



Beijing Foreign Studies University|
教育部 - 出国人员培训部

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Public Speaking

Unit 5, Lesson 2 Appealing to Senses & Using Figures of Speech

Instructor
Dr. Carlos Cardenas

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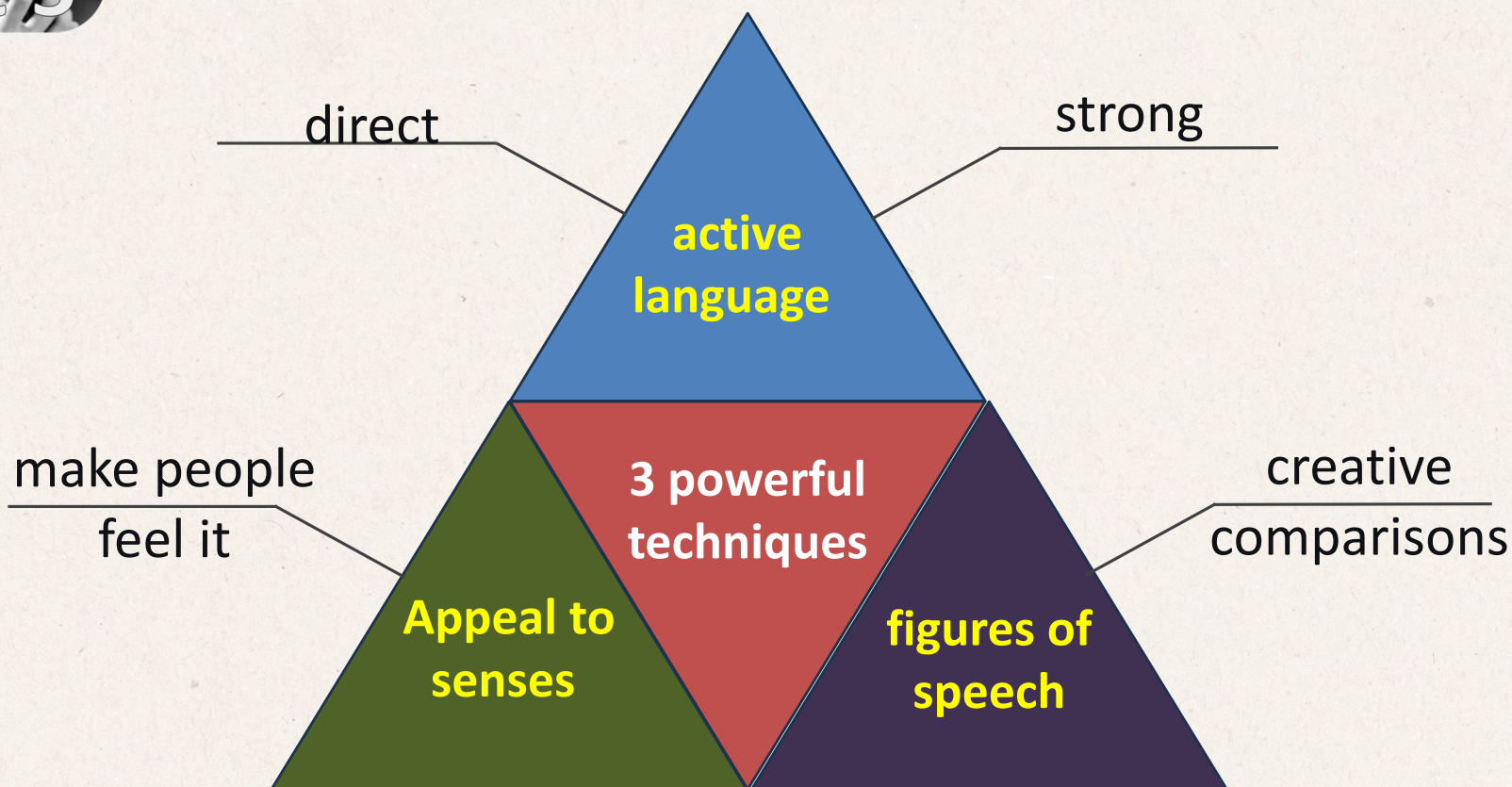


Lesson 1

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How to Make Your English Speeches More Vivid





Technique 1: Active Language



Rule: Put the **doer** first.

Better
for
writing

Passive (weak) ❌

A mistake was made by me.

The speech was given by Li.

Active (strong) ✅

I made a mistake.

Li gave the speech.

Better
for
Speaking

Why active? Shorter, clearer, more confident.



Technique 1: Active Language

Exercise 1 – Make It Active

Change these **passive** sentences to **active voice**. Say your answer out loud.

1. *It was decided by many students that smoking should be given up.*

Many students decided to give up smoking.

2. *A negative effect on sleep quality was caused by late-night social media scrolling.*

Many students decided to give up smoking.

3. *It is believed by experts that data entry jobs will be taken over by AI.*

Many students decided to give up smoking.

4. *A choice between a start-up and a stable job was faced by me after graduation.*

Many students decided to give up smoking.

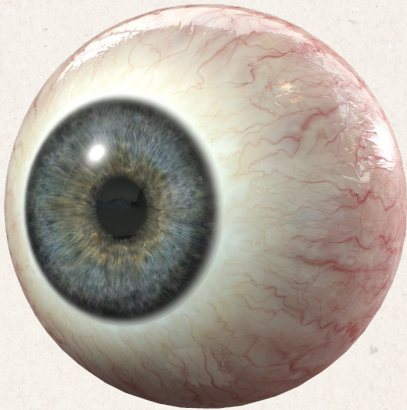


Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Visual image



Help your audience build a mental image.

"When I stood up to speak, I saw 40 tired faces, 20 phones hiding under desks, and one professor taking notes on everything I said."





Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Auditory image



Suggest the sound of something.

"The only sounds were my own heartbeat and someone coughing in the back row."





Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Tactile image



Re-create the feel of something

*"The microphone felt **cold** and
slippery in my **sweaty** hand."*



Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Thermal image



Creates impressions of heat or cold

*"My face was **burning hot**, but
my hands were **ice cold**."*



Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Gustatory image



Re-creates the taste of something

*“My mouth was so **dry** that I couldn't taste anything – just the **faint** taste of fear.”*



Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Olfactory image

Suggests the smell of something



"The classroom smelled like old chalk, wet umbrellas, and someone's leftover lunch."





Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Synesthesia

Combines two or more sensory impressions



"The classroom smelled like old chalk, wet umbrellas, and someone's leftover lunch."





Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



Don't just **tell** your audience. Make them **feel** your story.

Kinetic image

Creates feelings of motion or movement



*"I walked from **one side** of the stage to the **other**, trying to look calm, but my legs felt disconnected from my body."*



Technique 2: Appeal to the Senses



In pairs, complete the three exercises on our class worksheet:



Public Speaking Course, Spring 2026

Student: _____ Class: _____

Unit 5: Appealing to Senses & Using Figures of Speech

I. Read and listen to the following speech and fill in the blanks with the words you hear:

Sensory Image	Speech Script: "My 24 Hours Without Social Media"
	"Last week, I decided to quit social media for 24 hours. At first, I just sat on my bed, staring at my phone. The screen was _____ and silent. I could see my own _____ face reflected in the glass – pale eyes, _____ hair, and a blank expression.
	"Without Douyin or WeChat, the room became very _____. I could hear the old _____ on the wall ticking – <i>tick, tick, tick</i> . Then I heard my own _____ growling. And worst of all? I heard my own thoughts. They were loud and nervous, like a radio that wouldn't turn off."
	"I picked up my phone without thinking. My fingers touched the _____ smooth glass. But I didn't open any app. I just held it. The edges of my phone case felt _____ and cheap. My thumb kept moving by itself, searching for something to scroll."
	"After six hours, a strange feeling started in my chest. It was not _____. It was cold. A lonely, cold feeling, like someone had put an _____ inside my heart. My hands were also cold. I wanted to open WeChat just to feel _____ again."
	"By midnight, I was still awake. My mouth was _____. I drank some water, but it had no taste. Then I realized – the taste in my mouth was the taste of boredom. _____ plain, and uncomfortable. Like drinking tea that has been left out all day."
	"At 2 a.m., I finally got up to make instant noodles. The smell filled my small dorm room _____. _____ like hot ocean water, mixed with the cheap smell of _____ and dry vegetables. It was the only good thing I had experienced all day. I closed my eyes and just breathed it in."

	"The next morning, I couldn't stay inside anymore. I ran _____ the stairs – two steps at a time. I jumped _____ a sleeping cat near the door. I walked _____ to the campus lake, then stopped. The world outside was moving. Cars, people, birds. For the first time in 24 hours, I felt like I was moving with them, not just watching a screen."
	"And here is the strangest part. When I finally opened WeChat again, the red notification _____ did not just look _____. They felt warm, like holding a hot _____ on a cold day. And the sound of the notification – that little <i>ding</i> – tasted _____, like the first bite of _____ in summer. I know that sounds crazy. But that is what 24 hours without social media does to you."
	"So yes, I opened WeChat again. The red notifications felt like a reward. But I also learned something: boredom has a taste. Silence has a smell. And a notification can be sweet. Maybe that's okay."

II. Go back to the script and find out which type of sensory image is used in every paragraph. Write the answer in the box in front of each paragraph:

• Visual	• Gustatory
• Auditory	• Olfactory
• Tactile	• Kinetic
• Thermal	• Synesthesia

III. Read the script again and find short examples of each sensory image:

Sensory Image	Example from the script
Visual:	_____
Auditory:	_____
Tactile:	_____
Thermal:	_____
Gustatory:	_____
Olfactory:	_____
Kinetic:	_____
Synesthesia:	_____



Technique 3: Use Figures of Speech



There are three types you can use in a speech:

Type	What it does	Example
Simile	Compare using like/as	• “My roommate is like a broken alarm clock.” • “The final exam week was as long as a Chinese New Year traffic jam.”
Metaphor	Say something IS something else	• “Doubao is my third hand.” • “The library was a battlefield during finals week.”
Personification	Give human actions to objects	• “The WeChat app refused to open.” • “The air conditioner whispered all night.”



Technique 3: Use Figures of Speech



Exercise: Name the Figure of Speech

1. "Time is a thief." → ?

Metaphor

2. "My alarm clock shouted at me this morning." → ?

Personification

3. "Her voice was like warm milk." → ?

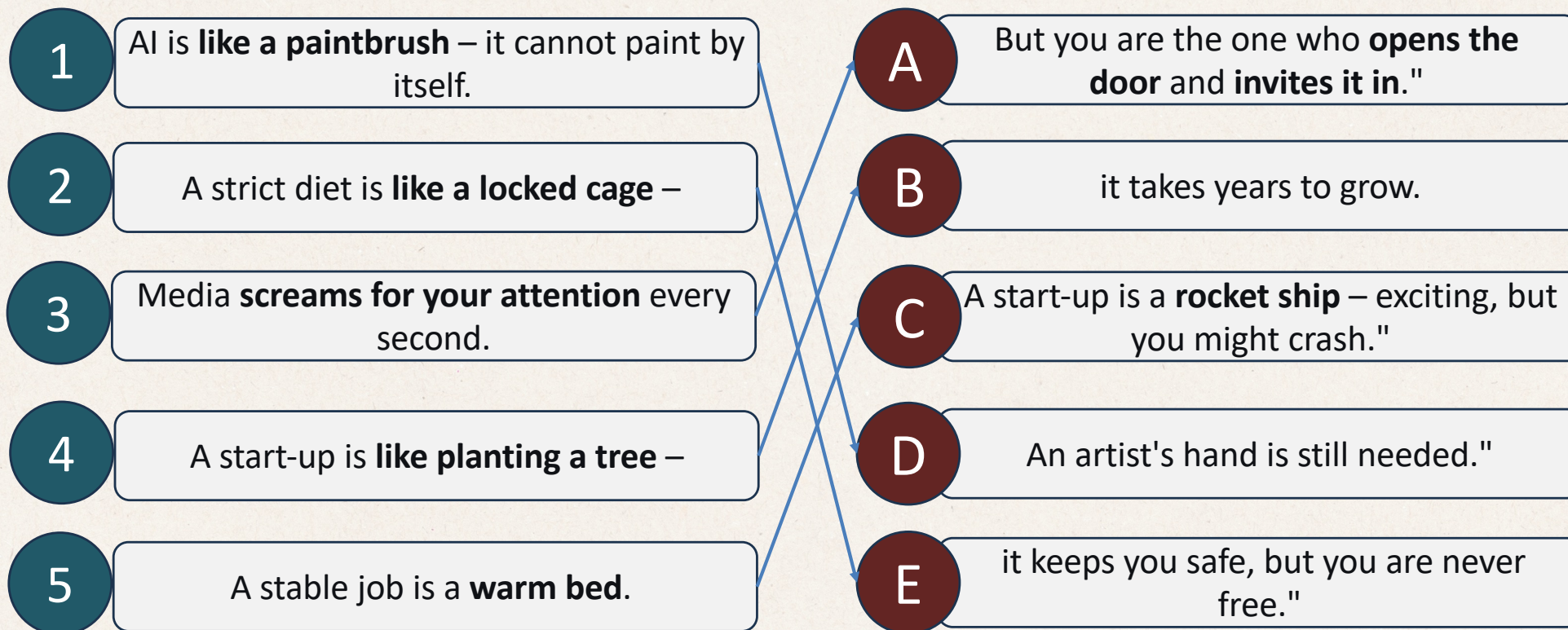
Simile



Technique 3: Use Figures of Speech



Exercise: Match the halves of the following figures of speech:





Technique 3: Use Figures of Speech



Exercise: take the following online quiz to practice about the figures of speech we studied in class and to learn a few more:



0:12 ✓ 0

Which of the following is an example of a simile?

A wind whispered through the trees.	Her smile is as bright as the sun.
Times flies when you're having so much fun.	The world is a stage.

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<https://wordwall.net/resource/83507145/english/figures-of-speech>



Technique 3: Use Figures of Speech



Exercise: Watch this video in which a speaker presents several metaphors to understand what giving a speech feels like. Then answer the questions in the online quiz:

