

Winning Edge #31 – The Lego Stump Speech

This is Trevor Bragdon with Commonwealth Partners' *The Winning Edge*: Tips to help conservatives persuade and win.



If you have kids, odds are you have LEGOs in your house. You probably have dozens, if not hundreds, of what we now call "minifigs" – those little LEGO people with interchangeable heads, bodies, and legs.

These figures were the brainchild of LEGO designer Jens Nygaard Knudsen in 1978. After 50 iterations, Knudsen created a minifig that kids could easily use and assemble: a head that showed expression, a body that could hold things, and functional legs. The result was a toy that became an instant hit and has since spawned countless variations. Some estimates say there are over 5 billion minifigs in the world today.

The genius of the minifig design lies in three key parts: the head, the torso, and the legs. These components can easily be mixed and matched, giving endless possibilities for creativity.

Interestingly, the LEGO minifig is a perfect analogy for crafting a compelling stump speech. Like these little figures, a powerful speech requires correctly assembling the right components. And just like the minifig, your stump speech needs three parts to stand tall.

1. **Head – Logical Appeals:** This is where the brains of your speech reside. Fill it with facts, statistics, and logical arguments that give your audience the confidence that you understand the most important issues. (See [Winning Edge #4](#), [#6](#), and [#30](#) for more details.)
2. **Body – Emotional Appeals:** The body or torso represents the heart of your speech. This is where you connect with your audience on an emotional level. Share stories, paint vivid pictures, and tap into the feelings that drive people to care deeply about your message. (See [Winning Edge #13](#), [#22](#), and [#29](#) for more details.)

3. **Legs – Call to Action:** The legs of your minifig get things moving. Focus on two main points of action—clear, concrete steps that your audience can take. This gives your speech direction and momentum. (See Winning Edge [#1](#) for more details)

Like with LEGO minifigs, the beauty of this approach is that you can assemble these pieces in the order that best fits your style and message. The key is to think about your audience and build the version that appeals to them the most. Are they more likely to be swayed by logical arguments first, or do they need an emotional connection to get interested? Maybe a strong call to action right out of the gate is what will grab their attention. Here are three options for your stump speech:

Head First: Start with logical appeals to lay the groundwork, then connect to the emotional heart of your speech, and finish strong with actionable steps.

Body First: Begin with emotional appeals to engage your audience, then add logical arguments to solidify your points, and wrap up with clear actions.

Feet First: Kick off with a bold call to action to grab attention, then build up with emotional and logical appeals to support your message.

Remember, this approach's strength is its flexibility. You can rearrange these components based on your audience and the specific message you want to convey. The important thing is to ensure all three elements—logic, emotion, and action—are present and working together to create a compelling speech.

Now, go put this into action. Start building your perfect stump speech using the LEGO minifig approach so you can connect with voters and impact the campaign trail.