Attention Getters (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

Audience-centered speakers have engaging *attention getters* to start their speeches.

**Types of attention getters**

- **Ask a question**: Speakers can ask their audiences questions which expect a verbal or nonverbal response or rhetorical question (no response from the audience)
  - Speakers can poll the audience – ask them to raise hands in response to a question
  - Speakers should ask questions with short responses
  - Limit use of questions in prepared speeches

- **Surprising fact or statistic**: Speakers can use data from their research to engage their audience
  - This information should help their audience become more interested in their topic

- **Brief narrative or anecdote**: Speakers can use a short story to connect their topic to real or hypothetical narratives
  - Narratives should be clearly connected to the speech topic
  - Narratives should not overwhelm the introduction (keep it brief)

- **Famous or inspiring quote**: Speakers can use famous quotations in order to get the attention of their audience
  - Quotes should be clearly connected to the topic
  - Quotes should be accurate & attributed

- **Joke**
  - Jokes should be inclusive to the audience (not offensive)
  - Jokes should be appropriate for the topic and audience
**Tips for effective attention getters**

- Use attention getters to start the speech, then introduce yourself
- Keep attention getters brief
- Use attention getters that are inclusive and connect with diverse audiences