Cato Institute

Fox News (careful with this one)

CNN (has short to the point articles, very good for extemp)

US News and World Report

The Economist (Covers many obscure topics)

Washington Post

Google News headlines

Extemp Central (Great way to learn about obscure or popular topics)

Aljazeera (Middle East Issues from the Arab Point of view...often radicalized.)

ForeignPolicy.com

Christian Science Monitor (A favorite)

PollingReport.com (capture this one 5 links deep, contains polls from many many sources)

Cato handbook on policy (buy a copy or download from here  
<<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/index.html>>)

[guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk)



# Extemp Primer

The Week (wouldn't cite this one, but good to get a basic feel of many of the possible topic areas)

ABC News

MSNBC

Jerusalem Post

Council on Foreign Relations

Foreign Affairs