

## LASER TALK Use the EPIC acronym

**L**earning how to speak powerfully about our issues is one of the most important tools in an advocate’s tool kit. This format was created by RESULTS, an organization devoted to eliminating world hunger, to enable its volunteers to create powerful “laser talks,” short and compelling talks that are the backbone of their work. Laser talks can be used during chance encounters with policy makers at any level, during phone calls with legislators, and in meetings with newspaper editorial boards.

### EPIC

RESULTS created a simple acronym, EPIC, to help remember the basics of creating a laser talk. The letters in EPIC stand for:

- **ENGAGE**
- State the **PROBLEM**
- **INFORM** about the solution
- Give the **CALL** to action

**E**

#### ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Get your listener’s attention with a dramatic fact or short statement. Keep this opening statement to one sentence if possible. For instance, you could say:  
*“I know you share my concern about improving the quality of teaching for all students.”*

**P**

#### STATE THE PROBLEM

Present causes of the problem you introduced in the first section. How widespread or serious is the problem?  
*“Too few students experience great teaching every day, too few educators experience professional learning that has a powerful impact on teaching and student performance, and too few schools prioritize high levels of learning every day for both adults and students.”*

**I**

#### INFORM ABOUT SOLUTIONS

Inform the listener about a solution to the problem you just presented.  
*“We need to ensure that every teacher has access to high-quality professional learning every day so every student achieves. That can happen if you support implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning. This would help ensure that teachers have time to work and learn with colleagues every day, that their learning is aligned with standards, and that their learning is built on a continuous cycle of improvement.”*

**C**

#### CALL TO ACTION

Once you’ve engaged your listener, presented the problem, and told them about a solution, be specific about what you want them to do. This enables you to follow up to learn if they’ve taken this action. Present this action in the form of a yes or no question.  
*“Will you support the implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning?”*

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## LASER TALK **Make your delivery**

**A**ny good musician or actor knows you would never go on stage without rehearsing first, and it's no different with public speaking. It's important to speak to the other person instead of reading the information word for word. You can, however, refer to notes at first. And you'll want to strive to keep the talks short — no more than two minutes. As you speak the information, you'll discover where you need more practice or where you may want to change a part of it. These talks will develop and change as you learn new information over time, so be flexible and stay alert for interesting facts to update your talks.

### TIPS FOR DELIVERING A LASER TALK

Practice your laser talk several times before practicing in front of another person.

Memorize as many of the details as possible.

Choose a member in your group that you feel safe practicing with.

Identify your audience — for example a member of Congress or a state legislator.

Deliver your talk without stopping, even if you have a few stumbles along the way. The more you practice, the better you will get.

Once finished, critique yourself. Pick two things that you liked about the talk and one thing you want to improve.

Listen with an open mind and ear for learning how to make your talk better when your partner gives you feedback on your delivery.

### TIPS FOR LISTENING TO A LASER TALK

Ask the speaker to identify the target of this laser talk.

Listen intently to the talk, trying to pick out different sections of the EPIC format.

Did the speaker engage you up front?

Did the speaker describe the problem and its solutions?

Were you inspired by a clear call to action?

Ask the speaker to critique his or her own talk.

Tell the speaker two things that you really liked about the talk and one thing that you think he or she could improve upon.

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