

---

## AES interactive dj entertainment speech, speech, speech!

---



### So you have to write a speech ...

One can easily write an entire book on how to write a good speech - and, of course, many have. We could go into detail about writing to appeal to the senses, about rhythm, and symbolism, metaphor and simile and as important as these things are (good writing can only help a speech) you're probably here because you want ready-to-use, easily digested information about speech-writing, not English lessons.

So let's get to it. You have to write a speech. You don't know the first thing about writing a speech. Don't panic. You've come to the right place. Firstly, what's worse than a boring speech? A long, boring speech. So the first rule is: keep it concise. Keep all speeches short - this is important. After all, brevity is the soul of wit. What may seem an entertaining speech in the writing may turn out to be a tiresome monologue. The purpose of any wedding speech is to congratulate the couple and to thank those who need thanking.

### Anatomy of a great speech

Writing a speech is easy. There's a beginning, a middle and an end. That's it. Don't complicate the matter. A wedding speech consists of humour, emotion, congratulations, quotations, reminiscences and anecdotes in varying degrees depending on who is giving the speech. The best speech - the one you should aim to write - is one which skilfully combines humour and emotion in just the right quantities. Get the mix right and you'll have a great speech in the making. Let's look at each component in more detail.

### Humour

We have resisted the temptation to produce a selection of humorous one-liners. There are plenty of books available which do this. We recommend you flick through one for inspiration. Humour in speeches tends to work best when it's subtle. Aim to give a good-humoured, good natured speech rather than trying to be a racy comedian; joke after joke won't work. The best speeches are those which intersperse light-hearted teasing and self-deprecation with sincere best wishes and congratulations. Such speeches can be truly memorable. A wedding is a special day in more than one sense. What may be laughed off on any other day may be a little close to the bone on such a special occasion. In view of this, think twice before making any jokes about the bride or her mother. Be sensitive. A popular choice for wedding speeches is the humorous opening and why not? Weddings are times of happiness, laughter and celebration. However, the humorous opening is also the most difficult to carry off. Some people are natural comics and can make anyone laugh whereas others just can't cut it. Test your material and if you aren't sure, leave it out; better that than have it met with awkward silence and embarrassment.

### Emotion

An emotive speech is also easy to write. Ask yourself, "What do I really want to say?" and then write it - there's no secret technique. Writers have a saying, "Get it down, then get it written". You may cringe at your first attempt to communicate your feelings but you can always modify it afterwards. Remember, particularly emotional speeches are more the province of the bride's father and groom rather than the best man.

### Congratulations

The congratulatory part of a speech is easy enough: you compliment the bride on how beautiful she looks; how fortunate the groom is and you wish the couple the very best for the future.

*Continued/2.*

### Quotations

A good quotation conveys its message powerfully and memorably and can elevate a speech to a more profound level. However, don't overdo it: one quotation per speech is enough. If you are looking for a more down-to-earth quotation, lines from songs or films are good choices as a lot of people can relate to them. Songs especially have an almost endless supply of quotations about love and can be used to raise a smile or two. Again, there are many books of quotations which you can browse for ideas.

### Reminiscence and Anecdote

Fertile hunting ground for reminiscence and anecdote include: holidays, college, travel, work, childhood, friends, turning points and first encounters. Stories are great opportunities to highlight the strength of a friendship or bond or to illustrate character but be sure to tie them in with the occasion. Remember to make your recollections have a point or you'll end up sounding strange at best.

### Speech Content

Depending on whether you are the bride's father, the groom or the best man, your speech will typically comprise of varying quantities of humour, emotion and congratulations.

#### The Bride's Father's Speech

The bride's father's speech should cover the following:

Convey his and his wife's love for their daughter. Express enthusiasm of both families getting to know each other better. A little advice, garnered from experience, is offered to the couple - in good nature and good humour. Affection expressed for the groom. The couple are wished every success for their future together and the guests invited to toast their happiness.

#### The Groom's Speech

The main purpose of the Groom's speech is to thank others and show his and the bride's gratitude. Firstly, he should thank the bride's father for his toast; he should say how privileged he feels to be married to the woman of his dreams; he should thank his new in-laws for approving of their daughter's choice of husband and how fortunate he feels to be part of their family. Importantly, he should thank his own parents not only for their help on the day but also their love, support and sacrifices through all the years. He should thank the guests for attending, for making the day so enjoyable and for the abundant gifts. He should express his regrets if any principal guests could not make it. He should thank those who are hosting the reception and those who have helped make the day extra special: Uncle Paul for the loan of his Mercedes, for example. Thank the Best Man, Maid or Matron of Honour, Bridesmaids and Groomsmen, Page Boys and Flower Girls for their invaluable assistance. Compliment the female wedding party on how stunning they look; End the speech with a toast to the bridesmaids.

#### The Bride's Speech

It is not usual - nor required - for the bride to give a speech but it's entirely up to you - why not?

#### The Best Man's Speech

The best man's speech is distinctly light-hearted, humorous and designed to end things on a joyful note. The best man thanks the groom on behalf of the bridesmaids and compliments them the same; He thanks the Groomsmen and other attendants for making him look so efficient; He congratulates the couple and shares any amusing stories he may have - though he must use his judgement to avoid making an embarrassing mistake or offending others; He reads out selected goodwill messages of absent friends, (keep this brief); Finally, he asks the guests to toast the couple once more.

### Speech Delivery

Practice your speech aloud in front of a mirror: practice, practice, practice and practice. You may feel silly at first but it's the only way to ensure that your speech sounds right when the time comes. You won't have the luxury of a rehearsal on the day and no doubt you want to give as good a speech as you can. Remember, speeches are meant to be heard, not read and what may look good on paper may sound rather clumsy when spoken so practice aloud in front of a mirror - it's the only way! Remember, "There is no such thing as writing, only rewriting". You can always - will always - edit, cut, chop and change your first draft. You can polish and craft the speech until you are happy with it. Your first attempt to capture your emotions on paper doesn't have to be final but if you are worried that your writing is gushy, ask someone you trust for their opinion. Make every effort to memorise your speech. Reading from a card kills the spontaneity and sincerity of the occasion although having prompt cards is fine. And of course, remember the golden rule: keep it concise.

*Continued /3.*

### Speeches: some do's and don'ts

Any weighty or emotional topics should be reserved for the bride's father and groom only. The best man should nearly always stick to a humorous and upbeat speech.

Don't make jokes about the honeymoon; having children; the in-laws or sex.

Don't fidget. Don't play with coins in your pocket; don't sway; don't touch your glasses; don't scratch; don't smooth your hair; don't overly gesticulate.

Don't fold your arms when giving a speech - it comes across as defensive or arrogant.

Don't speak too fast. Easier said than done. Everyone has a tendency to speak more quickly when addressing an audience. Make a conscious effort to slow down. Ask others to listen to you as you practice.

Don't insult others for laughs. There's a world of difference between light-hearted teasing and making someone feel inadequate or stupid. It's easy to do when you have the stage. Self-deprecation is fine though (and quite charming).

Do smile often. It's a wedding not a wake.

Do take deep breaths if you are nervous. Tell yourself you are in the presence of friends and family - it isn't an audition. It is an honour to be asked to give a speech, something you should be proud to do.

Do look at your audience - it helps them warm to you - but don't be mechanical about it. Smile, be natural, make occasional eye contact and remember to look back at the happy couple now and then. Make sure you do not look as though you're talking to the floor - shy people take note.

Do hold the microphone directly in front of your mouth! Listening to a speaker who mumbles or whispers is infuriating. If you are having problems with a microphone, just put it aside and speak up.

Do practice your speech aloud in front of the mirror - sorry, but we can't say this enough.

**Do remember that giving this speech is a unique event in your life - enjoy it - it won't come again.**