# **Background on TED**

The TED conference (which stands for technology, entertainment, design) began life in 1984 as a yearly and very expensive conference where industry leaders and creative types gathered to exchange “Ideas Worth Spreading.”

**TED Talks:**

your TED talk will begin with an idea. You have something meaningful to say, and your goal is to re-create your core idea inside your audience’s minds, For example;

* Be common-sense (“Every kid needs a champion”) or counter-intuitive (“The way we think about charity is wrong”)
* Describe a scientific breakthrough (“How bacteria talk”) or your own experience (“I am the son of a terrorist, here’s how I chose peace”)
* Motivate people to action (“We need to talk about an injustice”) or greater self-awareness (“Your elusive creative genius”)

**Focus on one major idea**

* Ideas are complex things; reduce your content so that you can focus on the single idea you’re most passionate about and give yourself a chance to explain that one thing properly. Everything you say [should link] back to it in some way.

**Give people a reason to care**

* Stir your audience’s curiosity. Use intriguing, provocative questions to identify why something doesn’t make sense and needs explaining. If you can reveal a disconnection in someone’s worldview, they’ll feel the need to bridge that knowledge gap.

**Build your idea with familiar concepts**

* Build your idea, piece by piece, out of concepts that your audience already understands. A vivid explanation to delivers a satisfying moment as the image is placed into in our minds.

# **6-Step Process for Creating Your TED Talk**

1. **Find an idea you want to share**

Provide one idea worth sharing, it can be useful to ask yourself things like:

* What’s one assumption I’d like to challenge?
* What’s a belief of mine that has changed, and why?
* What does everyone miss when they think about my area of interest or expertise?

1. **Develop an unexpected and/or catchy way to state your idea**

If your idea can be stated in a catchy way, listeners will pay more attention and remember it more easily, e.g.

* We can solve malnutrition now (vs. Malnutrition is a problem that is finally, in our day and age, able to be resolved by advances in science.)
* Almost dying saved my life (vs. A near death experience created the motivation for me to face and overcome problems that otherwise would have slowly killed me.)
* Never, ever give up (vs. Cultivate the ability to commit without wavering; it’s an essential component of your lifelong success.)

1. **Collect anything and everything that relates to your idea**

To re-create your idea in the minds of your listeners, you’ll need vivid examples, illustrations, stories, facts, questions, comments, etc. Collect these materials by writing them down, taking photos, recording your thoughts as sound files, etc. e.g.

* a snippet of conversation
* a story that relates to your idea
* a fact, or cluster of data that supports it
* a metaphor or analogy that helps explain it
* a personal moment in your relationship with the idea
* a physical object that will help your audience understand it

1. **Start imagining how you might open and end your talk**

While it’s too soon to choose your opening and close, it’s not too soon to start playing with ideas for these important parts of your talk.

Opening an effective way to begin any speech (not just a TED talk) is to grab your audience’s attention e.g.

* often with a human-interest story
* a surprising statistic
* an unexpected observation
* a thought-provoking question

Closing by ending your talk in a positive, forward-looking way.e.g.

* painting a hopeful picture of the future; and/or
* finishing, resolving a story or discussion

1. **Put the rest of your materials in a reasonable order**

The middle of any speech is tricky, and a TED talk is particularly so, because TED talks can take just about any form you’d like.

Review the materials you’ve collected and shuffle them until you find a method that works for you, e.g.

* Create a high-level outline (leave out most of the detail, just arrange the big points or elements)
* Write each element (story, comment, observation, fact) on a 3 x 5 card and physically shuffle them to see different possible orders. (You can do this on a table, or digitally, by creating one slide per element and shuffling them with PowerPoint’s “slide sorter” feature)
* Use sound (speaking out loud) instead of writing to put your talk elements into different sequences (Ask: Does it sound right if I tell that story first, then give the fact? How about if I give the fact first, then tell the story?)

1. **Talk your way to a rough draft of your script**

* This is where your “speaking plan” becomes a “speech.”
* Take your outline or list of ordered elements and talk about each item in turn.
* Practice out loud, record yourself or use computer’s voice recognition software to capture your words and let you hear how your speech sounds.
* Recruit a willing volunteer to listen to talk and get feedback on how to improve the structure and clarity of your draft.
* Practice, Practice, Practice… instead of striving for perfection, prepare carefully, take your best shot, and try to relax.

**HAVE FUN!!**

* Excellent opportunity to showcase your new, innovative and creative skills to prospective employers and fellow UWS colleagues.
* You can demonstrate that you are **U**niversal, **W**ork-ready and are going to have **S**uccessful new career.