Sample Expository Speech

This section presents a sample expository speech given by a student in an introductory speaking course, including adaptation plan, outline, and transcript.

Women in World War II

by Lindsey Degenhardt[5]

Adaptation Plan

1. **Speaking directly to members of the audience:** I will use rhetorical questions and personal pronouns to show audience I am talking to them directly.
2. **Building credibility:** I will use documented sources to show that I have good information, and I will use an example of my grandmother's experience to show that I have personal knowledge of events.
3. **Getting and maintaining interest:** Since the audience interest level will not be high, I will compare the 1940s to now and show that some of the fads now are the same as the fads then. I will try to show that although World War II happened a long time ago, the results have affected our current culture. I will also try to make my delivery enthusiastic.
4. **Facilitating understanding:** I will present the information clearly. I will use repetition and transitions to make my points clearer. I will also use examples and show visual aids.
5. **Increasing retention:** I will repeat my main points three times throughout the speech—in the introduction, in the body, and in the conclusion. I will use sectional transitions to reinforce retention of main points. I will tell stories and use visual aids to help the audience retain the information. I will also tell how the 1940s have had an impact on our culture today.

Speech Outline

SPECIFIC GOAL: I would like the audience to understand the three ways that women helped the war effort during World War II.

INTRODUCTION

I. Do you think that World War II happened so long ago that it has no effect on us now?

II. Some of our music is based on 1940s swing, and several recent movies are based on 1940s events.

III. Today I am going to share with you the roles that women played during World War II.

THESIS STATEMENT: Three ways in which women helped the war effort during World War II were by working at home, working outside of the home, and enlisting in the military.

(*continued*)

BODY

I. One way in which women helped the war effort was by working at home.

A. Women rationed food and supplies.

1. They cut back on their use of sugar, canned goods, silk, and gasoline.

2. They donated their pots and pans.

B. Women planted "Victory gardens."

(Now that we have seen how women helped from their homes, let's see how they helped outside of their homes.)

II. A second way in which women helped the war effort was by working outside of the home.

A. Some women got jobs in factories.

1. In 1940, only 13.8 million women were employed (20%).

2. In 1945, almost 19 million women were working.

3. Women made up 40% of the workforce in aircraft assembly in 1944.

(We have now seen how women helped the war effort by getting jobs. Let me tell you the third way in which women helped.)

III. A third way in which women helped the war effort was by enlisting in the military.

A. The Army and Navy Nurse Corps were started in the early 1900s.

1. During World War II, 31.3% of all active nurses were women.

B. By January 1943, all of the branches of the United States military included women.

1. There were three positions that women could be trained in: radio operators, storekeepers, and secretaries.

2. To be in the WAVES, women had to meet higher standards and be older than males to enlist.

3. My grandmother was in the WAVES, the women's branch of the Navy.

CONCLUSION

I. Women helped at home, at work, and in the military.

II. If women had not helped in the war, there might not be so many women enrolled in college right now. (375)

SOURCES: Creedy, Brooks Spive. *Women Behind the Lines.* New York: The Women's Press, 1949. Hartmann, Susan M. *Home Front and Beyond.* Boston: Twain Publishers, 1982. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War.* New York: The Free Press, 1993. Stein, Conrad R. *World at the Home Front.* Chicago: Children's Press, 1986. U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957.* Washington, DC: 1960. U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Statistical Abstract of the United States.* Washington, DC: 2000. Weatherford, Doris. *American Women and World War II.* New York: Facts on File, 1990.

Speech and Analysis

Read the following aloud at least once. Then analyze it on the basis of the primary criteria in the checklist on page 000.

Speech

When someone mentions World War II, do you groan and think, "I don't want to hear about World War II, that happened such a long time ago and it doesn't have anything to do with me"? Did you know that swing dancing and swing music similar to that played by Big Daddy Little Daddy was popular in the 1940s? Even some recent movies such as *Pearl Harbor* are based on 1940s events. Since so many more movies are portraying the roles that men played during the war, I'm going to share with you the roles woman played during World War II. There are three ways in which women helped the war effort during World War II. They worked at home, worked outside of the home, and enlisted in the military.

Analysis

Lindsey begins her speech with rhetorical questions.

Her goal in this part of the introduction is to get the class to wondering what she is going to talk about in the speech.

After stating her goal, Lindsey clearly previews the three ways women helped the war effort.

One way in which women helped the war effort was by working at home. To help the soldiers, women rationed food and supplies. They cut back on their use of sugar, canned goods, soap, and gasoline. The canned goods and sugar went to feed the soldiers. The soap was used to make parachutes. And the gasoline was used to fuel tanks and airplanes. When the military had a shortage of aluminum, women donated pots and pans so that the military could make tanks, planes, and artillery.

Here Lindsey states her first subpoint, that women rationed food and supplies. She then supports this point with specific examples.

Another way in which women helped at home was—they grew Victory gardens. Victory gardens are just normal vegetable gardens, um carrots, beans, cucumbers—that sort of thing. But the reason that women planted these was they thought that if they grew their own food, they wouldn't buy so much food from the store, and the surplus could be used to feed the soldiers. Now that we've seen how women helped from their homes, let's see how they helped outside of their homes.

Now she introduces her second subpoint, that another way women helped at home was to grow Victory gardens.

After defining "Victory gardens," she shows how this effort helped the war effort.

Here's a good transition to the second main point.

A second way in which women helped the war effort was working outside of their homes. Before the war started, not very many women were employed. According to the New York Census, less than 14 million women were employed in 1940, compared to 42 million men. When women worked during this time, they were usually teachers, secretaries, or librarians. But during the war a lot of men were either drafted or enlisted, so a lot of the factory jobs opened up and no one but women were there to work. So women became crane operators, hydraulic press operators, tractor drivers, and miners. According to Conrad Stein, author of *World at the Home Front,* by 1944, 40% of the workforce in aircraft assembly was made up of women and 12% in shipyards. In 1945, 19 million women worked, compared to 46 million men.

Here Lindsey clearly states the second way women helped.

In this section she documents the statistics she uses to develop her main point.

So now the ratio is getting a little closer. And compare that to today when 65 million women worked in 1999, compared to 75 million men. Now we have seen how women helped on the home front by getting jobs, let me tell you about another way women helped.

Here is another good transition.

A third way that women helped the war effort was by enlisting in the military. In the early 1900s the Army/Navy Nurse Corps was started. And according to Susan Hartmann, author of *Home Front and Beyond,* during World War II, 31.3% of all active nurses were women. And Doris Weatherford, author of *American Women and World War II,* stated in her book that by January 1943 all of the branches of the United States military included women. Now not only could they be nurses, they could also be radio operators, secretaries, and store keepers. But although women were now allowed in the military, they had to be of higher standards and also had to be older to enlist. And they couldn't actually use guns and fight in other countries. For instance, my grandmother was in the WAVES and she was positioned in Texas. But she couldn't be, even though she went to two years of college, she couldn't be a commissioned officer. She had to have a degree to be a commissioned officer—but she was a noncommissioned officer.

Now, Lindsey clearly states her third main point.

In this section she gives examples of the kinds of roles women filled in the military to help free men to engage in the fighting. Notice the use of specific examples to support her point.

Here Lindsey presents the ironic point that although women did the necessary work, they were prevented from becoming commissioned officers.

In summer of 1945, Japan surrendered. This defeat might not have been possible without the help of women at home, at work, and in the military. Not only did women have an effect on the outcome of the war, women also, the women of the '40s also had an effect on our culture today. Because if women had just gone back to their housewife positions after working in factories there might not be so many women with college degrees today. ■

After a short review of the three roles women fulfilled, she concludes with a statement that shows that doing this kind of work opened many occupational possibilities for women from then on.

This is a very good expository speech. She has a good introduction that captures attention and leads into the speech; she gives three clearly stated and well-developed main points using high-quality information; and she provides a good conclusion that not only summarizes the main points but also shows the effects of their efforts on our culture today. ■