

STRATEG

DEVELOP

PROCESS

ORGANIZING THE SPEECH



Chapter 5

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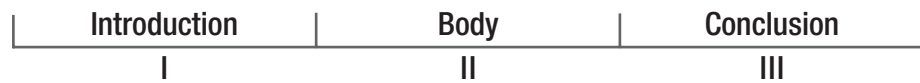
Functions

Model Introductions

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Functions

The *introduction*, *body* and *conclusion* are the basic parts of a speech. Aristotle points to the importance of organization and structure in fulfilling *logos*, one of his three proofs of an argument (more will be said on this in the chapter on persuasion). Almost all of the serious message organizing goes on in the body. Because the body is the longest and most important part, it is the logical place to begin your critical thinking and planning. Introductions and conclusions are easier to prepare after you have a clear understanding of your message and how you intend to develop it.



ORGANIZING THE BODY OF THE SPEECH

Main Points

LOCATING MAIN POINTS If you've carefully worded your specific purpose and your central idea or thesis, you have already seen some main points emerge. Chapter 4 discussed Aristotle's first canon, *invention*, which involves preparing and researching the speech. Aristotle's second canon, *disposition*, is the focus of this chapter: how to organize the speech. A well-thought-out central idea often becomes a mini-outline for the body of a speech. Recall the student speech on management functions in Chapter 4.

Topic: The Role of a Manager

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience of five basic management functions

Central Idea (Thesis): Five basic management functions are planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling.

Body

- Main Points:**
- I. The planning function serves as the foundation for your management decisions.
 - A.
 - B.
 - II. The organizing function provides the step-by-step process that needs to be followed.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - III. The directing function guides the employees through the organized process of the plan.
 - A.
 - B.
 - IV. The coordinating function sees that different aspects of a plan are being handled without overlapping.
 - A.
 - B.
 - V. The controlling function of a manager suggests that the decision is ultimately yours.
 - A.
 - B.
 - 1.
 - 2.

Some main points follow a logical, 1–2–3 order and become evident in your early preparation as well as your central idea.

Topic: Finding a Job

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To explain to the class the proper way to find and apply for a job

Central Idea (Thesis): Getting a job involves: listing employers, data preparation, letters, interview preparation, and, finally, personal appearance.

Body

- Main Ideas:**
- I. Prepare a complete list of prospective employers.
 - II. Prepare data for an employment application.
 - III. Prepare three-part letters.
 - IV. Prepare what you will say in an interview.
 - V. Plan your dress and grooming.

Speeches to persuade are often more difficult to outline because influence is involved, evidence must be found, and reasons for your viewpoint explained. Look at basic reasons or arguments for your main points. One student sorted out a great many facts and opinions on a controversial topic and settled on two reasons, which then became the two main points.

Topic: Promiscuity

General Purpose: To persuade

Specific Purpose: To persuade the audience that promiscuity has too high a price

Central Idea (Thesis): (thesis or claim) Promiscuous persons face new and unusual risks from herpes and AIDS.

- Main Points:**
- I. Promiscuity has become a major transmitter of genital herpes.
 - II. Promiscuity has become a major transmitter of AIDS.

RHETORICAL ADVICE

Number of Points Classroom speeches are typically short and limited to one central idea. Three to four main points are usually all that can be covered. Should you need more than four or five main points, it will be necessary to cover each one more superficially; as a result, clarity may suffer. Try eliminating some of

them on a rank-order of interest or importance. Try combining points that may overlap. Eliminating and/or combining, which is the hardest part of speech preparation, is very important because it also directs future research of your topic.

Unity with Central Idea This advice, based on a long-standing rhetorical principle, refers to how well your speech organization hangs together and promotes an undivided total effect. As we learned in Chapter 4, we should be able to capture much of the speech in the title, the specific purpose, and the statement of central idea. If you are simply tacking interesting main points to your outline with no clear notion of how or whether they fit the total effect you are hoping to achieve, they should probably be cut. Your speech outline is like the plot of a play. If it gets too tricky, complicated, or strays too far from the point, the audience gives up.

Relatively Equal Merit A district attorney arguing a murder case has three main points:

- I. Means
- II. Opportunity
- III. Motive



A district attorney arguing a murder case has three main points: means, opportunity, and motive.

These points have equal merit relative to her purpose. She must prove all three. However, if the defense concedes *means* and part of *opportunity*, the D.A. will spend more time on *motive*. Equal merit does not necessarily mean equal time or equal emphasis.

If our D.A. adds a fourth point concerning the fact that the accused is an expert marksman, she has then injured her speech organization. “Expert marksman,” while important, is not of equal merit with the others. It should be a sub-point under “Means.”

Your main points should also be judged on equal merit relative to your purpose. Although you will need to spend a reasonable amount of time on each main point (like the D.A.), it is not necessary to allot equal time and emphasis to each point. A careful assessment of your audience often helps decide time, space, or emphasis.

Suppose your purpose is “To inform the audience about listening.” The three points you chose as having equal merit are:

- I. Sensory access
- II. Motivation
- III. Skills

Suppose the audience is composed of healthy, motivated seminarians. Because most of your time and effort will be spent on “Skills,” perhaps these three points are not of equal merit. Because merit is relative to purpose, you may need a different purpose to accommodate this audience and this rhetorical advice: “To inform the audience about the skills used by effective listeners.”

Wrestling with the question of equal merit not only helps you coordinate your main points but also gives you a good check on your specific purpose and your audience adaptation.

Ordering Main Points

Ordering your main points depends heavily upon the audience and the setting, as well as your purpose. A speech on the U.S. economy depends on the economic sophistication of the audience as well as the latest news from Wall Street. A speech on AIDS might be ordered quite differently for an audience of drug abusers, an audience of homosexuals, an audience of heterosexuals, an audience

of physicians, and so on. Nevertheless, several inherently sensible, useful, almost generic methods exist and are used by successful speakers.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER Materials are arranged according to the order in which events took place. In speaking on “Life on Earth,” we would probably discuss the following geologic periods chronologically:

- Topic:** Life on Earth
- General Purpose:** To inform
- Specific Purpose:** To inform the audience about the geologic periods of the planet Earth
- Central Idea (Thesis):** Life on earth developed through six geologic periods, from the Archeozoic to the present.
- Main Points:** (chronologically)
- I. The Archeozoic period
 - II. The Proterozoic period
 - III. The Paleozoic period
 - IV. The Mesozoic period
 - V. The Cenozoic period
 - VI. The Present period

This large topic would have to be severely limited to some specific aspect that cuts across all of the periods, such as changes in life forms. Creating full sentences in your outlining helps you see the development of your central idea and how well you have supported your main points. This, then, assists you in editing your ideas to fit the parameters of the assignment. Perhaps the first four main points discussed above could be covered superficially with the emphasis on the Cenozoic period when the mastodons, mammoths, and saber-toothed tigers first appeared. Historical subjects lend themselves readily to this method; so do processes of a sequential (1–2–3) order, such as film developing. Remember, however, that these subjects can be handled in other ways. History is often more interesting and meaningful if discussed topically.

DIFFICULTY ORDER For some subjects, particularly technical ones, it may help to organize your materials according to order of difficulty, proceeding from

the easiest aspect to the most difficult one. In discussing general principles of electricity, you might arrange a series of ideas as shown below.

Topic: Electricity and Magnetism

General Purpose: To inform.

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the effects of electromagnetic phenomena

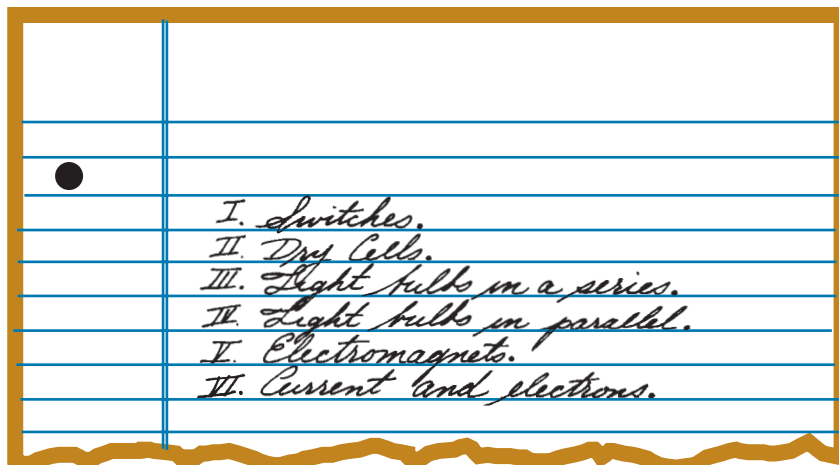
Central Idea (Thesis): Electricity and magnetism are companion physical forces that are responsible for most modern technology.

Main Points: (in order of difficulty)

- I. Electrostatic force occurs between stationary charges.
- II. Magnetic force occurs between charges in uniform motion.
- III. Electromagnetic induction and varying current are companion forces.
- IV. Electromagnetic radiation and accelerating charges create current and electrons.

One electrical engineering student, sensing that her classmates might find all of her main points most difficult, focused them differently to better fit her audience and scaled them down as in Figure 5.1. She still developed her points from easiest to more difficult.

Figure 5.1: Difficulty Order



SPATIAL ORDER This method is particularly useful for certain types of geographic or physical-order subjects. In a speech about the United Nations headquarters in New York, you might first describe each building and then discuss the offices in each building one floor at a time; the ideas are thereby organized spatially. This discussion could also be organized topically if the audience was familiar with the general political structure of the United Nations. In discussing “Nationalism in Africa,” you might organize according to geographic location and simply divide the ideas from north to south and east to west. Chronological history might also be a useful method of organizing this speech. A speech on the various peoples of Africa and where they are or are not found could also be ordered and discussed geographically.

Topic: Different Africans

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform the class about four regions of differing African peoples

Central Idea (Thesis): Differing African peoples are found across four distinctly different African regions.

Main Points: (arranged spatially)

- I. The Sahara
- II. The Nile Valley
- III. The Great Rift Valley
- IV. The Kalahari Desert

LOGICAL ORDER This causal-order method uses generally accepted or obvious cause-and-effect relationships, whether we are talking about the fall of the Japanese empire or the building of a house or a boat. When the order is naturally present in the subject or when the association of ideas is evident, it may be convenient to organize your speech materials accordingly. This method differs from the topical method in that the subpoints almost always illustrate or explain to what they are subordinate, unless the audience (for example, experienced boat builders) already knows the logical relationship. If you were talking to boat builders about excessive hull vibration, you might deal first with effects and work back to causes. You must study your audience very thoroughly before using this method. Persuasive speeches often employ the logical method.

- Topic:** Crack
- General Purpose:** To persuade
- Specific Purpose:** To persuade my audience that cocaine is a returning threat to society
- Central Idea (Thesis):** Cocaine is being widely used and is a threat to public health.
- Main Points:** (causal order)
- I. Cocaine or crack use is accelerating alarmingly.
 - A. Statistics on use
 - B. Statistics on reduced cost
 - II. Cocaine use is destroying public health.
 - A. Loss of sensory impressions
 - B. Recent evidence that its use leads to stroke

NEED-PLAN ORDER Materials are organized according to problems (*needs*) and solutions (*plans*). The speaker first presents the need or the problem that currently exists and then supplies a plan or solution to the problem. The first goal is to get agreement on the existence of the problem. Sometimes this takes more development than others. If the problem was increased tuition, most of the classroom audience should be aware already. Therefore, showing the existence of the problem might need no more than a precursory introduction and a focus on the harmful effects. The second goal is to provide the audience with the plan or the solution. In this case, perhaps the plan would be to suggest alternate resources. The speaker needs to fully develop the plan and, most importantly, show how the plan actually will solve the problem.

If the cocaine speech illustrated under the *logical* (cause-effect) method were expanded to the problem of drug use generally, a *need-plan* or problem-solution order might be a better organizational option.

- Topic:** “H”, Crack, Smack, and “Mary Jane” (also the speech title)
- General Purpose:** To persuade
- Specific Purpose:** To persuade the audience that a national policy is necessary to control widespread drug use
- Central Idea (Thesis):** The federal government needs a radical new mandatory educational program to stop the flow and use of drugs.

Main Points: (Need-plan order)

Need

- I. The deleterious effects of drug use are out of control.
 - A. } Evidence and argument
 - B. }
 - C. }

- II. The uninhibited trafficking in illegal drugs is leading to horrendous crime statistics.
 - A. } Evidence and argument
 - B. }

Plan

- III. A federal program of mandatory drug education is necessary.
 - A. }
 - B. } Details of plan (and how it will solve the problem)
 - C. }

An organizational tool often used for problem-solution or persuasive speeches is Monroe's Motivated Sequence. A full description of this organizational format will be presented in Chapter 11—Speeches to Persuade.

TOPICAL ORDER In the topical method, materials are often ordered according to general topics or classifications of knowledge. For example, a history professor might concentrate on the history of religion, war, government, education, or science. The importance of the topic may or may not be such that the presentation of the topic violates historical time. Some topics are better designed to be broken down into parts, or subtopics. These subtopics become your main points. Although the topical method is a useful way to start breaking down very broad topics, you should first assess the other, more specific ordering systems before deciding upon this more general ordering system. A broad topic like integration of the races can be looked at in several topical ways—educationally, socially, militarily, economically, and so forth. A city may be described topically in terms of its industry, employment opportunities, recreational facilities, schools, and climate.

Topic: Faltering Integration

General Purpose: To persuade

Specific Purpose: To persuade the audience that racial integration needs to be pursued more aggressively

Central Idea (Thesis): Racial integration is uneven across standard societal measures.

Main Points: (topics)

- I. Educational integration is not working.
- II. Economic integration is weak at higher income levels.
- III. Housing integration is mostly unsuccessful.
- IV. Social integration is improving.
- V. Military integration is the most apparent.

In the above example, a need-plan organization might also be used if you have a plan or a chronological order can be used to show the improvement or the lack of it over time.

An audience can be easily confused with the topical method if you mix your main points in terms of function. For example:

Topic: The Real Zodiac

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the latest news on solar system components

Central Idea (Thesis): The solar system is composed of nine planets plus moons, planetoids, comets, meteors, and particles that reflect zodiacal light.

Main Points: (topical)

- I. Nine planets and thirty-three moons
- II. One thousand six-hundred planetoids or asteroids
- III. Comets and meteors
- IV. Reflectors of zodiacal light
- *V. Space travel

Note that the first four main points are logically consistent, each serving the same function of describing *parts* or components of the solar system. The fifth point, “Space travel,” deals not with constituent parts but with another topic (or dimension) completely. This is not to say that a brief anecdote or startling illus-

tration about space travel wouldn't make a good attention-getting *introduction* for such a speech. I suppose one could also organize this speech spatially.

In general, main points should be (1) related in function, (2) unitary (one idea per point), (3) consistent in wording, (4) roughly equal in speech time needed, and (5) ordered to achieve appropriate emphasis.

Cohesion: Connecting Ideas

This includes all efforts at showing that your ideas *cohere*; that is, they relate, connect, or hang together in some meaningful way. The principle means are *previews* and *reviews* of main ideas and effective *transitions* between them.

PREVIEWS Your announcing, in advance, how your main points are connected may make them clearer.

“Today I will explain three reasons why we should support Senator Foghorn.”

1. First she has a clear record of accomplishments
2. She is a woman of deep and sustained character
3. And lastly, she doesn't mind getting her hands dirty

The preview of your speech is found as the last point in your introduction. Some speech instructors might separate the preview out of the introduction to stand alone between your introduction and the body of your speech.

REVIEWS Make your main points more cohesive—and better understood by your audience—by *reviewing* or *summarizing* your points. In Chapter 4, we talked about the importance of restatement for audience comprehension. However, you can be creative by avoiding direct repetition. Restate the ideas in your summary, not each word directly.

1. What is clear about Senator Foghorn is that her record of accomplishments is unparalleled.
2. Her character is unquestioned by all who know and have worked with her.
3. When it comes to work, Senator Foghorn gets involved

TRANSITIONS These specific language segments connect one idea to another. They can be short and direct indicating a move to the next point, or they can be elaborate internal previews and internal reviews that help the audience hold the points together. Whichever the case, they are the bridges of words and phrases indicating that you have finished one thought and are moving on to another.

In the case of speeches that follow a fairly clear chronological order, you may need little by way of transitional statement.

“To continue...”

“Step two in this process...”

“On the third day...”

“To sum up...”

These are just simple *signs* that hopefully will replace the excess verbalizations often used by inexperienced speakers—“Let’s see,” “ah,” “um,” “okay,” “so...”

You can also use connecting phrases as *signposts* designed to emphasize or indicate a shift in focus.

“More important than my previous points...”

“My next argument is crucial...”

“Now hear this...”

“Most of all...”

“In this case...”

For lack of a simple connecting word or phrase, these additional situations sometimes provide awkward moments for speakers. The following are some suggestions:

1. *Comparing*: from another point of view, in like manner, in contrast with this
2. *Citing*: by way of illustration, a case in point is, under this head
3. *Judging*: this being true, such being the case, under these circumstances
4. *Excepting*: with this exception, waiving this question, excluding this point
5. *Opposing*: were this not so, on the contrary, in spite of this
6. *Conceding*: to be sure, it must be granted, admitting the force of
7. *Making reference*: in point of, with respect to, as related to

As mentioned earlier, you can also employ internal previews and internal reviews between your points as transitions.

INTERNAL PREVIEWS You can preview each main idea as you come to it in a more developed transition. Previewing a main point within the body of the speech is referred to as an internal preview. Think of them as elaborate transitions. Here is an example of how an internal preview is used as a transition within the body of a speech.

“My second important reason to support Senator Foghorn has to do with her strength of character, including her willingness to stand by what she says”

We would expect that the following point would cover examples of character and explain what is meant by “stand by what she says.”

INTERNAL REVIEWS Sometimes a complicated point needs a summary before moving forward, and might be necessary to show the logic of the point as it relates to what is coming. This transition style is referred to as an internal review. Although the speech on Senator Foghorn contains points that are hardly complicated, we will stay with that example here.

“Now that I’ve established that Senator Foghorn is a woman of character by following through with her promises, standing by what she says, and dependably responding to her constituents, let’s move to work ethic.”

There are also times that internal previews and internal reviews can be combined. This can be particularly helpful with complicated points. However, it can also be cumbersome. Speakers use these transitions judiciously.

PLANNING THE INTRODUCTION

Functions

Securing attention is the first requirement of an introduction, and is one of great importance. An uninterested audience means your message will not get across. Your introduction should also attempt to establish or strengthen *goodwill* among you, the group you represent, and the audience. In those rare cases in which goodwill is scarce (when you're facing a hostile audience), you need to establish an atmosphere for a *fair hearing*, meaning that you create enough credibility and trustworthiness that the audience is willing to hear you out. For example, statesman Adlai Stevenson used humor to establish rapport with a tough Labor Day audience. "When I was a boy, I never had much sympathy for a holiday speaker. He was just a kind of interruption between hot dogs, a fly in the lemonade."

Another function of the introduction is *orientation*. The speaker must orient the audience by supplying certain background explanations or definitions to help the audience understand the main body of the speech. Certain terms may be unfamiliar, and *not* to define them is to confuse the audience (for example, cybernetics, carcinoma, ROM/RAM, method acting, and organon). Not all definitions need to occur in the introduction; however, if a term or concept is central to your speech, it should be addressed at this point.

Finally, unless some special strategy of persuasion is involved, the introduction seeks to make your *central idea* and *purpose* clear: What is the main thrust of your topic and what are you seeking from your audience? Almost always it offers a *preview* of what will follow in the main body.

In sum, the general functions of an introduction are as follows:

1. Secure *attention*
2. Establish goodwill and credibility
3. Assure a fair hearing

4. Orient your audience to the subject
5. Make your *central idea* and *purpose* clear
6. Offer a preview

SECURE ATTENTION One student with a persuasive speech on chest X-rays secured attention with the following *startling statement*:



There is a subtle killer loose in the room. It killed forty thousand people last year. It likes young people—no one is immune to tuberculosis.

It was topic relevant (X-rays reveal TB), it was audience relevant (young people are most susceptible), and it was startling. How much better than:

A yearly chest X-ray is the best way to avoid TB.

Audiences usually respond to the unique, the strange, and the bizarre. One student speaking against terms that stereotype people aroused attention and curiosity with the following *rhetorical questions*:

1. What if this week Dr. Ross asked us to define who we are, or what our roles are? In doing so I wonder how many of us would use such terms as “man,” “woman,” “male,” “husband,” “wife,” “mother,” “father,” “masculine,” “feminine”? And if so, I wonder how many of us would be stereotyping ourselves?

The following elements of her introduction to secure attention highlight the use of *reference to subject*:

2. For far too long clichés—such as: “Little boys are made of snakes and snails and puppy dog’s tails; and little girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice”—have represented the image of the male and female in society. Traditionally, males have been depicted as heroic, active, and aggressive, while females pale in the shadow of masculinity.

The title of the student’s speech was “A War on Words,” which was an attention-getting device in itself when announced by the student chairperson.

Another student speaking on the social impact of rock music used *audio equipment* and opened with music examples—plenty of attention here.

Statistics make great attention-getters, particularly if not commonly known. They are sometimes very poignant when put in question form to a relevant audience. Here are some examples:

Do you know that 72 percent of the freshmen in the Detroit public high schools don’t graduate?

Eighty percent of the books written are read by 10 percent of the people.

Fewer than one out of five books published covers expenses.

Quotations are often good openers and attention-getters. Here are some that students have used:

A speech on the future:

I am not afraid of tomorrow for I have seen yesterday, and I love today.

William Allen White (journalist)

A speech on publishing difficulties:

A person who publishes a book willfully appears before the populace with his pants down.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

A speech on human insensitivity:

The young man who has not wept is a savage, and the old man who will not laugh is a fool.

George Santayana

A speech on critical thinking:

I am not afraid of tomorrow for I have seen yesterday, and I love today.

William Allen White (journalist)

A speech on inexperienced deer hunters:

A little learning is a dangerous thing; Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring; There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, And drinking largely sobers us again.

Alexander Pope

This student not only moved on to a discussion of inadequate training in gun handling but also, through a play on words, to the problems of drinking and hunting. We'll have more to say about attention and interest factors in Chapter 10, "Speeches to Inform."

ESTABLISH GOODWILL AND CREDIBILITY Goodwill and credibility are especially important with a controversial subject and a hostile audience. As we shall learn in more detail in Chapter 11, "Speeches to Persuade," some concession to the opposition helps establish goodwill and indicates that you know something about the other side of the argument. So does humor. When Jimmy Carter was campaigning for the presidency, he became used to difficult audiences. Upon finally being greeted by a quieter, more contemplative group, he commented, "It certainly is nice to have people waving at me with all five fingers." Establishing goodwill is another way of connecting to the audience. A speaker wants the audience to trust him or her and minimizing differences is a good start.

In a student speech *against* the repeal of Michigan's container (bottles and cans) law, the speaker opened as follows:

I know that soft drinks cost a dollar a case more in Michigan due to extra handling and storage. I also know that some glassmaking jobs are lost and that some energy is lost because of extra transportation. However, let me tell you about litter reduction and the costs saved there ...

Credibility can be established by revealing your experience, training, or any other reason why you are qualified to speak on your chosen topic. Trying to do that without sounding boastful can be a problem.

A speech on scuba diving was opened with a display of equipment and the following words:

I've only been diving for two years and my deepest dive was only 80 feet to the wreck of the schooner Kukla. I'd like to review some basics ...

It was clear to all of us (even the divers) that this speaker had credibility and that he wasn't trying to inflate his qualifications.

Other ways to establish credibility include stating some startling statistic or referring to a source that is an expert on your topic. This shows the audience that you have faithfully been doing your homework for the speech and have come to the presentation prepared.

ASSURE A FAIR HEARING This function is much like securing goodwill and perceptions of credibility and is not necessary in speeches where the audience is not hostile. The container-law speech was a good example of an appeal for a fair hearing because the audience had concern about increased costs on their beverages. Hostile audiences are the main problem particularly if they keep rehearsing arguments to what they *think* you're going to say. The concession suggestion is also a good one here, but sometimes a direct appeal is appropriate.

I know that most of you are opposed to the by-pass road proposal. I have heard your arguments—it's only American fair play that you hear the other side. I promise to be as objective as I can.

Other methods of securing fair hearing include *appreciation*: (“I understand and appreciate your concern—and most of all your willingness to hear both sides”), *personal reference*: (“I've lived all of my life in this community and I want only the best for its citizens....”) and *humor* (“Your spokesperson just paid me a compliment—I think. He said, ‘It must be difficult for you to soar among eagles when you work with turkeys [the road commission].’ ”)

ORIENT YOUR AUDIENCE TO YOUR SUBJECT As in establishing goodwill by connecting to the audience; the audience also needs you to connect them to your topic. It may be important to you, but why is it important or interesting to them? Sometimes an audience also needs to become better acquainted with technical aspects, definitions, diagrams, or terms that you

will use in the body of your speech. Review these in the introduction; a visual aid helps too. A speech on the history of firearms made more sense to the audience after the speaker first oriented audience members to the basic nomenclature (names of the parts) of a rifle. He did this by using an enlarged diagram, thus giving the audience a vocabulary and a sense of function that greatly assisted understanding. Had his speech been on the firearms themselves, and not the history, naming the parts of a rifle might have worked better as a first point. The point of orientation is to give the audience the information they need to better follow the rest of the speech and to see how it relates to them.

Other ways to orient your audience to the topic may include a brief historical sketch, an extended example or short narrative, or a hypothetical story.

CLARIFY YOUR CENTRAL IDEA AND PURPOSE If, after a rousing speech introduction, your audience says, “Okay, but what are we talking about?” or “Whadhesay?” we might have a problem of clarity in the purpose, the central idea, and/or poor orientation. Unless strategy is involved, the introduction should clarify what you are going to discuss (the central idea), why your audience should listen (orientation), and what you expect from them (purpose).

The central idea is clarified with a thesis statement that captures and summarizes your speech in a full, declarative sentence. As a complete sentence, the thesis will help focus the speaker in creating the main points and help focus the audience on what to expect. A student speaking on music theory started his introduction with a violin demonstration (attention) and for his central idea provided the following thesis statement:

There are three elements shared by all instruments that need to be understood in order to play any of them

He then revealed the purpose of the speech by making it clear to the audience that there was simplicity to the instruments:

Although you, yourself might not play an instrument, knowing what they all have in common can better help you to appreciate the necessary knowledge all musicians share.

PREVIEW THE BODY OF YOUR SPEECH The old rule of “Tell ’em what you’re going to tell ’em, tell ’em, tell ’em what you’ve told ’em” makes some sense. The preview is “what you’re going to tell ’em.” The preview is the last element of a good introduction and lets your audience know precisely what you are going to cover in the body of your speech. It can serve as a transition to the body, but more often is followed by a transition to the first main point.

The above student, giving his speech on music theory, ended his introduction with a forthright preview of what was to follow.

I have three points to make that I will relate to playing an instrument: the kinds of notes, the musical staff, and methods of counting the notes.

You need not always be as specific as the example above. Look at the following direct preview and its more creative counterpart:

Today, I am going to speak about how to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Instead;

Reducing what we consume, reusing what we purchase, and recycling what we no longer want are ways we can contribute to a greener environment.

PITFALLS TO AVOID IN INTRODUCTION The following examples illustrate problems that speakers often find in working their introductions. False starts, unnecessary apologies, and overstatements are three general pitfalls you will want to avoid. All three result in a reduction of your credibility.

False Starts

“Before I begin ...”

“Well, I guess it’s time to start ...”

“Is it all right if I sit down?”

“Before saying anything important ...”

Statements such as these generally irritate audiences and label you as ineffective.

Unnecessary Apologies

“I’m not very good at this ...”

“I hope you’ll pay attention ...”

“I didn’t have much time to prepare ...”

“I never had a speech course ...”

“I’m sorry if this sounds complicated ...”

If any of these apologetic statements are true, the audience will find out soon enough. Don’t destroy your credibility before you even get started.

On the other hand, if you are late for the speech, lost your visual aids, or caused the schedule to be rearranged, a brief explanation, if not an apology, is in order.

“I’m late because my ROTC instructor held the class overtime.”

“My luggage along with my slides was stolen.”

“I apologize to the other speakers and appreciate their accommodating my travel problems.”

Overstatement This pitfall includes distortion, imprudence, misrepresentation, and over exaggeration to get attention. Don’t promise more than you can deliver.

A social science teacher opened a lecture on nuclear power by asking each student to cut off a lock of hair and deposit it in a metal container. The teacher then burned the hair, which gave off a nauseating stench. This, he explained, was what human flesh smelled like when exposed to nuclear radiation. Next he showed a two-minute film clip of the most grisly pictures of hideously burned people after the atomic bomb raid on Hiroshima. Finally, he snuffed out an ant farm in a fraction of a second by burning up the oxygen with hot magnesium, much, he explained, as people are destroyed in a nuclear explosion.

Attention here all right! But will it help introduce the body of the speech? Not if it is so overpowering that it destroys future concentration or so emotional

that it actually turns people off to the point of rejection of the speaker and the speaker's message. Will it assure a fair hearing? Is it a fair hearing? Is it a fair orientation to the subject? Does it confuse the purpose? Is it a case of overkill and misplaced emphasis?

Attention at any price is a mistake. Attention-getting strategies should be relevant to both the topic and the audience, no matter whether it's a joke, a story, an example, or a demonstration. However, some topic-relevant devices are not always audience relevant. One student speaker opened a speech on presidential politics with a joke about one of the more profligate candidates. The story had two four-letter words in it. Half of the audience were members of the Pentecostal Church; more than half of the audience walked out before he got to the message.

Do not be afraid to startle or titillate an audience especially with an important but dull topic, but look for the boomerangs.

Certainly, gaining the listeners' *attention* is an important requirement of the beginning of a speech, but one can overdo as well as underdo attention-gaining devices. The number of attention devices to be used also depends on what attention level the audience has already achieved. In other words, if the listeners are on the edge of their seats and ready to hear what you have to say, a lengthy introduction designed to arouse their attention will be unnecessary.

Model Introductions

The inaugural address of John F. Kennedy, which follows, illustrates most of the functions and requirements of a good introduction. Note that they both lack a preview of main points to follow.

- Attention* My fellow citizens:
We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end as well as a beginning—signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.
- Orientation* The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power and Goodwill to abolish all forms of human poverty and to abolish all forms of human life. And, yet, the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still

at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

Fair Hearing We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a cold and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today.

Central Idea And Purpose Let every nation know, whether it wish us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, or oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and success of liberty. This much we pledge—and more.

In still more specific terms, an introduction may utilize appreciation, personal reference, quotations, humor, and related stories or experiences. When the purpose of the speech is relatively obvious and the speaker and subject are well known, a related story, incident, or narrative with built-in attention often reinforces the purpose and gives the audience a fresh orientation. Booker T. Washington's introduction to his classic address at the Atlanta Exposition is a case in point.

Attention Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens: One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success.

Goodwill I but convey to you, Mr. President and Directors, the sentiment of the masses of my race when I say that in no way have the value of manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress. It is a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom.

Fair Hearing Not only this, but the opportunity here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress. Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill;

that the political convention or stump speaking had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or truck garden.

Orientation A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, “Water, water; we die of thirst!” The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River.

Central Idea and Purpose To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next door neighbor, I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.”

President Franklin D. Roosevelt also used a story in an introduction to one of the many appeals he made for the purchase of war bonds.

Once upon a time, a few years ago, there was a city in our Middle West, which was threatened by a destructive flood in a great river. The water had risen to the top of the banks. Every man, woman, and child in that city was called upon to fill sandbags in order to defend their homes against the rising waters. For many days and nights destruction and death stared them in the face. As a result of the grim, determined community effort, that city still stands. Those people kept the levees above the peak of the flood. All of them joined together in the desperate job that had to be done—businessmen, workers, farmers, and doctors, and preachers—people of all races.

To me that town is a living symbol of what community cooperation can accomplish.

PLANNING THE CONCLUSION

Functions

A good conclusion offers *review*, *reinforcement*, and *a call to action*. To these we sometimes add *visualization*, *restatement*, and *impression*. All of these devices in-

tend to rekindle attention and to assist the memory. Aristotle suggested that the major purpose of the conclusion is to help the memory. An attention-getter used here is a good idea just as it was in the introduction.

The conclusion is generally shorter than the introduction. It may, and generally should, include a short summary that reinforces the central idea, thus making it easier to understand. It may provide clearly stated directions if certain actions are part of the speaker's purpose. When your purpose has been inspiration, you may need a more impressive conclusion. Some of the devices suggested in the discussion on introductions (an impressive quotation, incident, or experience) apply here. The three major functions of a good conclusion are as follows:

1. Review the central idea.
2. Reinforce belief or action desired.
3. End with impact and impress when appropriate.

REVIEW THE CENTRAL IDEA “Tell ’em what you told ’em.” Sometimes the speaker summarizes the central idea in his review. Other times, the speaker reviews each main point covered in the speech. A detailed speech about the dietary laws of the Jewish people, including the biblical and pragmatic reasons behind them, concluded as follows:

CONCLUSION

- I. In review, an observing Jew may not:
 - A. Consume meat that comes from animals that do not possess cloven hoofs and that do not chew their cud.
 - B. Consume fish that do not have both scales and fins.
 - C. Consume or cook meat and dairy foods together.
 - D. Eat any part of a living animal.
 - E. Consume blood (hence, koshering).
 - F. Consume meat from an animal that has not been ritually slaughtered.

In a speech about the future six wonders of the world, where the central idea was to show their useful purposes compared to the ancient seven wonders, this student offered an interesting and detailed review:

CONCLUSION

- I. These new six wonders have useful purposes.
 - A. Snowy Mountains Scheme makes Australia's desert lands places of lush vegetation.
 - B. Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel enables people to travel more easily from Norfolk to the Delmarva Peninsula.
 - C. The Netherlands' Delta Plan secures the land from the damaging storms of the sea.
 - D. The New York Narrows Bridge allows traffic to cross the entrance of New York Harbor.
 - E. The Mont Blanc Tunnel allows year-round travel through the Alps.
 - F. The English Channel Tunnel connects Britain and France by rail transporting passengers and their cars.
- II. These constructions are more wondrous than the ancient ones.
 - A. Ancient wonders were noted primarily for art, size, and beauty.
 - B. The modern wonders each have all of these plus unchallenged utility.

REINFORCE BELIEF OR ACTION A speaker can, of course, reinforce by simply reviewing as shown in the illustrations above. However, in persuasive speeches one may also wish to be a little more explicit or manifest. In a speech where the central idea was that nonsmokers have rights and should speak up for them, after a review of actions to be taken, the student uses reinforcement to emphasize the belief and action she is requesting. Her concluding statement is a direct **call to action**, giving the audience specific actions they can adopt immediately:

CONCLUSION

- I. In summary, smokers infringe on the health and well-being of nonsmokers with the secondhand smoke of their burning cigarettes.
 - A. Secondhand smoke can cause lung cancer in adults who do not smoke.
 - B. Exposure to secondhand smoke also increases the risk of heart disease in the nonsmoker.

- C. In children, exposure to secondhand smoke can cause asthma, increase the risk of SIDS, and increase the risk of lower respiratory track and middle ear infections.
 - D. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has created the smoke-free home and car program.
 - E. We should follow the EPA program guidelines and secure smoke-free environments for nonsmokers and children.
- II.** There is no reason there can't be places for smoking as well as places not to smoke.
- A. I don't think anyone has ever really died of a "nicotine fit" from not smoking for an hour or two during a class period.
 - B. You really should stand up for your rights and support movements to designate places to smoke and places not to smoke.
 - C. So, the next time you're in a car or other enclosed place and someone asks you, "Do you mind if I smoke?" be sure to reply, "Yes, I mind!"

In a speech where the central idea was that latchkey children can survive very nicely if parents will practice specific rules, a student reviewed and reinforced the actions as follows:

CONCLUSION

- I.** In review, these are actions to take if you have a child who will have to stay alone.
 - A. Teach children to use the phone and lock the doors.
 - B. Don't let the child display a key in public.
 - C. Instruct children to tell callers that the parent is busy and unable to come to the phone.
 - D. Structure activities for the child.
 - E. Arrange for the child to spend some afternoons with friends.
 - F. Get a pet.
 - G. Teach children that independence and resourcefulness are virtues but don't overload the circuits.
- II.** Latchkey children can lead normal lives without fear, drugs, or crime.
 - A. The proof is standing here in front of you;
 - B. I was a latchkey child.

In the above example, the student is covertly asking for the audience to reconsider their beliefs. Although he provides actions a parent can take, he is not requesting the audience to any particular action or overt change. In fact, depending on how he organized the speech, his review could signal it was either an informative or persuasive speech. His reinforcement leads us to believe it was designed as a persuasive speech.

END WITH IMPACT AND IMPRESS WHEN APPROPRIATE All speeches should end with a strong final statement that leaves the audience with something to consider or resonates with the audience long after the speech is over. This is referred to as **ending with impact**. Most classroom speeches other than *special-occasion* assignments don't call for superdramatic, elevated conclusions, but a dramatic or pointed, relevant quotation like those shown in the discussion of introductions usually works well in all speeches. A very touching speech by a handicapped student on the "Promise of Tomorrow" was concluded using the same quotation with which she had opened her speech.

Other choices to end a speech can include restating a startling fact given earlier in the speech, providing a rhetorical or hypothetical question, offering a thought-provoking comment that invites the audience to further consideration, or requesting or calling the audience to action in a persuasive speech.

Special-occasion speeches typically do call for a more elevated style of language and a more impressive presentation at their conclusion. Martin Luther King, Jr. provided a classic inspirational conclusion in his famous speech in support of civil rights legislation before an estimated two hundred thousand people. Note that his review is much more than a mere repetition of his main points, and that his purpose is made abundantly clear.

So let freedom ring—from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire, let freedom ring; from the mighty mountains of New York, let freedom ring—from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and mole hill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring...

When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

A presidential inauguration is a very special occasion and the "Ask Not" speech of John Fitzgerald Kennedy made an impression that will be long remembered. The conclusion deserves a piece of marble.



And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you: Ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessings and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

PITFALLS TO AVOID IN CONCLUSIONS

As in introductions, there are pitfalls that speakers want to be sure to avoid in their conclusions. Three typical pitfalls include deprecation of a speaker's own effort in creating and presenting his/her speech, overamplification by restating

points with too much emphasis or even worse, adding new material, and prolonging the close.

Deprecation of Effort

“I should have had more time to prepare.”

“I’m sorry I couldn’t say it better.”

“I guess there are more important points as well.”

“I’m not an orator, but I hope you got something out of this.”

These kinds of apologies are almost always superfluous and damaging to your credibility. Apologies and qualifiers germane to other issues may sometimes pertain, but should probably have been stated earlier.

Overamplification Overamplification refers to a disproportionate expansion of the points already covered in the body of the speech. A speaker can creatively

restate, but should not elaborate on points already covered in the speech. In its worst example of overamplification, new material is introduced. New material should never appear in the conclusion. Main points with their support belong in the body of the speech, not in the conclusion.

*I am not afraid of tomorrow for I have
seen yesterday, and I love today.*

William Allen White

Prolonged Close Most important, make it clear when you are finished; consider your exit lines carefully. Speakers who do not know when to finish appear awkward and frustrate the audience. Furthermore, an awkward conclusion reduces the credibility he may have gained throughout the speech. The never-ending conclusion leaves you with so many things to tie together that you cannot conclude your speech in any unified manner. The lesson is obvious; prepare your conclusion as carefully as the rest of your speech. Doing so serves as a good check on organic unity. Quit while you’re ahead. Don’t let an audience hypnotize you so much that you ruin a good speech by an overly long or overly dramatic conclusion.



CHAPTER REVIEW

Wrapping it up

Summary

The introduction, body, and conclusion are the basic parts of a speech. Main points emerge from your central idea and early preparation. In persuasive speeches, look at your basic reasons or arguments for the main points. Rhetorical advice regarding main points includes: limit them to three or four, keep them unified with your central idea, and give each relatively equal merit.

Methods of ordering main points include: chronological, difficulty, spatial, logical, need-plan, which includes considering Monroe's Motivated Sequence, and topical. The principal ways of connecting main ideas include: a preview in the introduction, a review in the summary, and transitions between main points (which include internal previews and internal reviews or summaries as well as brief statements and signposts).

Six functions of the introduction part of a speech include: securing attention, connecting to the audience by establishing goodwill and credibility, assuring a fair hearing when the audience is opposed or hostile to your topic, orienting the audience to the subject of your speech, clarifying your central idea and purpose, and offering a preview of your main points. Pitfalls to avoid include: false starts, unnecessary apologies, and overstatement.

Three functions of the conclusion include: reviewing the central idea, reinforcing the belief or action desired, and ending with impact while impressing when appropriate. Pitfalls to avoid include: deprecation of effort, overamplification, and a prolonged close.

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