



The Seven-Minute Extemp Speech: Structure and Template.

A reusable blueprint for a 7-minute extemp speech, with a timing table and fill-in template. Use it as the starting skeleton for any question until the shape becomes automatic.

The shape of a strong speech

Every good extemp speech does one thing: it **answers the question you drew**. The structure is simply a container that makes the answer easy to follow. The NSDA sample outline runs: introduction, the question and your answer, a thesis, a preview, major points, a restatement, a review, and a conclusion. The five-part version below packs that into a form you can memorize.

PART	TARGET TIME	JOB
Attention-getter	0:00 to 0:30	Make the audience care
Background + question	0:30 to 1:00	Give context, then say the question word for word
Answer + preview	1:00 to 1:15	State your one-sentence answer and name your 3 points
Point 1	1:15 to 2:50	Claim, evidence, analysis, link back
Point 2	2:50 to 4:25	Same pattern
Point 3	4:25 to 6:00	Same pattern
Conclusion	6:00 to 6:45	Restate answer, recap, strong closing line

These times are a coach's suggestion, not a rule. Aim to finish near 6:45 to 7:00 so a nervous pace does not run you over time.

The introduction, step by step

- 1 Attention-getter.** A short story, a surprising fact with its source, a quote, or a vivid image tied to the topic. Keep it under 30 seconds.
- 2 Background.** Two or three sentences that tell the audience what is happening and why it matters now.
- 3 The question.** Say it exactly as written on the slip. Judges listen for it.
- 4 Your answer.** One sentence. Example: "Yes, because of cost, trust, and timing."
- 5 Preview.** Name your three points in the same order you will give them.

Mini example (neutral topic)

Question: Will school districts that adopt four-day weeks keep the schedule long term? Answer: Probably not all of them, because of family needs, learning results, and cost. Preview: "First, family logistics. Second, student outcomes. Third, budgets."

Building each main point

Use the same four-beat pattern in every point. Repetition is a feature: it keeps the judge oriented.

BEAT	WHAT YOU SAY	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
Claim	The point in one line	"Family logistics make the schedule hard to sustain."
Evidence	Fact + source + date	"According to [outlet] this month, ..."
Analysis	Why it matters	"That means working parents must find a fifth day of care."
Link	Tie to the question	"So districts face pressure to reverse course."

Question types and the point shapes that fit

QUESTION STARTS WITH	GOOD POINT PATTERN
Will ...?	Three reasons it will or will not (causes)
Should ...?	Benefits, costs, and a better alternative
How ...?	Three steps, tools, or actors
To what extent ...?	What works, what does not, overall verdict
Why ...?	Three causes ranked by importance

Another flexible pattern is **past, present, future** (what happened, where we are, what comes next), which works especially well for trends.

Conclusion template

- ◆ Signal the end: "In conclusion" or return to your opening story.
- ◆ Restate the question and your answer.
- ◆ Recap the three points in one short sentence each.
- ◆ End with a memorable final line, ideally echoing the attention-getter.

PRACTICE: WRITE YOUR OWN TEMPLATE FOR A QUESTION YOU DRAW

Coaching note

Want a plan built around your speaker? Book a free consultation with Scholar Coach at the link below.

Built from public guidance: NSDA Competition Events Guide: Extemporaneous Speaking · NSDA United States Extemp event description. Rules change by league and tournament, so always confirm against your tournament invitation and current league rules.

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