

Practice Exercise **3**

It doesn't make any difference how long your speech is. Unless you make your audience tune in to what you are saying in the first sixty seconds, they will tune you out. Take the speaker who intends to speak on "The Democrats' Dilemma" and opens with: "On my way over to the club tonight, I ran into a bum who asked me for \$49.50 for a cup of coffee. I told him he'd do much better if he asked for a quarter. He said, 'Do you think I'm going into the Ritz in these clothes?'" We know the speaker's purpose: to win the audience over with humor. This bit of humor, however, has no connection with the purpose. The audience is laughing at the wrong time. Once you have an audience laughing, it's hard to get them to switch to an entirely different train of thought. There's nothing wrong with humor in a speech as long as it has something to do with the purpose of the speech. To open a speech with humor just to be entertaining invites an almost sure "turnoff" for the remainder of the talk.

1. The main function of the details in this passage is to
 - a. define a topic.
 - b. describe.
 - c. give reasons supporting an argument or opinion.
 - d. set a tone or mood.
2. What part of a speech determines its failure or success?
 - a. the purpose of the speech
 - b. the language used by the speaker
 - c. the closing comments
 - d. the first sixty seconds
3. If a speaker decides to be humorous, the humor
 - a. should be connected with the speech.
 - b. must be related to current events.
 - c. should be fresh and different.
 - d. must be reserved for the end of the speech.
4. Underline the sentence that states the most significant detail for someone who wants to decide whether humor is appropriate in a speech.