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Exploring Public Speaking: 2nd Revision

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Chapter 6
Organizing and Outlining Your Speech

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, the student will be able to:

- ◊ Explain why organization is necessary and valuable to public speaking;
- ◊ Differentiate the different types of organizational patterns;
- ◊ Choose an organizational pattern that is most logical to the speech's specific purpose;
- ◊ Construct an outline for an extemporaneous speech;
- ◊ Create connective statements that will help the audience understand the logic and structure of a speech.

Chapter Preview

6.1 – Why We Need Organization in Speeches

Have you had this experience? You may have an instructor who is easy to take notes from because he or she helps you know the main ideas and gives you cues as to what is most important to write down and study for the test. And then you might have an instructor who tells interesting stories, says provocative things, and leads engaging discussions, but you have a really hard time following where the instruction is going. If so, you already know that structure makes a difference for your own listening. In this chapter we will examine why that is true and how you can translate that type of structure to your own speeches.

Significant psychological and communication research has been done about how an audience needs and desires clear organization in a speech as they listen. Those sources are listed in the references at the end of the chapter, but they are summarized here.

First, as we listen, we have limits as to how many categories of information we can keep in mind. You have probably heard that that number of items or categories is seven, or as one source says, "seven plus or minus two" (Miller, 1956; Gabriel and Mayzner, 1963; Cowan, Chen, & Rouder, 2004). In public speaking, to be on the safe side, the "minus two" is advised: in other words, you should avoid having more than five main points in a speech, and that would only be for a speech of some length where you could actually support, explain, or provide sufficient evidence for five points.

For most speeches that you would give in class, where you have about 5-7 minutes, three points is probably safe territory, although there could be exceptions, of course. It is also acceptable for short speeches to just have two main points, **if doing so supports your specific purpose**. That last phrase is bolded for emphasis because ultimately, your organization is going to depend on your specific purpose. For the purposes of your speeches in this class, each "category" could be thought of as one of your main points.

Secondly, the categories of information should be distinct, different, and clear. You might think about organization in public speaking as having three steps, which we will cover in more detail later in the chapter. These steps are grouping, labeling, and ordering (putting in order). Before you can label your main points clearly or put them in the right order, you have to group your information.

Here we might use the analogy of having a yard sale at your home, something you might have done or helped a family member to do. The first step, before putting up signs or pricing items, is to go through your closets and garage and creating "piles" of items: what you want to sell, what should probably just be discarded, what you want to keep but store elsewhere, what you might want to give away. Then you take the "sell" pile and separate it into categories such as children's items, tools, kitchen items, furniture, etc. This second phase of sorting items is so you can put them outside on your lawn or driveway in a way people expect to see items and would be more likely to buy. You would probably not sort items by color or size, although you could. It's just that your customers are not looking for "blue" items or "big" items as much as they are looking for kitchen items, baby clothes, or furniture.

Researchers have found that "chunking" information, that is, the way it is grouped, is vital to audience understanding, learning, and retention of information (Beighly, 1954; Bodeia, Powers, & Fitch-Hauser, 2006; Whitman & Timmis, 1975; Daniels & Whitman, 1981). How does this work in practice? When you are doing your research, you look at the articles and websites you read and say, "That information relates to what I read over here" and "That statistic fits under the idea of . . ." You are looking for similarities and patterns. That is exactly what you do when you group anything, such as the items at a yard sale, where you group according to customer interest and purpose of the items. Finally, if a piece of information you found doesn't fit into a group as you do your research, it may just not belong in the speech. It's what we would call "extraneous."

A good example of this principle is if you are doing a demonstration speech. It may or may not be required in your class but is the kind of speech you may be called upon to do in your future work. For example, a nurse may be teaching patients how to do self-care for diabetes, or a computer trainer may be showing how to use software. The temptation is to treat the procedure as a list of steps, which may number as many as twenty or thirty steps.

There are very few times we can remember a list of twenty or thirty items. Yes, you learned the alphabet of 26 letters when you were a child, or all the state capitals, but you have probably forgotten how long it took. Plus, you probably learned a song to help with the alphabet, and you also did not understand the point of the alphabet; it was just something you did with other children

or to please your parents. In the case of the state capitals, you probably used flashcards or memory aids.

Adult learning and listening is different. We need information "chunked" or grouped into manageable categories. So, instead of listing twenty or thirty discrete steps in the process you are demonstrating or explaining, you would want to group the steps into three to five logical categories to help the audience's reception and retention of the message, using the separate steps as "subpoints."

Finally, because your audience will understand you better and perceive you as organized, you will gain more credibility as a speaker if you are organized, assuming you also have credible information and acceptable delivery (Slagell, 2013; Sharp & McClung, 1966). Yun, Costantini, and Billingsley (2012) also found a side benefit to learning to be an organized public speaker: your writing skills will improve, specifically your organization and sentence structure. This was no surprise to one of the authors, whose students often comment that they were able to organize their essays and papers for other classes much better after learning good organization principles for speaking.

6.2 - Patterns of Organization

At this point, then, you should see how much your audience needs organization. You also know that as you do research, you will group together similar pieces of information from different sources in your research. As you group your research information, you will want to make sure that your content is adhering to your specific purpose statement and will look for ways that your information can be grouped together into categories.

Interestingly, there are some standard ways of organizing these categories, which are called "patterns of organization." In each of the examples below, you will see how the specific purpose gives shape to the organization of the speech and how each one exemplifies one of the six main organizational patterns. In each example, only the three to five main sections or "points" (Roman numerals) are given, without the other essential parts of the outline. Please note that these are simple, basic outlines for example purposes, and your instructor will of course expect much more content from the outline you submit for class.

Chronological

Specific Purpose: To describe to my classmates the four stages of rehabilitation in addiction recovery.

I. The first stage is acknowledging the problem and entering treatment.

II. The second stage is early abstinence, a difficult period in the rehabilitation facility.

III. The third stage is maintaining abstinence after release from the rehab facility.

IV. The fourth stage is advanced recovery after a period of several years.

Chronological pattern

an organizational pattern for speeches in which the main points are arranged in time order

The example above uses what is termed the **chronological pattern** of organization. Chronological always refers to time order. Since the specific purpose is about stages, it is necessary to put the four stages in the right order. It would make no sense to put the fourth stage second and the third stage first. However, chronological time can be long or short. If you were giving a speech about the history of the Civil Rights Movement, that period would cover several decades; if you were giving a speech about the process to change the oil in your car, that process takes less than an hour. The process described in the speech example above would also be long-term, that is, one taking several years. The commonality is the order of the information.

In addition, chronological speeches that refer to processes can be given for two reasons. First, they can be for understanding. A speech about recovery is to explain what happens in the addiction recovery process, but the actual process may never really happen to the audience members. That understanding may also lead them to more empathy for someone in recovery. Second, chronological or process speeches can be for action and instruction. For a speech about changing the oil in a car, your purpose is that the audience could actually change the oil in their cars after listening to the speech.

One of the problems with chronological speeches is, as mentioned before, that you would not want just a list of activities. It is important to chunk the information into three to five groups so that the audience has a framework. For example, in a speech about the history of the Civil Rights Movement, your "grouping" or "chunking" might be:

I. The movement saw African-Americans struggling for legal recognition before the Brown v. Board of Education decision.

II. The movement was galvanized and motivated by the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

III. The movement saw its goals met in the Civil Rights Act of 1965.

It would be easy in the case of the Civil Rights Movement to list the many events that happened over more than two decades, but that could be overwhelming for the audience. In this outline, the audience is focused on the three events that pushed it forward, rather than the persons involved in the movement. You could give a speech with a focus on people, but it would be different and probably less chronological and more topical (see below).

Spatial

Spatial pattern

an organizational pattern for speeches in which the main points are arranged according to movement in space or direction

You can see that chronological is a highly-used organizational structure, since one of the ways our minds work is through time-orientation—past, present, future. Another common thought process is movement in space or direction, which is called the **spatial pattern**. For example:

Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the three regional cooking styles of Italy.

I. In the mountainous region of the North, the food emphasizes cheese and meat.

II. In the middle region of Tuscany, the cuisine emphasizes grains and olives.

III. In the southern region and Sicily, the diet is based on fish and seafood.

In this example, the content is moving from northern to southern Italy, as the word "regional" would indicate. Here is a good place to note that grouping or "chunking" in a speech helps simplicity, and to meet the principle of KISS (Keep It Simple, Speaker). If you were to actually study Italian cooking in depth, sources will say there are twenty regions. But "covering" twenty regions in a speech is not practical, and while the regions would be distinct for a "foodie" or connoisseur of Italian cooking, for a beginner or general audience, three is a good place to start. You could at the end of the speech note that more in-depth study

would show the twenty regions, but that in your speech you have used three regions to show the similarities of the twenty regions rather than the small differences.

For a more localized example:

> Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the layout of King Tut's pyramid.
>
> I. The first chamber of the tomb was antechamber.
>
> II. The second chamber of the tomb was the annex.
>
> III. The third chamber of the tomb was the burial chamber.
>
> IV. The last chamber of the tomb was the treasury.

For an even more localized example:

> Specific Purpose: To describe to my Anatomy and Physiology class the three layers of the human skin.
>
> I. The outer layer is the epidermis, which is the outermost barrier of protection.
>
> II. The second layer beneath is the dermis.
>
> III. The third layer closest to the bone is the hypodermis, made of fat and connective tissue.

The key to spatial organization is to be logical in progression rather than jumping around, as in this example:

> I. The Native Americans of Middle Georgia were primarily the Creek nation.
>
> II. The Native Americans of North Georgia were of the Cherokee tribe nation.
>
> III. The Native Americans of South Georgia were mostly of the Hitchiti and Oconee tribes.

It makes more sense to start at the top (north) of the state and move down (south) or start at the bottom and move up rather than randomly discuss unconnected areas.

Topical/Parts of the Whole

The topical organizational pattern is probably the most all-purpose in that many speech topics could use it. Many subjects will have main points that naturally divide into "types of," "kinds of," "sorts of," or "categories of." Other subjects naturally divide into "parts of the whole." However, as mentioned previously, you want to keep your categories simple, clear, distinct, and at five or fewer.

Specific Purpose: To explain to my freshmen students the concept of SMART goals.

I. SMART goals are specific and clear.

II. SMART goals are measurable.

III. SMART goals are attainable or achievable.

IV. SMART goals are relevant and worth doing.

V. SMART goals are time-bound and doable within a time period.

Specific Purpose: To explain the four characteristics of quality diamonds.

I. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of cut.

II. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of carat.

III. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of color.

IV. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of clarity.

Specific Purpose: To describe to my audience the four main chambers of a human heart.

I. The first chamber in the blood flow is the right atrium.

II. The second chamber in the blood flow is the right ventricle.

III. The third chamber in the blood flow is the left atrium.

IV. The fourth chamber in the blood flow and then out to the body is the left ventricle.

At this point in discussing organizational patterns and looking at these examples, two points should be made about them and about speech organization in general.

First, you might look at the example about the chambers of the heart and say, "But couldn't that be chronological, too, since that's the order of the blood flow procedure?" Yes, it could. There will be times when a specific purpose could work with two different organizational patterns. In this case, it's just a matter of emphasis. This speech is emphasizing the anatomy of the heart; if the speech's specific purpose were "To explain to my classmates the flow of blood through the chambers of the heart," the organizational pattern would be chronological but very similar (However, since the blood goes to the lungs to be oxygenated before coming back to the left atrium, that might alter the pattern some).

Another principle of organization to think about when using topical organization is "climax" organization. That means putting your strongest argument or most important point last when applicable. For example:

Specific purpose: To defend to my classmates the proposition that capital punishment should be abolished in the United States.

I. Capital punishment does not save money for the justice system.

II. Capital punishment does not deter crime in the United States historically.

III. Capital punishment has resulted in many unjust executions.

In most people's minds, "unjust executions" is a bigger reason to end a practice than the cost, since an unjust execution means the loss of an innocent life and a violation of our principals. If you believe Main Point III is the strongest argument of the three, putting it last builds up to a climax.

Cause/Effect Pattern

If the specific purpose mentions words such as "causes," "origins," "roots of," "foundations," "basis," "grounds," or "source," it is a causal order; if it mentions words such as "effects," "results," "outcomes," "consequences," or "products," it is effect order. If it mentions both, it would of course be cause/effect order. This example shows a cause/effect pattern:

Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the causes and effects of schizophrenia.

I. Schizophrenia has genetic, social, and environmental causes.

II. Schizophrenia has educational, relational, and medical effects.

It should be noted, however, that a specific purpose like the last one is very broad and probably not practical for your class speeches; it would be better to focus on just causes or effects, or even just one type of cause (such as genetic causes of schizophrenia) or one type of effect (relational or social). These two

examples show a speech that deals with causes only and effects only, respectively.

Specific Purpose: To explain to my fellow Biology 1107 students the origin of the West Nile Virus epidemic in the U.S.

I. The West Nile Virus came from a strain in a certain part of Africa.

II. The West Nile Virus resulted from mosquitoes being imported through fruits.

III. The West Nile Virus became more prominent due to floods in the Southeast.

Specific Purpose: To describe to my classmates the effects of a diagnosis of autism on a child's life.

I. An autism diagnosis will affect the child's educational plan.

II. An autism diagnosis will affect the child's social existence.

III. An autism diagnosis will affect the child's family relationships.

Problem-Solution Pattern

The problem-solution pattern will be explored in more depth in the chapter on Persuasive Speaking because that is where it is used the most. Then, we will see that there are variations on it. The principle behind problem-solution pattern is that if you explain to an audience a problem, you should not leave them hanging without solutions. Problems are discussed for understanding and to do something about them.

Additionally, when you want to persuade someone to act, the first reason is usually that something is wrong! Even if you wanted your friends to go out to get some dinner, and they have recently eaten, you will probably be less successful because there is no problem for them—they are not hungry. Then you would have to come up with a new problem, such as you will miss their presence, which they may or may not see as a problem for them.

In another real-life example, let's say you want the members of the school board to provide more funds for music at the three local high schools in your county. What is missing

because music or arts are not funded? What is the *problem*?

Specific Purpose: To persuade the members of the school board to take action to support the music program at the school.

I. There is a problem with eliminating extracurricular music programs in high schools.
    A. Students who do not have extracurricular music in their lives have lower SAT scores.
    B. Schools that do not have extracurricular music programs have more gang violence and juvenile delinquency.

II. The solution is to provide $200,000 in the budget to sustain extracurricular music in our high schools.
    A. $120,000 would go to bands.
    B. $80,000 would go to choral programs.

Of course, this is a simple outline and you would need to provide evidence to support the arguments, but it shows how problem-solution works. Psychologically, it makes more sense to use problem-solution rather than solution-problem. The audience will be more motivated to listen if you address needs, deficiencies, or problems in their lives rather than giving them solutions first.

Problem-Cause-Solution Pattern

A variation of the problem-solution pattern, and one that sometimes requires more in-depth exploration of an issue, is the "problem-cause-solution" pattern. If you were giving a speech on future extinction of certain animal species, it would be insufficient to just explain that numbers of species are about to become extinct. Your second point would logically have to explain the cause behind this happening. Is it due to climate change, some type of pollution, encroachment on habitats, disease, or some other reason? In many cases, you can't really *solve* a problem without first identifying what *caused* the problem. This is similar to the organizational pattern called Monroe's Motivated Sequence (German, Gronbeck, Ehninger & Monroe, 2012), which also requires a discussion of cause to create a logical speech.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that age to obtain a driver's license in the state of Georgia should be raised to 18.

I. There is a problem in this country with young drivers getting into serious automobile accidents leading to many preventable deaths.

II. One of the primary causes of this is younger drivers' inability to remain focused and make good decisions due to incomplete brain development.

III. One solution that will help reduce the number of young drivers involved in accidents would be to raise the age for obtaining a diver's license to 18.

Some Additional Principles of Organization

It is possible that you may use more than one of these organizational patterns within a single speech. For example, the main points of your speech could be one organizational pattern and the subpoints a different one. In the spatial example above about the Native American nations of Georgia, the subpoints might be chronological (emphasizing their development over time), or they could be topical (explaining aspects of their culture).

You should also note that in all of the examples to this point (which have been kept simple for the purpose of explanation), each main point is relatively equal in emphasis; therefore, the time spent on each should be equal as well. While you are not obliged to spend exactly the same amount of time on each main point, the time spent (and the importance of the main point) should be about the same. You would not want your first Main Point to be 30 seconds long, the second one to be 90 seconds, and the third 3 minutes. For example:

Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the rules of baseball.

I. Baseball has rules about equipment.

II. Baseball has rules about numbers of players.

III. Baseball has rules about play.

Main Point II is not really equal in importance to the other two. There is a great deal you could say about the equipment and even more about the rules of play, but the number of players would take you about ten seconds to say. If Main Point II were "Baseball has rules about the positions on the field," that would make more sense and be closer in level of importance to the other two.

To give another example, let's say you want to give a commemorative (or tribute) speech about a local veteran whom you admire.

I. James Owens is an admirable person because he earned the Silver Star in the Korean War.

II. James Owens is an admirable person because he served our community as a councilman for 25 years.

III. James Owens is an admirable person because he rescued five puppies who were abandoned in his back-yard.

Although Main Point III is a good thing to do, it's really not equal to Main Points I and II in importance or in the amount of time you would need to spend on it.

Parallelism

the repetition of grammatical structures that correspond in sound, meter, and meaning

Next, you will also notice that in most of the examples so far, the main points are phrased using a similar sentence structure. For example, "The first chamber in the blood flow is. . ." "The second chamber in the blood flow is. . . ." This simple repetition of sentence structure is called **parallelism**, a technique useful for speakers and helpful for the audience in remembering information. It is not absolutely necessary to use it and will not always be relevant, but parallelism should be used when appropriate and effective.

In relation to the way each main point is written, notice that they are full grammatical sentences, although sometimes short and simple. For purposes of preparation, this is a good habit, and your instructor will probably require you to write your main points in full sentences. Your instructor may also expect you to write your subpoints in complete sentences as well, but he or she will discuss that with you. There are examples of the different versions of full sentence outlines provided at the ends of some chapters.

Finally, in the way you phrase the main points, be sure they are adequate labeled and clearly explain your content. Students are often tempted to write main points as directions to themselves, "Talking about the health department" or "Mention the solution." This is not helpful for you, nor will your instructor be able to tell what you mean by those phrases. "The health department provides many services for low-income residents" says something we can all understand.

6.3 – Connective Statements

At this point, you may be thinking that preparing for public speaking does not always follow a completely linear process. In writing the specific purpose statement, you might already have a predetermined structure, and if so, the central idea or thesis sentence flows simply from the specific purpose statement and structure. In other instances, the process may not be as direct and you will need to think more deeply about the best way to organize your speech and write your central idea. Some of the examples shown above, such as the one about the chambers of the heart, fall into the "easy-to-follow" category, but others, such as the development of the Civil Rights movement, would be less easy to follow.

Also at this point, we have worked on the core of the speech: the purpose, the main idea or thesis, and the key main points, also referred to as "Roman numerals" because traditional outline format uses I. through V. for them. You will notice that we have not addressed the introduction or the conclusion. You will find that information in Chapter 8. That information is in a separate chapter and placed later because it is important and needs special emphasis, not because it is unimportant. Basically, you cannot write an introduction if you do not know what you are

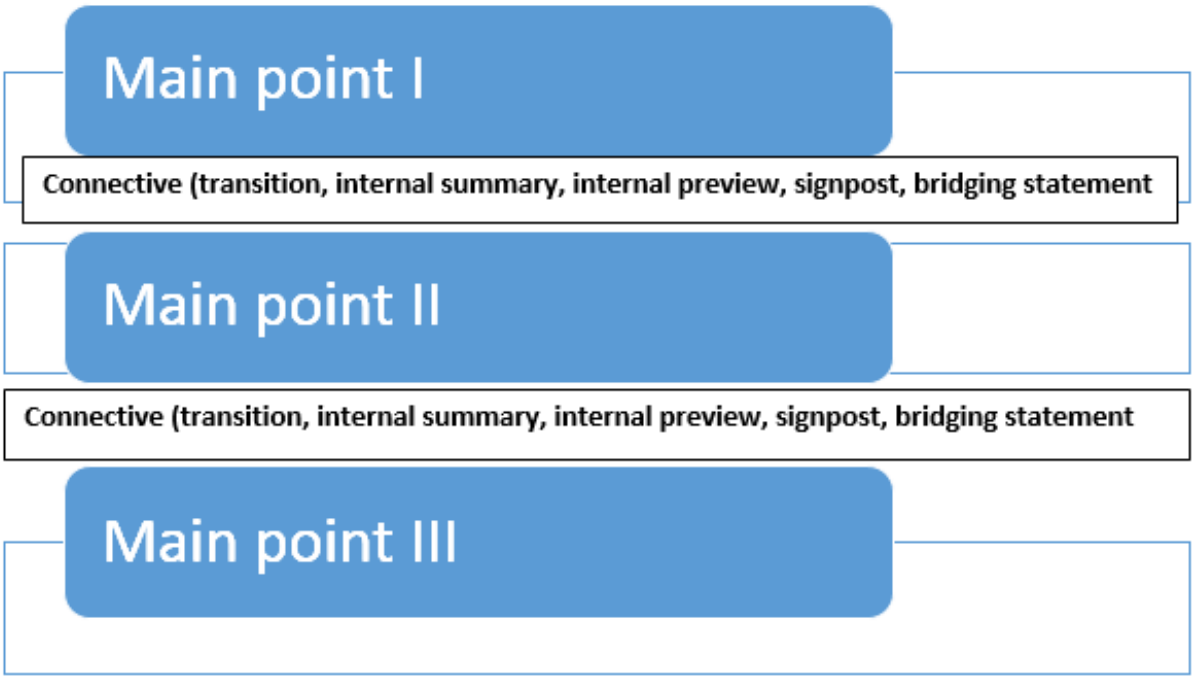

Figure 6.1—Visual of Connectives

introducing. For that reason, even if you are tempted to write your introduction first, you should probably wait until the "core" or "body" of your speech is fairly solid in your mind.

However, there is one aspect beyond the introduction and conclusion that you should prepare and not leave to chance or "ad lib" during the speech. (In fact, you really should not leave anything to chance or "ad lib" in this stage of your development as a public speaker.) That aspect is the connective statements, the subject of the next section.

Connectives

a phrase or sentence that connects various parts of a speech and shows the relationship between them

Connectives or connective statements are broad terms that encompass several types of statements or phrases, but are generally designed to help "connect" parts of your speech to make it easier for audience members to follow. Connectives are tools that add to the planned redundancy and are methods for helping the audience listen, retain information, and follow your structure. In fact, it is one thing to have a well-organized speech. It is another for the audience to be able to "consume" or understand that organization.

Connectives in general perform a number of functions:

- Remind the audience of what has come before
- Remind the audience of the central focus or purpose of the speech
- Forecast what is coming next
- Help the audience have a sense of context in the speech—where are we? (this is especially useful in a longer speech of twenty minutes or so)
- Explain the logical connection between the previous main idea(s) and next one
- Explain your own mental processes in arranging the material as you have
- Keeps the audience's attention through repetition and a sense of movement

Connectives can include "internal summaries," "signposting," "internal previews" or "bridging statements." Each of these terms all help connect the main ideas of your speech for the audience, but they have different emphases and are useful for different types of speeches.

Types of connectives and examples

Internal summaries emphasize what has come before and remind the audience of what has been covered.

> "So far I have shown how the designers of King Tut's burial tomb used the antechamber to scare away intruders and the second chamber to prepare royal visitors for the experience of seeing the sarcophagus."

Internal previews let your audience know what is coming up next in the speech and what to expect with regard to the content of your speech.

> "In this next part of the presentation I will share with you what the truly secret and valuable part of the King Tut's pyramid: his burial chamber and the treasury."

Transitions serve as bridges between seemingly disconnected (but related) material, most commonly between your main points.

> "After looking at how the Cherokee Indians of the North Georgia mountain region were politically important until the 1840s and the Trail of Tears, we can compare their experience with that of the Indians of Central Georgia who did not assimilate in the same way as the Cherokee."

At a bare minimum your transition is saying, "Now that we have looked at (talked about, etc.) X, let's look at Y."

Signposts emphasize the physical movement through the speech content and let the audience know exactly where they are. Signposting can be as simple as "First," "Next," "Lastly" or using numbers such as "First," "Second," Third," and "Fourth." Signposts can also be lengthier, but in general signposting is meant to be a brief way to let your audience know where they are in the speech. It may help to think of these akin to the mile markers you see along interstates that tell you where you are or signs letting you know how many more miles until you reach your destination.

> "The second aspect of baking chocolate chip cookies is to combine your ingredients in the recommended way."

Internal summaries

a type of connective that emphasizes what has come before and remind the audience of what has been covered

Internal previews

a type of connective that emphasizes what is coming up next in the speech and what to expect with regard to the content

Transitions

a type of connective that serves as a bridge between disconnected (but related) material in a speech

Signposts

a type of connective that emphasizes physical movement through the speech content and lets the audience know exactly where they are; commonly uses terms such as First, Second, Finally

Bridging Statements

a type of connective that emphasizes moving the audience psychologically to the next part of a speech

Bridging statements emphasize moving the audience psychologically to the next step.

> "I have mentioned two huge disadvantages to students who don't have extracurricular music programs. Let me ask: Is that what we want for your students? If not, what can we do about it?"

In any speech there would be multiple ways to help the audience move with you, understand your logic, keep their attention, and remind them of where they have been and where they are going. However, there are a few pieces of advice to keep in mind about connectives.

First, connectives are for connecting. They are not for providing evidence. Save statistics, stories, examples, or new factual information for the supporting points of the main ideas of the speech. Use the connectives for the purposes listed above (review, psychological emphasis, etc.) not to provide new examples, facts, or support.

Second, remember that connectives in writing can be relatively short—a word or phrase. In public speaking, connectives need to be a sentence or two. When you first start preparing and practicing connectives, you may feel that you are being too obvious with them and they are "clunky." Some connectives may seem to be hitting the audience over the head with them like a hammer. While it is possible to overdo connectives, and we have heard speakers do so, it is less likely than you would think. The audience will appreciate them, and as you listen to your classmates' speeches, you will become aware of them and when they are absent. Lack of connectives results in hard-to-follow speeches where the information seems to come up unexpectedly or the speaker seems to jump to something new without warning or clarification.

The third piece of advice is that your instructor may want you to include connectives on your outlines in some way to help you start thinking about them. More experienced public speakers have developed the ability to think of transitions, internal previews and summaries, and signposts on the spot, but that talent takes many years to develop.

Fourth, you will also want to vary your connectives and not use the same one all the time. A popular transitional method is the question, such as:

> "Now that you know what was in the first chamber of the King Tut's tomb, you are probably asking, what is in the second tomb? I am glad you asked."

While this method can occasionally be clever, usually it is not; it is just annoying. The audience didn't ask, so you don't want to put words in their mouths. Or this:

> "The first, outer layer of the skin is the epidermis, the protection for what lies beneath. But what *does* lie beneath the epidermis?"

You should also want to avoid the word "so" too much or repeatedly.

Finally, up to this point we have only discussed connectives between the main points. In reality, you will want to think in terms of connectives between any list of subpoints. For example, going back to the example Problem-Solution speech about music in the high schools, you would want a shorter connecting phrase between Subpoint A and B under Main Point I.

> "Not only do students without band or choir have lower standardized college test scores, they get involved in more illicit activities."

Admittedly, preparing connectives between subpoints is more difficult, but you also want to avoid jumping to the next idea without warning.

6.4 – Outlining

For the purposes of this class, there are two primary types of outlines that we will discuss: preparation outlines and speaking outlines.

Preparation Outlines

Preparation outlines are comprehensive outlines that include all of the information in your speech. This is also most likely the outline that you will be required to turn in to your instructor on the days you give your speeches or in some cases, several days before you give the speech in class. Each instructor of public speaking has a slightly different method for approaching outlining. The examples given here are variations, so please attend to the exact specifications that your instructor may require.

Some instructors require students to label parts of the introduction, for example with "Attention getter" and "Credibility," and some like the introduction to have Roman numeral points. Some may want the central idea statement underlined. Some versions of outlines consider the introduction Main Point I, and the conclusion the last main point. Some will expect all units to be full sentences, and some will require full sentences in the main points only. However, there are some parts of an extemporaneous speech outline that are always present: the specific purpose, the introduction, the central idea statement and preview, the speech body with clearly labeled units, the connectives, and the conclusion.

In Appendix B are some examples of outlines for informative, persuasive, and commemorative speeches.

Speaking Outlines

It should be clear by now that the preparation outline is something you are moving away from as you practice your speech and get ready for the delivery. As mentioned before and will be mentioned later, you must give yourself adequate time to practice the delivery of your speech—which is why procrastination is one of a public speaker's biggest enemies. As you practice, you will be able to summarize the full preparation outline down to more usable notes. You should create a set of abbreviated notes for the actual delivery. The more materials you take up with you to the lectern, the more you will be tempted to look at them rather than have eye contact with the audience, and that will affect your grade as well as your connection with the audience.

Your speaking notes should be in far fewer words than the preparation, in key phrases, and in larger letters than the preparation outline Your speaking outline should provide cues to yourself to "slow down," "pause," or "change slide." You may want to use 4X6 or 5X7 cards (3X5 might be too small) but again, keep them to a minimum. Your authors have seen many students get their multiple cards out of order and confuse themselves and the audience. Except for any quotations that you want to say exactly as the original, you will avoid long chunks of text. An example of speaking notes on 5X7 cards is found in Figure 6.2. These three note cards would be relevant to the informative speech outline on haunted places in Gettysburg found at the end of Chapter 12.

Conclusion

The organization of your speech may not be the most interesting part to think about, but without it, great ideas will seem jumbled and confusing to your audience. Even more, good connectives will ensure your audience can follow you and understand the logical connections you are making with your main ideas.

Something to Think About

Listen to a speech by a professional speaker, such as on TedTalks, and see if you can detect their structure and use of transitions. Then talk about how they help (or don't) your understanding and retention of what they say.

ATTENTION: QUESTION

BRIDGE: MY EXPERIENCE(SLIDE)

THESIS: Gettysburg plagued by historical events that play a role in the manifestations that haunt Gettysburg today: Devil's Den, Little Round Top, and the Hummelbaugh House.

(PAUSE AND BREATHE: YOU CAN DO THIS!)

I. Devil's Den is considered a site for para-normal activity. (SLIDE)

A. The Devil's Den HISTORY IN Civil War.

1. heavy fighting July 2 1863.

2. death toll 800 union and 1,800 for the Confederates. (SLIDE)

B. Some reported paranormal activity

1. Dennis Williams in Haunted Places there can be the sounds of drum rolls and gunshots heard.

2. Visitors reporting taking pictures of, conversations with soldier, not in picture.

Little Round Top. (SLIDE)

Historical significance

Union soldiers held advantage

James Brann, *America's Civil War Magazine* (November 2009)
Union Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain lead counterattack

B. Manifestations at Little Round Top

1. Filming of the movie *Gettysburg* (1993) (SLIDE)

2. Ghostly solders (SLIDE)

Figure 6.2—Speaking Notes Example

Chapter 8 Introductions and Conclusions

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

- ◊ Recognize the functions of introductions and conclusions;
- ◊ Identify the primary elements of a speech introduction;
- ◊ Identify the primary elements of a speech conclusion;
- ◊ Construct introductions and conclusions.

Chapter Preview

8.1 – General Guidelines for Introductions and Conclusions

8.2 – Structuring the Introduction

8.3 – Structuring the Conclusion

8.4 – Example Introductions and Conclusions

8.1 – General Guidelines for Introductions and Conclusions

Can you imagine how strange a speech would sound without an introduction? Or how jarring it would be if, after making a point, a speaker just walked off the podium and sat down? You would most likely be pretty confused, and the takeaway from that speech—even if the content was really good—would likely be, "I was confused" or "That was a weird speech."

This is just one of the reasons all speeches need introductions and conclusions. Introductions and conclusions serve to frame the speech and give it a clearly defined beginning and end. They help the audience to see what is to come in the speech, and then let them mentally prepare for the end. In doing this, introductions and conclusions provide a "preview/review" of your speech as a means to reiterate to your audience what you are talking about.

If you remember back to Chapter 2, we talked about "planned redundancy" as a strategy for reminding the audience about your topic and what you are trying to accomplish with your speech. Since speeches are auditory and live, you need to make sure the audience remembers what you are saying. So one of the primary functions of an introduction is to preview what you will be covering in your speech, and in the conclusion review what you have covered. It may seem like you are repeating yourself and saying the same things over and over, but that repetition ensures that your audience understands and retains what you are saying.

The challenge, however, is that there is much more that a speaker must do in her introduction and conclusion than just preview or review her topic and main points. The roles that introductions and conclusions fulfill are numerous, and, when done correctly, can make your speech stronger. The challenge with all this, though, is that the introduction and conclusion aren't what your audience wants or needs to hear; that is primarily contained in the body section where the bulk of your research and information will be housed. So to that end, the introduction and conclusion need to be relatively short and to the point.

The general rule is that the introduction and conclusion should each be about 10% of your total speech, leaving 80% for the body section. Let's say that your informative speech has a time limit of 5-7 minutes: if we average that out to 6 minutes that gives us 360 seconds. Ten percent of 360 is 36, meaning your introduction should come in at just over half a minute. That isn't to say that your speech instructor will be timing you and penalize you for hitting the 40 second mark, but rather to highlight the fact

that you need to be economical with your time. An introduction or conclusion that lasts 90 seconds is taking up 25% or your speech!

The challenge that arises from this relatively short amount of time is that there is a lot you need to get done in that 10%, and all of it is vital to establishing yourself as a knowledgeable and credible speaker. In the following sections, we will discuss specifically what you should include in the introduction and conclusion, and offer a number of options for accomplishing each.

8.2 – Structuring the Introduction

A common concern many students have as the date of their first major speech approaches is "I don't know how I should start my speech." What they are really saying is they aren't sure what words will be memorable, attention-capturing, and clever enough to get their audience interested or, on a more basic level, sound good. This is a problem most speakers have, since the first words you say, in many ways, set the tone for the rest of your speech. There may not be any one "best" way to start a speech, but we can provide some helpful guidelines that will make starting a speech much easier.

With that in mind, there are five basic elements that you will want to incorporate into your introduction. And while you have some leeway to structure your introduction in a way that best fits with your speech and you wouldn't necessarily do all of these in the order below, the following order of these five elements is fairly standard. Unless you have a specific reason to do otherwise, it is probably a pretty good order for you to use.

Attention getter

a statement or question that piques the audience's interest in what you have to say at the very beginning of a speech

Element 1: Get the Audience's Attention

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. While many audiences may be polite and not talk while you're speaking, actually getting them to listen to what you are saying is a completely different challenge. Let's face it—we've all tuned someone out at some point because we weren't interested in what they had to say. If you do not get the audience's attention at the outset, it will only become more difficult to do so as you continue speaking.

That's why every speech should start with an **attention getter**, or some sort of statement or question that piques the audience's interest in what you have to say at the very start of a speech. Sometime these are called "grabbers." The first words out of your mouth should be something that will perk up the audience's ears. Starting a speech with "Hey everybody. I'm going to talk to you today about soccer" already sounds boring and has

not tried to engage the individuals in the audience who don't care about soccer. Once your audience has deemed your speech to be boring, informing, persuading, or entertaining them becomes exponentially more difficult. So let's briefly discuss what you can do to capture your audience's attention from the onset.

First, when selecting an attention-getting device, you want to make sure that the option you choose is actually appropriate and relevant to your specific audience. Different audiences will have different backgrounds and knowledge, so you should use your audience analysis to determine whether specific information you plan on using would be appropriate for a specific audience. For example, if you're giving a speech on family units to a group of individuals over the age of sixty-five, starting your speech with a reference to the television show *Gossip Girl* may not be the best idea because the audience may be unfamiliar with that show.

You will also want to choose an attention-getting device appropriate for your speech topic. Ideally, your attention-getting device should have a relevant connection to your speech. Imagine if a speaker pulled condoms out of his pocket, yelled "Free sex!" and threw the condoms at the audience in the beginning of a speech about the economy. While this may clearly get the audience's attention, this isn't really a good way to prepare an audience for a speech about the stock market. To help you out, below we have listed a number of different attention getters that you may find useful for opening your speech.

Anecdote

An **anecdote** is a brief account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." A common mistake speakers make when telling an anecdote is to make the anecdote too long. An example of an anecdote used in a speech about the pervasiveness of technology might look something like this:

Anecdote

a brief account or story of an interesting or humorous event

> In July 2009, a high school girl named Miranda Becker was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open manhole.

Notice that the anecdote is short and has a clear point. From here the speaker can begin to make his or her point about how technology is controlling our lives.

A second type of anecdote is a parable or fable. A parable or fable is an allegorical anecdote designed to teach general life lessons. The most widely known parables for most Americans are those given in the Bible and the best-known fables are Aesop's Fables (http://www.umass.edu/aesop/index.php). So if you decide your speech will focus on the benefits of remaining in college for more than four years in order to obtain multiple degrees, you may want to adapt some version of "The Tortoise and The Hare" as your attention getter.

Startling Statement/Statistic/Fact

Another way to start your speech is to surprise your audience with startling information about your topic. Often, startling statements come in the form of statistics and strange facts. The goal of a good startling statistic is that it surprises the audience and gets them engaged in your topic. For example, if you're giving a speech about oil conservation, you could start by saying, "A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel." You could start a speech on the psychology of dreams by noting, "The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year."

A strange fact, on the other hand, is a statement that does not involve numbers but is equally surprising to most audiences. For example, you could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any casinos in Las Vegas." You could start a speech on the Harlem Globetrotters by saying, "In 2000, Pope John Paul II became the most famous honorary member of the Harlem Globetrotters." All four of these examples came from a great website for strange facts (http://www.strangefacts.com).

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, make sure that your startling statement is factual. The Internet is full of startling statements and claims that are simply not factual, so when you find a statement you'd like to use, you have an ethical duty to ascertain its truth before you use it and to provide a reliable citation. Second, make sure that your startling statement is relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value. We've all heard startling claims made in the media that are clearly made for purposes of shock or fear mongering, such as "Do you know what common household appliance could kill you? We'll tell you at 11:00." As speakers, we have an ethical obligation to avoid playing on people's emotions in this way.

Rhetorical Question

A question to which no actual reply is expected.

A Rhetorical Question

A **rhetorical question** is a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the history of Mother's Day could start by asking the audience, "Do you remember the last time you told your mom you loved her?" In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to shout out an answer, but rather to think about the questions as the speech goes on.

A Story

It is sometimes helpful to begin your speech in a way that your audience finds familiar, since this can make them feel more connected to your speech. This may be particularly helpful for topics that your audience is unfamiliar with. One of the best and easiest ways to do this is to begin with a story that your audience is likely to have heard before. These types of stories come in a number of forms, but the most common ones include fables, tall tales, ghost stories, parables, fairy tales, myths, and legends.

Two primary issues that you should be aware of often arise with using stories as attention getters. First, you shouldn't let your story go on for too long. If you are going to use a story to begin your speech, your need to think of it more in terms of summarizing the story rather than actually reciting the entire thing. Even a relatively simple story like "The Tortoise and the Hare" can take a couple of minutes to get through in its entirety, so you'll need to cut it down to the main points or highlights. The second issues with using stories as attention getters is that the story must in some way relate to your speech. If you begin your speech by recounting the events in "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," your speech will in some way need to deal finding balance or coming to a compromise about a matter. If your story doesn't relate to your topic, you will likely confuse your audience

and they may spend the remainder of your speech trying to figure out the connection rather than listening to what you have to say.

A personal story is another option here. You may consider starting your speech with a story about yourself that is relevant to your topic. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience. If you are an expert or have firsthand experience related to your topic, sharing this information with the audience is a great way to show that you are credible during your attention getter. For example, if you had a gastric bypass surgery and you wanted to give an informative speech about the procedure, you could introduce your speech in this way:

> In the fall of 2015, I decided that it was time that I took my life into my own hands. After suffering for years with the disease of obesity, I decided to take a leap of faith and get a gastric bypass in an attempt to finally beat the disease.

If you use a personal example, don't get carried away with the focus on yourself and your own life. Your speech topic is the purpose of the attention getter, not the other way around. Another pitfall in using a personal example is that it may be too personal for you to maintain your composure. For example, a student once started a speech about her grandmother by stating, "My grandmother died of cancer at 3:30 this morning." The student then proceeded to cry nonstop for five minutes. While this is an extreme example, we strongly recommend that you avoid any material that could get you upset while speaking. When speakers have an emotional breakdown during their speech, audience members stop listening to the message and become very uncomfortable.

Immediate Reference to Subject

The most direct (but probably the least interesting of the possible attention getters) is to tell your audience the subject of your speech. Here's an example:

> We are surrounded by statistical information in today's world, so understanding statistics is becoming paramount to citizenship in the twenty-first century.

This sentence explicitly tells an audience that the speech they are about to hear is about the importance of understanding statistics. While this isn't the most entertaining or interesting attention getter, it is very clear and direct. And note that it justifies the importance of the audience paying attention while avoiding being

completely snooze-inducing, as it would have been if it were reworded as, "I want to talk to you about statistics."

Reference to Audience or Appeal to Self-Interest

As we have tried to emphasize throughout this book, your audience is the single most important factor is crafting your speech, so it makes sense that one approach to opening your speech is to make a direct reference to the audience. In this case, the speaker has a clear understanding of the audience and points out that there is something unique about the audience that should make them interested in the speech's content. Here's an example:

> As students at Dalton State, you and I know the importance of selecting a major that will benefit you in the future. In today's competitive world, we need to study a topic that will help us be desirable to employers and provide us with lucrative careers. That's why I want you all to consider majoring in communication.

In this example, the speaker reminds the audience of their shared status as Dalton State students and uses the common ground to acknowledge the importance of selecting a major that will benefit them in the future. Elsewhere in the book we use the expression WIIFM (What's in it for me?") to remind you that your topic and approach should appeal to the self-interests and needs of the audience members.

Quotation

Another way to capture your listeners' attention is to use the words of another person that relate directly to your topic. Maybe you've found a really great quotation in one of the articles or books you read while researching your speech. If not, you can also use a number of Internet or library sources that compile useful quotations from noted individuals. Quotations are a great way to start a speech, so let's look at an example that could be used during the opening of a commencement address (a type of special occasion speech discussed later in Chapter 15):

> The late actress and social activist Audrey Hepburn once noted that, "Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible'!"

If you use a quotation as your attention getter, be sure to give the source first (as in this example) so that it isn't mistaken as your own wording.

Reference to Current Events

Referring to a current news event that relates to your topic is often an effective way to capture attention, as it immediately

makes the audience aware of how relevant the topic is in today's world. For example, consider this attention getter for a persuasive speech on frivolous lawsuits:

> On January 10 of this year, Scott Anthony Gomez, Jr., and a fellow inmate escaped from a Pueblo, Colorado, jail. During their escape the duo attempted to rappel from the roof of the jail using a makeshift ladder of bed sheets. During Gomez's attempt to scale the building, he slipped, fell forty feet, and injured his back. After being quickly apprehended, Gomez filed a lawsuit against the jail for making it too easy for him to escape.

In this case, the speaker is highlighting a news event that illustrates what a frivolous lawsuit is, setting up the speech topic of a need for change in how such lawsuits are handled.

Historical Reference

You may also capture your listeners' attention by referring to an historical event related to your topic. Obviously, this strategy is closely related to the previous one, except that instead of a recent news event you are reaching further back in history to find a relevant reference. For example, if you are giving a speech on the perception of modern music as crass or having no redeeming values, you could refer back to Elvis Presley and his musical breakout in the 1950s as a way of making a comparison:

> During the mid-1950s, Elvis Presley introduced the United States to a new genre of music: rock and roll. Initially viewed as distasteful, and Presley himself chastised for his gyrating dance moves and flashy style, today he is revered as "The King of Rock 'n Roll." So when we criticize modern artists for being flamboyant or over the top, we may be ridiculing some of the most important musical innovators we will know in our lifetimes.

In this example, the speaker is evoking the audience's knowledge of the Elvis to raise awareness of similarities to current artists that may be viewed today as he was in the 1950s.

Humor

Humor is another effective method for gaining an audience's attention. Humor is an amazing tool when used properly. We cannot begin to explain all the facets of humor within this text, but we can say that humor is a great way of focusing an audience on what you are saying. However, humor is a double-edged sword. If you do not wield the sword carefully, you can turn your audience against you very quickly.

When using humor, you really need to know your audience and understand what they will find humorous. One of the biggest mistakes a speaker can make is to use some form of humor that the audience either doesn't find funny or finds offensive. Think about how incompetent the character of Michael Scott seems on the television program *The Office*, in large part because of his ineffective use of humor. We always recommend that you test out humor of any kind on a sample of potential audience members prior to actually using it during a speech. If you do use a typical narrative "joke," don't say it happened to you. Anyone who heard the joke before will think you are less than truthful!

Now that we've warned you about the perils of using humor, let's talk about how to use humor as an attention getter. Humor can be incorporated into several of the attention-getting devices mentioned. You could use a humorous anecdote, quotation, or current event. As with other attention-getting devices, you need to make sure your humor is relevant to your topic, as one of the biggest mistakes some novices make when using humor is to add humor that really doesn't support the overall goal of the speech. So when looking for humorous attention getters you want to make sure that the humor is not going to be offensive to your audience and relevant to your speech.

For example, here's a humorous quotation from Nicolas Chamfort, a French author during the sixteenth century: "The only thing that stops God from sending another flood is that the first one was useless." While this quotation could be effective for some audiences, other audiences may find this humorous quotation offensive. The Chamfort quotation could be appropriate for a speech on the ills of modern society, but probably not for a speech on the state of modern religious conflict. It also would not be

appropriate in an area that had just experienced damaging floods. You want to make sure that the leap from your attention getter to your topic isn't too complicated for your audience, or the attention getter will backfire.

This list of attention-getting devices represents a thorough, but not necessarily exhaustive, range of ways that you can begin your speech. Certainly these would be the more common attention getters that most people employ. Again, as mentioned earlier, your selection of attention getter is not only dependent on your audience, your topic, and the occasion, but also on your preferences and skills as a speaker. If you know that you are a bad storyteller, you might elect not to start your speech with a story. If you tell jokes that no one laughs at, avoid starting your speech off with humor.

To review, think back to the factors of attention in Chapter 7. The best attention getters are

1. concrete (they bring up or refer to real experiences);
2. Novel (they use material that is new or that the audience is unlikely to have heard before);
3. Movement (don't spend too long in the introduction because the audience will wonder where you are headed);
4. Need-oriented (your attention getter and introduction in general should relate to the needs or interests of the audience).

Other factors like suspense (introduce a story and finish it at the end) or conflict (telling a story with strong opposing forces and tension) can also be used.

Element 2: Establish Your Credibility

Whether you are informing, persuading, or entertaining an audience, one of the things they will be expecting is for you to know what you are talking about. So the fourth element of an introduction is to let your audience know that you are a knowledgeable and credible source for this information. To do this, you will need to explain how you know what you know about your topic.

For some people, this will be simple. If you are informing your audience how a baseball is thrown, and you have played baseball since you were eight years old, that makes you a fairly credible source. You probably know what you are talking about. So let us know that by saying something like, "Having played baseball for over ten years, including two years as the starting pitcher on my high school's varsity team, I can tell you about the

ways that pitchers use to throw different kind of balls in a baseball game." With regard to persuasive speaking, if you are trying to convince your audience to join Big Brothers Big Sisters and you have been volunteering for years, let them know: "I've been serving with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the last two years, and I can tell you that the experience is very rewarding." By telling your audience you volunteer, you are saying to them "I'm not asking you to do anything I wouldn't do myself." And if you do it (and have done it for two years) then it must be a good experience.

However, you may be speaking on a subject with which you have no history of credibility. If you are just curious about when streetlights were installed at intersections and why they are red, yellow, and green, you can do that. But you will still need to give your audience some sort of reason to trust your knowledge. Since you were required to do research, you are at least more knowledgeable on the subject that anyone else in the class. In this case you might say, "After doing some research and reading several books on the subject, I want to share what I've learned about the history and evolution of streetlights in America."

Element 3: Establish Rapport

The next element of your introduction will be to establish rapport with your audience. **Rapport** is basically a relationship or connection you make with your audience. In everyday life, we say that two people have a rapport when they get along really well and are good friends. In your introduction, you will want to explain to you're audience why you are giving them this information and why it is important to them. You will be making a connection through this shared information and explaining to them how it will benefit them. One of the best examples of rapport we have seen came from an informative speech on the poet Lord Byron:

> You may be asking yourselves why you need to know about Lord Byron. If you take Humanities 1202 as I did last semester, you will be discussing his life and works, so after this speech you will have a good basis for the class material.

What is important here is that this speaker used the audience analysis techniques discussed in Chapter 2 to determine the demographic make-up of her audience and determine what would motivate them to listen. Knowing that they are all college students (as your audience will be), she enticed them to listen with the suggestion that this information would benefit them in a future class they might take.

Rapport

a relationship or connection a speaker makes with the audience

Another important thing to note here is that there is not necessarily a right or wrong way to establish rapport with your audience. You as the speaker must determine what you think will work best and help make a connection. Take for example an informative speech on "how to throw a baseball." How would you establish rapport with your audience on that topic? Maybe you choose to focus on the age of your audience, and noting that they are all relatively young and that some of them are already parents, you might say, "A lot of people in this room have or may have children someday, and if you decide you want to throw a ball with them or help them with sports, here are three steps you can use to teach them how to throw a baseball." Will everyone in the class have kids someday? Probably not, but it is reasonable to guess that most about your audience will relate to this approach based on a demographic analysis.

Element 4: Preview Your Topic/Purpose/Central Idea

The second major function of an introduction after getting the audience's attention is to reveal the purpose of your speech to your audience. Have you ever sat through a speech wondering what the basic point was? Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speaker was talking about? An introduction is important because it forces the speaker to be aware of explaining the topic of the speech to the audience.

When previewing your topic in the introduction, be explicit with regard to exactly what your topic is. Spell it out for them if you have to. While it may not be great writing, the sentence "I'd like to tell you about how to properly change your car's oil" is clear and leaves no doubt what your speech will be about. This

might be a good place for you to review the material in Chapter 4 about writing central idea statements and specific purposes.

While not a hard and fast rule, you will probably also want to avoid having the audience "guess" what your topic is through clues. Consider the following topic reveal:

> Today I'd like to talk to you about a man who overcame great adversity to become the President of the United States. During his time in office he faced increasing opposition from conservative voices in government, as well as some dissension among his own party, all while being thrust into a war he didn't want.

As an attention getter, this may not be bad, but what it doesn't do is reveal the topic. The speaker at this point might assume the audience has clearly figured out who this speech is about and moved on. Unfortunately, the above passage could refer to either Abraham Lincoln or Barack Obama, and members of the audience might either be confused or disappointed when they figure out the speech isn't covering what they thought it was.

It should also be noted here that at no point in your introduction do you ever want to read your specific purpose statement as a way of revealing your topic. Your specific purpose is included on your outline as a way for your instructor's sake and to keep you on track during preparation. The language used in the specific purpose ("To inform my audience…") is too stilted and awkward to actually be read aloud.

Element 5: Preview Your Main Points

Just like previewing your topic, previewing your main points helps your audience know what to expect throughout the course of your speech and prepares them for what you are going to speak on. Your preview of main points should be clear and easy to follow so that there is no question in your audience's minds what they are. Long, complicated, or verbose main points can get confusing. Be succinct and simple: "Today, in our discussion of Abraham Lincoln's life, we will look at his birth, his role a president, and his assassination." From that there is little question as to what specific aspects of Lincoln's life the speech will cover. However, if you want to be extra sure they get it, you can always enumerate them by using signposts (as we discussed in Chapter 6): "In discussing how to make chocolate chip cookies, first we will cover what ingredients you need, second we will talk about how to mix them, and third we will look at baking them."

What these five elements do is prepare your audience for the bulk of the speech (i.e. the body section) by letting them know what they can expect, why they should listen, and why they can trust you as a speaker. Having all five elements starts your speech off on much more solid ground that you would get without having them.

8.3 – Example Introductions and Conclusions

Below you will find examples of informative and persuasive introductions . Notice that each contains the five elements necessary for a good intro: an attention getter, the establishment of rapport with the audience, the speaker's credibility, a clear topic reveal, and clearly articulated main points.

Informative Speech Introductions

Topic: Allergies

My parents knew that something was really wrong when my mom received a call from my home economics teacher saying that she needed to get to the school immediately and pick me up. This was all because of an allergy, something that everyone in this room is either vaguely or extremely familiar with. Allergies affect a large number of people, and three very common allergies include pet and animal allergies, seasonal allergies, and food allergies. All three of these allergies take control over certain areas of my life, as all three types affect me, starting when I was just a kid and continuing today. Because of this, I have done extensive research on the subject, and would like to share some of what I've learned with all of you today. Whether you just finished your freshman year of college, you are a new parent, or you have kids that are grown and out of the house, allergies will most likely affect everyone in this room at some point, so it will benefit you all to know more about them, specifically the three most common sources of allergies and the most recent approaches to treating them.

Topic: Seasonal Affective Disorder

When winter is approaching and the days are getting darker and shorter, do you feel a dramatic reduction in energy or do you sleep longer than usual during the fall or winter months? If you answered yes to either of these questions, you may be one of the millions of people who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. For most people these problems do not cause great suffering in their life, but for an estimated six percent of the United States population these problems can result in major suffering. As a student in the registered nursing program here at Dalton State, I became interested in SAD after learning more

about it and want to share this information with all of you in case you recognize some of these symptoms in yourself or someone you love. In order to fully understand SAD, it is important to look at the medical definition of SAD, the symptoms of this disorder, and the measures that are commonly used to ease symptoms.

Persuasive Speech Introductions

Topic: Term Life Insurance

You have cried silent tears and uttered desperate prayers, but as you watch the medical team unhook the tubes, turn off the heart monitor and shoot furtive, helpless glances your way, you face the unmistakable reality that cancer has won and you are left with unimaginable grief, despair and yes, financial burden. Most of us would not choose to cause our loved ones financial pain on top of the emotional pain of our deaths, but by failing to plan for their financial needs, that is exactly what we do. I have learned a lot about life insurance in my research for this presentation, from taking a thirteen-week course about financial matters, and from the experience of purchasing a term life insurance policy just last year. I know most of you probably have not thought much about life insurance, but someday each and every one of us in this room will pass away and somebody is going to have to pay for our funerals. Term life insurance is affordable, protects those you love from the financial devastation of your uninsured death, and reinforces your commitment to their financial and emotional well-being while you are living. Let's examine the definition of term life insurance and then its benefits.

8.4 – Structuring the Conclusion

Similar to the introduction, the conclusion has four specific elements that you will want to incorporate in order to make it as strong as possible. Given the nature of these elements and what they do, these should generally be incorporated into your conclusion in the order they are presented below.

Element 1: Signal the End

The first thing a good conclusion should do is to signal the end of a speech. You may be thinking that telling an audience that you're about to stop speaking is a "no brainer," but many speakers really don't prepare their audience for the end. When a speaker just suddenly stops speaking, the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead, you want to make sure that audiences are left knowledgeable and satisfied with your speech. In a way, it gives them time to begin mentally organizing and cataloging all the points you have made for further consideration later.

Generally, the easiest way to signal that it is the end of your speech is to begin your conclusion with the words, "In conclusion." Similarly, "In summary" or "To conclude" work just as well. While these may seem very blunt ways of communicating the end of your speech to the audience, you want it to be extremely clear to everyone that you are wrapping things up. Certainly you can choose to employ more elegant, interesting, or creative language here, but you then run the risk of the audience not catching on to the fact that your speech is ending.

On the other hand, saying “In conclusion” (and definitely saying it more than once) can have an unintended negative effect. The audience may figure you are finished and turn you off, sort of like how we get up and leave during the credits in a movie. Therefore, you can also go straight to the summary, which is element 2.

Element 2: Restate Main Points

In the introduction of a speech you delivered a *preview* of your main points, now in the conclusion you will deliver a *review*. The reason for this stems from the fact that one of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication (the issue of “planned redundancy” again). When you preview your main points in the introduction, effectively discuss and make transitions to your main points during the body of the speech, and finally, review the main points in the conclusion, you increase the likelihood that the audience will retain your main points after the speech is over. Remember, your English instructor can re-read your essays as many times as he or she wants, but your audience – and your instructor – only have one opportunity to catch and remember the points you are trying to get across in your speech.

Because you are trying to remind the audience of your main points, you want to be sure not to bring up any new material or ideas. For example, if you said, "There are several other issues related to this topic, such as…but I don't have time for them," that would make the audience confused and perhaps wonder why you did not address those in the body section. Or if you were giving a persuasive speech on wind energy and you ended with, "Wind energy is the energy of the future, but there are still a few problems with it, such as noise and killing lots of birds," you are bringing up a counter-argument that should have been dealt with in the body of the speech.

This is a good place to remind you that the introduction, preview, transitions, and conclusion are for helping the audience be interested, prepared to listen, to retain and to follow your speech. The hard core facts and content are in the body. If you are tempted to cram lots of into the conclusion, that is not the place for it, nor is it the place to provide the important steps to a solution. The conclusion is too late for that.

As you progress as a public speaker, you will want to work on rephrasing your summary statement so that it does not sound like an exact repeat of the preview. For example, if your preview was:

> The three arguments in favor of medical marijuana that I will present are that it would make necessary treatments available to all, it would cut down on the costs to law enforcement, and it would bring revenue to state budgets.

Your summary might be:

> In the minutes we've had together, I have shown you that approving medical marijuana in our state will greatly help persons with a variety of chronic and severe conditions. Also, funds spent on law enforcement to find and convict legitimate marijuana users would go down as revenues from medical marijuana to the state budget would go up.

Clincher

something memorable with which to conclude your speech

Element 3: Clincher

The fourth and final element of your conclusion is the **clincher**, or something memorable with which to conclude your speech. The clincher is sometimes referred to as a Concluding Device, but regardless, these are the very last words you will say in your speech, so you need to make them count. This

is the last thing your audience will hear, so you want to make it good. In a certain way, you might think of your speech as a nice dinner at a fancy restaurant: the introduction is the appetizer that gets everyone ready for the main course, the body section is the "meat and vegetables," and the conclusion is like dessert. But have you ever had a nice meal that ended with a dessert that didn't really taste good? Regardless of how good the rest of the meal was, you probably walked away thinking, *It was okay, but I just remember not liking it at the end*. A good clincher prevents your audience from thinking that way, and in fact can even make an audience remember a speech more favorably.

In many ways the clincher is like the inverse of the attention-getter. You want to start the speech off with something strong, and you want to end the speech with something strong. To that end, similar to what we discussed above with attention getters, there are a number of ways you can make your clincher strong and memorable.

Conclude with a Challenge

One way you can end your speech is with a challenge. A challenge is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires a contest or special effort. In a speech on the necessity of fundraising, a speaker could conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. In a speech on eating more vegetables, you could challenge your audience to increase their current intake of vegetables by two portions daily. In both of these challenges, audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves effort on their part.

In a challenge, try to make it aspirational but reasonable. The challenge should be something they can strive for but not see as something impossible. Two or three more servings a day of fruits and vegetables is reasonable, but six probably would be seen as too much.

In the same category as a challenge, probably the most common persuasive concluding device is the appeal for action or the call to action. In essence, the appeal for action occurs when a speaker asks her or his audience to engage in a specific behavior. When a speaker concludes by asking the audience "to do" something, the speaker wants to see an actual change. Whether the speaker appeals for people to eat more fruit, buy a car, vote for a candidate, oppose the death penalty, or sing more in the shower, the speaker is asking the audience to engage in action.

One specific type of appeal for action is the immediate call to action. Whereas some appeals ask for people to engage in behavior in the future, the immediate call to action asks people to engage in behavior right now. If a speaker wants to see a new traffic light placed at a dangerous intersection, he or she may conclude by asking all the audience members to sign a digital petition right then and there, using a computer the speaker has made available. For a speech on eating more vegetables, pass out raw veggies and dip at the conclusion of the speech; someone giving a speech on petitioning a lawmaker for a new law could provide audience members with a prewritten e-mail they can send to the lawmaker.

If you are giving a persuasive speech about a solution to a problem, you should not relegate the call to action to the very end of the speech. It should probably be a main point where you can deal with the steps and specifics of the solution in more detail. For example, perhaps a speaker has been discussing the problems associated with the disappearance of art education in the United States. The speaker could then propose a solution of creating more community-based art experiences for school children as a way to fill this gap. Although this can be an effective conclusion, a speaker must ask herself or himself whether the solution should be discussed in more depth as a stand-alone main point within the body of the speech so that audience concerns about the proposed solution may be addressed.

Conclude with a Quotation

Another way you can conclude a speech is by providing a quotation relevant to the speech topic. When using a quotation, you need to think about whether your goal is to end on a persuasive note or an informative note. Some quotations will have a clear call to action, while other quotations summarize or provoke thought. For example, let's say you are delivering an informative speech about dissident writers in the former Soviet Union. You could end by citing this quotation from Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "A great writer is, so to speak, a second government in his country. And for that reason no regime has ever loved great writers."

Notice that this quotation underscores the idea of writers as dissidents, but it doesn't ask listeners to put forth effort to engage in any specific thought process or behavior. If, on the other hand, you were delivering a persuasive speech urging your audience to sponsor a child in a developing country for $40 per month, you might use this quotation by Forest Witcraft: "A

hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different, because I was important in the life of a child." In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with the message that monetary sacrifices are worth taking, that they make our lives worthwhile, and that the right thing to do is to go ahead and make that sacrifice.

Conclude by Visualizing the Future

The purpose of a conclusion that refers to the future is to help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur. If you are giving a speech on the development of video games for learning, you could conclude by depicting the classroom of the future where video games are perceived as true learning tools. More often, speakers use visualization of the future to depict how society or how individual listeners' lives would be different, if the speaker's persuasive attempt worked. For example, if a speaker pro-poses that a solution to illiteracy is hiring more reading specialists in public schools, the speaker could ask her or his audience to imagine a world without illiteracy. In this use of visualization, the goal is to persuade the audience to adopt the speaker's point of view. By showing that the speaker's vision of the future is a positive one, the conclusion should help to persuade the audience to help create this future.

Inspire

to affect or arouse someone's emotions in a specific, positive manner

Conclude by Inspiration

By definition, the word **inspire** means to affect or arouse someone. Both affect and arouse have strong emotional connotations. The ultimate goal of an inspirational concluding device is similar to an "appeal for action" but the ultimate goal is more lofty or ambiguous; the goal is to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner. This is done by sharing a story, poem, or quotation that appeals to the audience basic values and therefore appeals to emotions. Stories or allusions to "underdogs" who overcame obstacles to achieve something worthwhile or those who make sacrifices for the good of others can help inspire. You probably know of such stories (Olympic athletes and a well-known figure such as Captain Sullenberg are examples) that would be of value, as long as they are relevant to your topic and purpose. Poetry is sometimes used to inspire, but you want to use a short passage (eight lines or less) of poetry that is clear to the audience.

Conclude with Advice

The next concluding device is one that should be used primarily by speakers who are recognized as expert authorities on a given subject. Advice is essentially a speaker's opinion about what should or should not be done. The problem with opinions is that everyone has them, and one person's opinion is not necessarily any more correct than another's. There needs to be a really good reason your opinion—and therefore your advice—should matter to your audience. If, for example, you are an expert in holistic medicine, you might conclude a speech on healthy living by giving advice about the benefits of alternative treatments for illnesses. If you have worked in several fast food restaurants and know some signs to look for in a clean, well-managed one, you can give some advice about those signs.

Conclude with a Question

Another way you can end a speech is to ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea. Maybe you are giving a speech on the importance of the environment, so you end the speech by saying, "Think about your children's future. What kind of world do you want them raised in? A world that is clean, vibrant, and beautiful—or one that is filled with smog, pollution, filth, and disease?" Notice that you aren't actually asking the audience to verbally or nonverbally answer the question; the goal of this question is to force the audience into thinking about what kind of world they want for their children.

Refer Back to the Introduction

This method provides a good sense of closure to the speech and can be one of the most effective methods. If you started the speech with a startling statistic or fact, such as "Last year, according to the official website of the American Humane Society, four million pets were euthanized in shelters in the United States," in the end you could say, "Remember that shocking number of four million euthanized pets? With your donation of time or money to the Northwest Georgia Rescue Shelter, you can help lower that number in our region."

Conclude with an Anecdote or Personal Story

As with your attention getter, a brief story can be a strong way to conclude. However, it must be relevant and not go on too long. Combining this method and the previous one, you might finish telling a story that you started in the introduction as your

clincher. This method is probably better with persuasive speeches where you want to end with a strong emotional appeal.

Conclude with a Reference to Audience or Audience Self-Interest

The last concluding device involves a direct reference to your audience. This concluding device is used when a speaker attempts to answer the basic audience question, "What's in it for me?" (the WIIFM question) The goal of this concluding device is to spell out the direct benefits a behavior or thought change has for audience members. For example, a speaker talking about stress reduction techniques could conclude by clearly listing all the physical health benefits stress reduction offers (e.g., improved reflexes, improved immune system, improved hearing, reduction in blood pressure). In this case, the speaker is clearly spelling out why audience members should care about the topic and what's in it for them.

Informative versus Persuasive Conclusions

As you read through the above possible ways to conclude a speech, hopefully you noticed that some of the methods are more appropriate for persuasive speeches and others are more appropriate for informative speeches. An appeal to action, for example, may not be appropriate for an informative speech since asking your audience to do something often borders on *persuasion*, which isn't what an informative speech is intended to do. Similarly, if your persuasive speech is on the importance of voting in the next presidential election, an appeal to action clincher would probably be one of your stronger options.

8.5—Example conclusions

Here are two examples of conclusions. More examples can be found on the outlines at the ends of Chapters 12, 13, and 15.

Informative Speech Conclusion

Topic: Anxiety

In closing, anxiety is a complex emotion that afflicts people of all ages and social backgrounds and is experienced uniquely by each individual. We have seen that there are multiple symptoms, causes, and remedies, all of which can oftentimes be related either directly or indirectly to cognitive

behaviors. While most people do not enjoy anxiety, it seems to be part of the universal human experience, so realize that you are not alone, but also realize that you are not powerless against it. With that said, the following quote, attributed to an anonymous source, could not be more true, "Worry does not relieve tomorrow of its stress; it merely empties today of its strength."

Persuasive Speech Conclusion

Topic: Adopting a Rescue Animal

In conclusion, I believe you should adopt a rescue animal because it helps stop forms of animal cruelty, you can add a healthy companion to your home, and it is a relatively simple process that can save a life. Each and every one of you should go to your nearest animal shelter, which may include the Catoosa Citizens for Animal Care, the Humane Society of NWGA in Dalton, the Murray County Humane Society, or the multiple other shelters in the area to bring a new animal companion into your life. I'll leave you with a paraphrased quote from Deborah Jacobs's article "Westminster Dog Show Junkie" on *Forbes.com*: You may start out thinking that you are rescuing the animal, and ultimately find that the animal rescues you right back."

Something to Think About

Read out loud one of the example introductions earlier in the chapter, and time your reading. If an introduction should not be longer than about 10% of the total speech time (although there can be some wiggle room on that percentage and it is not meant to be a hard and fast rule) how long would the speech attached to this introduction be? (You'll have to done math!) If you had to give a shorter speech using this introduction, how would you edit it to make it for the time limit but still be an effective introduction?