

LESSON-37

DESIGNING AND WRITING YOUR SPEECH

THIS CHAPTER WILL HELP YOU

1. . develop a simple, balanced, and orderly speech design.
2. . shape and arrange your main points.
3. . use transitions to make your speech flow smoothly.
4. . prepare introductions that capture attention, establish, credibility, and focus your speech.
5. . prepare conclusions that summarize your message, provide closure, and give the audience something to remember.

DEVELOPING YOUR SPEECH OR PRESENTATION

Developing a major speech or presentation is much like writing a formal report, with one important difference: You need to adjust your technique to an oral communication channel. This channel presents both an opportunity and a challenge.

The opportunity lies in the interaction that is possible between you and the audience. When you speak before a group, you can receive information as well as transmit it. So you can adjust both the content and the delivery of your message as you go along, editing your speech or presentation to make it clearer and more compelling. Instead of simply expressing your ideas, you can draw out the audience's ideas and use them to reach a mutually acceptable conclusion.

To realize the benefits of oral communication, though, you need to plan carefully. The challenge of this channel is controlling what happens. -As you develop each part of your speech or presentation, stop and think about how you plan to deliver the information. The more you plan to interact with your audience, the less control you'll have. Halfway through your presentation a comment from someone in the audience might force you to shift topics. If you can anticipate such shifts, you'll have a chance to prepare for them.

The Introduction

You'll have a lot to accomplish during the first few minutes of your speech or presentation, including arousing your audience's interest in your topic, establishing your credibility, and preparing the audience for what will follow. That's why preparing the introduction often requires a disproportionate amount of your attention.

Arousing Interest

Some subjects are naturally more interesting than others. If you will be discussing a matter of profound significance that will personally affect the members of your audience, chances are they'll listen regardless of how you begin. All you really have to do is announce your topic ("Today I'd like to announce the reorganization of the company").

The best approach to dealing with an uninterested audience is to appeal to human nature. Encourage people to take the subject personally. Show them how they'll be affected as individuals. You might plan to begin your address to new clerical employees like this:

If somebody offered to give you \$200,000 in exchange for \$5 per week, would you be interested? That's the amount you can expect to collect during your retirement years if you choose to contribute to the voluntary pension plan. During the next two weeks, you will have to decide whether you want to participate. Although for most of you retirement is many years away, this is an important financial decision. During the next 20 minutes, I hope to give you the information you need to make that decision intelligently.

Make sure your introduction matches the tone of your speech or presentation. If the occasion is supposed to be fun, you may begin with something light; but if you're talking business to a group of executives, don't waste their time with cute openings. Avoid jokes and personal anecdotes when you're discussing a serious problem. If you're giving a routine oral report, don't be overly dramatic. Most of all be natural. Nothing turns off the average audience faster than a trite, staged beginning.

Building Credibility

One of the chief drawbacks of overblown openings is that they damage the speaker's credibility, and building credibility is probably even more important than arousing interest. A speaker with high credibility is more persuasive than a speaker with low credibility.² So it's important to establish your credentials and quickly; people will decide within a few minutes whether you're worth listening to.³ You want the audience to like you as a person and to respect your opinion, and you have to plan for this while you're developing your speech.

Establishing credibility is relatively easy if you're speaking to a familiar, open-minded audience. The difficulty comes when you try to earn the confidence of strangers, especially those predisposed to be skeptical or antagonistic.

One way to handle the problem is to let someone else introduce you. That person can present your credentials so that you won't appear boastful, but make sure the person introducing you doesn't exaggerate your qualifications. If Brady Keys were to address a group of fast-food franchisees on inner-city operations, some of them might bristle at his being billed as the world's only authority on the subject.

If you plan to introduce yourself, keep your comments simple. At the same time, don't be afraid to mention your accomplishments. Your listeners will be curious about your qualifications, so tell them briefly who you are and why you're there. Generally speaking, one or two aspects of your background are all you need to mention: your position in an organization, your profession, and the name of your company. You might plan to say something like this:

I'm Karen Whitney, a market research analyst with Information Resources Corporation. For the past five years, I've specialized in studying high technology markets. Your director of engineering, John LaBarre, has asked me to brief you on recent trends in

computer-aided design so that you'll have a better idea of how to direct your R&D efforts.

This speaker would establish credibility by tying her credentials to the purpose of her presentation. By mentioning her company's name, her position, and the name of the audience's boss, she will let her listeners know immediately that she's qualified to tell them something they need to know. She connects her background to their concerns.

Previewing the Presentation

Brady Keys strongly believes that you need to "tell them what you're going to tell them." Giving your audience a preview of what's ahead adds to your authority and, more important, helps people understand your message. In an oral presentation, the speaker provides the framework. Your introduction will summarize your main idea, identify the supporting points, and indicate the order in which you'll develop those points. Once you've established the framework, you can move into the body of the presentation, confident that the audience will understand how the individual facts and figures relate to your main idea.

The Body

The bulk of your speech or presentation is devoted to a discussion of the three or four main points in your outline. Use the same organizational patterns you'd use in a letter, memo, or report, but keep things simple. Your goals are (1) to make sure the structure of your speech or presentation will be clear and (2) to make sure your speech will keep your audience's attention.

Emphasizing Structure

To show how ideas are related in an oral presentation, you rely more on words than you do in a written report. For the small links between sentences and paragraphs, one or two transitional words are enough: *therefore*, *because*, *in addition*, *in contrast*, *moreover*, *for example*, *consequently*, *nevertheless*, *finally*. To link major sections of the speech or presentation, you need complete sentences or paragraphs, such as "Now that we've reviewed the problem, let's take a look at some solutions." Every time you shift topics, stress the connection between ideas. Summarize what's been said, and then preview what's to come.

The longer your presentation, the more important the transitions become. If you will be presenting many ideas, the audience will have trouble absorbing them and seeing the relationship among them. Listeners need clear transitions to guide them to the most important points. Furthermore, they need transitions to pick up any ideas they may have missed. If you plan to repeat key ideas in the transitions, you can compensate for lapses in the audience's attention. When you actually deliver your speech, you might also want to call attention to the transitions by using gestures, changing your tone of voice, or introducing a visual aid.

Holding the Audience's Attention

To communicate your points effectively, you have to maintain the audience's attention. Here are a few tips for developing memorable speeches:

- *Relate your subject to the audience's needs.* People are interested in things that affect them personally. Plan to present every point in light of the audience's needs and values.
- *Use clear, vivid language.* People become bored quickly when they don't understand the speaker. If your presentation will involve abstract ideas, plan to show how those abstractions are connected with everyday life. Use familiar words, short sentences, and concrete examples.
- *Explain the relationship between your subject and familiar ideas.* Plan to show how your subject relates to ideas the audience already understands so that you give people a way to categorize and remember your points.

You can also hold the audience's interest by introducing variety into your presentation. One useful technique is to pause occasionally for questions or comments from the audience. This technique helps you determine whether the audience understands key points before you launch into another section; it also gives the audience a chance to switch for a time from listening to participating. Visual aids will also help clarify points and stimulate interest.

The Close

The close of a speech or presentation is almost as important as the beginning because audience attention peaks at this point. Plan to devote about 10 percent of the total time to the ending. When developing your conclusion, begin by telling listeners that you're about to finish so that they'll make one final effort to listen intently. Don't be afraid to sound obvious. Consider saying something like "in conclusion" or "to sum it all up." You want people to know that this is the home stretch.

Restating the Main Points

Once you've planned how to get everyone's attention, you'll repeat your main idea. Be sure to emphasize what you want the audience to do or think. Then state the key motivating factor. Reinforce your theme by repeating the three or four main supporting points. A few sentences are generally enough to refresh people's memories. Here's how one speaker ended a presentation on the company's executive compensation program:

We can all be proud of the way our company has grown. If we want to continue that growth, however, we will have to adjust our executive compensation program to reflect competitive practices. If we don't, our best people will look for opportunities elsewhere.

In summary our survey has shown that we need to do four things to improve executive compensation:

- Increase the overall level of compensation.
- Install a cash bonus program.
- Offer a variety of stock-based incentives.
- Improve our health insurance and pension benefits.

By making these improvements we can help our company cross the thresh-old of growth into the major leagues.

The speaker repeats his recommendations and then concludes with a memorable statement that motivates the audience to take action.

Describing the Next Steps

Some speeches and presentations require the audience to reach a decision or agree to take specific action. In such cases the close provides a clear wrap- up. If the audience agrees on

an issue covered in the presentation, plan to review the consensus in a sentence or two. If not, make the lack of consensus clear by saying something like “We seem to have some fun-damental disagreement on this question.” Then you’ll be ready to suggest a method of re-solving the differences.

If you expect any action to occur, you must explain who is responsible for doing what. One effective technique is to list the action items, with an estimated completion date and the name of the person responsible. Plan to present this list in a visual aid that can be seen by the entire audience, and ask each person on the list to agree to accomplish his or her as-signed task by the target date. This public commitment to action is the best insurance that something will happen.

If the required action is likely to be difficult, make sure everyone understands the prob- lems involved. You don’t want people to leave the presentation thinking their tasks will be easy, only to discover later that the jobs are quite demanding. If that happens, they may be-come discouraged and fail to complete their assignments. You’ll want everyone to have a realistic attitude and to be prepared to handle whatever arises. So when planning your pre-sentation, use the close to alert people to potential difficulties.

Ending on a Positive Note

Make sure that your final remarks are enthusiastic and memorable. Even if parts of your speech are downbeat, plan to close on a positive note. You might stress the benefits of ac- tion or express confidence in the listeners’ ability to accomplish the work ahead. An alter-native is to end with a question or a statement that will leave your audience thinking.

Remember that your final words round out the presentation. You’ll want to leave the audience with a satisfied feeling, a feeling of completeness. The close is not the place to in-troduce new ideas or to alter the mood of the presentation. Although you want to close on a positive note, avoid using a staged finale. Keep it natural.

The Question-and-Answer Period

Along with the introduction, body, and close, include in your speech or presentation an opportunity for questions and answers. Otherwise, you might just as well write a report. If you aren’t planning to interact with the audience, you’re wasting the chief advantage of an oral format.

Specifics about handling questions from the audience are discussed in this chapter under the heading “Handling Questions.” In general, the important things to consider when you’re developing your speech are the nature and timing of audience interaction. Responding to questions and comments during the presentation can interrupt the flow of your argument and reduce your control of the situation. If you’ll be addressing a large group, particularly a hostile or an unknown group, questions can be dangerous. Your best bet in this case is to ask people to hold their questions until after you have concluded your remarks. On the other hand, if you’re working with a small group and need to draw out ideas, encourage comments from the audience throughout the presentation.

INTRODUCTION

Writing can be a joy provided the basic purpose is clear. It proves to be tedious when the very motive is hazy. In simple terms, *effective business writing* means getting things done. This simple target can be achieved if we write with the following two-fold purpose in mind: to inform the reader and to request him to take action. In written business communication the expectations from the reader are high with respect to involvement. The effectiveness of the business message can be measured in terms of the speed with which the desired action is initiated and subsequent results produced.

Suppose on completion of the writing project a simple question is asked: “So What?” In other words, the writer asks himself the question that if this business message was drafted and sent to the receiver, what would be its implication? What does it hope to achieve? What is going to be its impact on the receiver? Would he be convinced about taking prompt action? Answers to such queries would automatically clear the path for further coherent and meaningful writing.

The greenhouse effect is a gradual warming of the earth caused by human activities that dump carbon dioxide into atmosphere. Fossil fuel has more than doubled since 1950. One cause of the green house effect is industrial emissions. The summer of 1993 brought record-breaking heat waves and the winter of 1991-92 was the warmest in 97 years. Skin cancers could increase as much as 26 per cent if the ozone level drops another 10 per cent. This past winter a gigantic iceberg almost as large as Rhode Island broke off an ice shelf in the Antarctic Peninsula. The greenhouse effect is a danger to our world.

How much of this randomly scrambled information would you remember if you heard it presented this way? There seems to be important news here, but it gets lost in the hodgepodge organization. Although unstructured techniques like brainstorming ideas and free-writing can sometimes stimulate the flow of ideas, when you want to communicate those ideas to others you must carefully plan and structure your message.

A well-organized presentation makes it easier for listeners to understand and remember what you have to say. Suppose you must take an introductory physics course next

semester and you got the following material from students for Better Teaching concerning two instructors who will teach the course at times you can schedule it:

Professor J is very entertaining. She tells a lot of funny stories and puts' on demonstrations that seem like a "magic show." But she doesn't explain difficult material in any systematic fashion, so it's hard to take notes. When it's time for departmental examinations, you often don't know how or what to study.

Professor M is very business-like. She starts each lecture by reviewing the material covered in the last session and asks if anyone has questions. Her lectures are easy to follow. She points out what is most important for students to know and uses clear examples that make difficult ideas easier to understand and apply.

Which instructor would you choose? When the content of a message is important, most of us will choose the speaker who is well organized over the entertainer. In fact, a recent study indicated that some of the reasons college students dislike certain instructors are that they stray from the subject, go off on tangents, jump from one idea to another, ramble, or are generally disorganized. How well your presentation is organized clearly affects your ethos. As we noted in Chapter 2, "competence" is an important part of credibility. It is hard for listeners to think you are competent when your speech is poorly organized. They are more likely to think that you have a muddled mind or that you didn't care enough to prepare carefully.

In this chapter we look at the principles that explain why people prefer well-organized messages. We then use these principles to explain how to structure the body of your speech. Next, we consider the importance of transitions to make a speech flow smoothly. Finally, we discuss how to prepare effective introductions and conclusions.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD FORM

The structure of a speech should follow the ways people naturally see and arrange things in their minds. People rarely store information in individual bits. Instead they *cluster* material so that it can be more easily recalled. For example, people store and recall telephone numbers as two or three *groups* of numbers such as 909-647-2830, not 9-0-9-6-4-7-2-8-3-0.5. Once grouped, information is organized according to a few basic principles.⁶ When these principles are satisfied, a speech has good form. *To develop good form, you should present your material simply, balance the length of the parts of your speech, and arrange your main points so that they lead naturally from one to another.* In other words, good form depends on simplicity, balance, and order.

Number of Main Points. In general, *the fewer main points you have, the better.* ⁷ Remember, each main point of your message must be developed with supporting materials. *It takes time to* present information, examples, narratives, and testimony effectively. Short classroom speeches (under ten minutes) usually should have no more

than four main points. Even longer speeches outside the classroom, those that may last up to an hour, should not normally attempt more than five main points. Look at what happens when a speech becomes overburdened with main points:

Main points:

Thesis statement: Government welfare programs aren't working. .

- I. There are too many programs.
- II. The programs often duplicate coverage.
- III. Some people who really need help are left out.
- IV. The programs are underfunded.
- V. They waste money.
- VI. Recipients have no input into what is really needed.
- VII. The programs create dependence and stifle initiative.
- VIII They rob the poor of self-respect.

All of these points are important, but presented in this way, they seem overwhelming. It would be hard for listeners to remember them because there are too many of them and they are not organized into a meaningful pattern. Let's see how these ideas might be clustered into a simpler structural pattern:

Thesis statement: Our approach to welfare in America is inadequate, inefficient, and insensitive.

Main point: I. Our approach is inadequate.

Subpoints: -“ A. We don't fund it sufficiently.

B. Some people who need help get left out.

Main Point II. Our approach is inefficient.

Subpoints A. There are too many programs.

B. There is too much duplication.

C. There is too much waste of money. -.

Main Point: III Our approach is insensitive.

Subpoints: A.: It creates dependence-e.

B. It stifles initiative.

C. It robs people of self-respect.

This simple structure makes the speech easy to follow. The ideas have been arranged so that the main points follow each other in a logical pattern of development. Each main point breaks down into more specific subpoints that extend and explain its meaning. Overlapping points have been combined and unnecessary ideas omitted. The audience can remember the ideas more easily.8

Phrasing Main Points. You also should state your main points as simply as possible. In the preceding example, not only has the number of main points been reduced, but the wording of these points has been made clear and direct. Parallel phrasing (“Our approach is . . .”) has been used for emphasis. This strategic repetition helps listeners remember the

message. It also allows the speaker to refer to the “Three is (Inadequate, Inefficient, and Insensitive) of welfare in the introduction and conclusion, a strategy that would spotlight the message and tie the speech together.

To achieve simplicity, be sure your specific purpose, thesis statement, and main points are very clear to you so that you can express them succinctly. Think of simplicity as a major goal when building your speech.

HOW TO COMPOSE YOUR SPEECH

A business message to be composed? Sounds rather simple. Let us take a hypothetical situation. Two people have been working in a particular department for quite some time and both know each other somewhat well. The assumption is that there can be no misinterpretation of the message. This is a wrong concept. Errors of judgment and interpretation do arise if a written message is not properly formulated. Some of the basic tenets to be kept in mind are as follows:

1. Simplicity and Brevity

The more simple your speech design, the easier it will be for listeners to follow, understand, and remember your message. Simplicity is especially important in oral presentations because the audience doesn't have a manuscript that they can reread if material seems confusing. To achieve simplicity you should limit the number of main ideas *in* your speech and keep each direct and to the point.

As far as possible, attempts should be made to make the business message short and simple. Unnecessary facts which may cloud the thinking of the reader should not be included. Further, care should also be taken to ensure that the material being composed is what the reader requires. Neither should it be too much nor too scanty. Verbose language should be avoided in favor of the short and the simple. Technical language should only be used when the writer feels that the reader belongs to the same discipline, and the impact of the original message would be lost if any other manner of approach is adopted.

KISS Principle--Keep It Short and Simple--should necessarily be observed to ensure that the piece of writing is good and comprehensible.

2. Choosing correct words. In order that the message adhere to the “KISS” principle appropriate words should be chosen. Vocabulary used should be such that both the sender and the receiver are conversant with it. In communication it is said that words in themselves mean nothing. It is the intention behind the words which denotes a particular meaning to the spoken or written statement, e.g. if five people were asked to respond to the word “red”, probably all of them would come up with a different answer which may well be as follows: blood, color, passion, rose and communists. Similarly for the written word. Each word has a particular *denotation*, that is, the dictionary meaning and a *connotation* or the meaning related to the intention of the sender. If the words are chosen with care the connotation is also correctly understood. For this it becomes imperative that we adhere to the following principles pertaining to the choice of words:

(a) *Understandable and simple words.* Suppose we were to make a statement of the following nature: "Singular specimen of the scientific class of avis contained within the boundaries of the upper prehensile, is equivalently valuable as a doubled inventory of that item located in a low-spreading thicket." A statement of this nature, though grammatically correct, is bound to give rise to the following queries in the mind of the reader-"What does the writer intend?" "What does he exactly mean?" Contrast this with the simple literal paraphrase of the above statement: "A bird in hand is better than two in the bush". How much simpler and meaningful is the statement when expressed in this manner.

(b) *Appropriate technical words.* Often a piece of technical writing necessitates that jargon be used. This does not mean that the text be inundated with all kinds of information that the reader might find difficult to comprehend. Keeping the receiver in mind, draft the message so that it does not get too heavy for him. To doubly ensure that there would be no errors in comprehension on the part of the reader, provide him with a list of technical words used with their correlates or meaning. This strategy, however, can only be observed if the piece of written communication is of a long nature, e.g. a report.

(c) *Concrete words.* Abstract messages should be avoided in favor of concrete messages. Words such as tomorrow, day after tomorrow, soon etc should, to a great extent, not be used at all. Replace these words by specific dates. What we have done is that we have avoided the use of words that merely point in the forward direction and have instead, come up with a specific time plan that enables the writer and the reader to meet the deadline.

(d) *Verbs and nouns.* In written communication verbs and nouns should be used as they spell out a positive and concrete rendering of the statement. The simplest pattern of making a statement should be in the order of subject-verb-object ordering which takes into account both the verb and the noun. Adjectives and adverbs should be totally done away with at the time of composing business messages unless, of course, one wishes to be extremely creative. Analyze the following statements:

1. Your project was extraordinary brilliant!
2. It's hard these days to find competent workers like you.
3. You really have made us happy with your performance.

Statements like these are too flamboyant. Restrict the flow of emotions by being specific and concrete and specify the content rather than the pleasure that one obtains as a result of one's accomplishment. Suppose we were to rephrase the statements and write them as:

1. Your project excelled in the areas of ...
2. Despite difficult circumstances you were able to meet the target.
3. Your dedication and sincerity are appreciated.

In all the three statements there is an objective assessment of the situation and the individual. This is brought about by a choice of well thought out words that neither express too much nor too little gratitude or appreciation for the task accomplished. .

(e) *Positive words.* At the time of writing, negative words should be totally eliminated from the text. The writing should be both positive and polite. As the basic purpose of any writing revolves round involvement of the reader, negative words can totally put him off. Ensure that words and statements made and used gently persuade the reader to take action. The emphasis should not be on what you have not done or what you can't do. On the contrary, it should focus on the person.

Let us take a look at the following statement: "It is next to impossible to complete the assignment today." It is surely going to put off the reader. Suppose we change the sentence and, while retaining the original meaning, write it in the following manner: "The assignment would be completed by tomorrow morning" The receiver cannot miss the positive overtones. The basic issue remains the same, that is, the assignment cannot be completed today. However, the manner in which it is stated spells a level of confidence and even hints at an unspoken promise of not failing to deliver the goods.

To take a look at another example: "You surely did mess up things last week. Now, you'll have to face the music." Suppose we were to change the tenor of the statement and make a proposal of the following nature: "I believe things went amiss last week. Probably everyone makes a mistake. Let's see how things can be sorted out." By the time the reader is through with these lines he has already been won over on the side of the writer.

Politeness is a good strategy to be adopted in difficult situations. Issues are sorted out amicably and cooperation is also sought.

(f) *Correct words.* What we wish to communicate should be absolutely clear in our mind prior to commencing work. Quite often we think in our native language and then try to translate the same idea in English or any other foreign language. The ideas in the text should be carefully read to ensure that what we wish to communicate is clear. For example, let us consider the following example: The presenter has but little time to convey himself. In such a sentence construct, the choice of the word "himself" is inappropriate. If each word was to be weighed in the sentence, the writer would realize that an individual does not convey "himself," rather it is the

idea that gets conveyed. Suppose we were to restructure it to read: The presenter has but little time to convey his ideas.

In a construct of this kind the message is absolutely clear. The sentence contains only a few words, and the writer has taken pains to ensure that the language is simple with an ordering pattern of subject-verb-object. For example, in some cases, the steps or techniques need to be demonstrated by performing them in front of the audience. If one were to analyze this statement, one would realize that steps and techniques are not 'performed' but 'demonstrated'. The writer falls in a double trap: one of making an error of logic and, two, of making use of redundant words that we normally refer to as "dead wood" and which need to be immediately eliminated from the sentence.

3. Sentence structure. Words alone are insufficient to express the meaning intended by the sender. The manner in which they are arranged in a sentence give coherence to the idea. As far as possible, the sentence construction should also be simple. Unnecessary words should be done away with. Occasionally, redundant words creep into the composition of the sentence. If we could make a conscious effort to read and re-read the text, we would realize that many ideas and concepts are embedded in the sentence itself. Example: New Innovations. Innovations themselves are new, hence the usage of "new" is redundant.

4. Paragraph construction. The next level of construction in written communication is the paragraph. Only one or two ideas should be stated in a paragraph. Since all the paragraphs form a link to provide the final meaning for the written text, there should be what we normally refer to as a topical sentence at the start of the paragraph. This prepares the reader *for* what is to follow in the rest of the paragraph. The last line should be a link between the foregoing and the forthcoming statements in the new paragraph. In other words, the beginning and end should emphasize the main idea.

Often writers use a one-sentence paragraph. It definitely looks clumsy if the entire text is not in point *form*. There has to be further amplification on the point that has been merely stated. Since a paragraph should be a composite of over two sentences, care has to be taken at the time of constructing it. Clauses have to be linked and all words and statements should show a connection. For example, some of the common obstacles to planning are: that planning takes time, it is interrupted by daily tasks, procrastination, etc. In a sentence of this kind, the points presented are totally disjointed. It leaves the reader disoriented. Suppose we were to restructure it in the following manner: Some of the common obstacles to planning are procrastination and time constraint. The middle clause, "it is interrupted by daily tasks" is already taken care of in the factor of "time constraint" spelt out in the corrected sentence. We have now succeeded in both eliminating redundant words and presenting clauses in a conjoined manner, which speak of an aesthetically and grammatically correct construction.

The paragraphs should be conjoined to one another in a logical manner. The main idea is always presented at the start and is followed by ancillary points. The points in the various paragraphs should not be presented randomly. Instead, they should flow *from* one another.

5. “You” -viewpoint. In all types of communication the emphasis should be on “you” instead of “I”. If the reader is able to appreciate the viewpoint presented in the written communication as pertaining specifically to him, he would be prompted to take quick and immediate action. Contrast the two statements *for* two letters wishing to congratulate a subordinate on his successful completion of an internal examination.

(a) I was very happy to learn that *you* had cleared your internal examination. Now I can recommend *you* for a promotion at the earliest.

(b) Congratulations on your successful completion of the examination. You would be happy to learn that your name can now be recommended *for* promotion.

The second type of approach makes the letter sound more positive and solicits the good will of the subordinate. On the other hand, the first example with excessive usage of “I” sounds rather pompous and it does not project the desire to share the happiness of the other. It is more in the nature of an objective statement rather than a desire to genuinely *reflect* happiness at the success of the other.

One must, however, be very careful with the usage of the pronoun “you”. If used in excess it can have damaging results. It could even sound like an imperative. For example, You must settle the dispute at once as you were part of the controversy that began in your room. Further, it is not always necessary to use “you” to indicate a “You-attitude”. Many a time it is implicit and built in the statement made. The usage also depends on the organizational culture. Does the writer wish to adhere to a formal style or does he wish to make written communication informal in nature? The answer to this query would sort out the underlying problem.

Balance

Balance means that all the major parts of your speech - the introduction, body, and conclusion - receive the right amount of emphasis and development. Proper emphasis in turn depends largely upon timing. Instructors frequently specify time limits for your speeches, so you must plan your message with these in mind. It can be very disconcerting to find yourself finishing the first main point of your speech with only one minute left and two more main points plus your conclusion to cover. Keep timing in mind as you prepare your speech, cutting and adding material to maintain the proper balance. Time yourself as you rehearse the speech to be sure it fits within the allotted limits.

There is no absolute rule of thumb that establishes how the major parts of speeches should be balanced. However, the following suggestions may be helpful:

1. *The body should be the longest part.* The body contains the essence of your message - the major ideas you want to communicate. It's where you conduct the business of your speech. If you spend three minutes on your introduction, a minute and a half on the body, and thirty seconds on the conclusion, your speech will be badly out of balance.
2. *Allocate time according to your topic and audience.* Within the body, you should allocate time based upon the topic and upon where the audience stands in relation to your specific purpose. One way to balance your main points is to give each about the same amount of development, which suggests that the main points are equally important. This strategy might be appropriate for the speech attacking the "three I's" of welfare policy, in which each point merits about equal attention.

Another approach is to arrange your main points in the order of their importance. You could begin with your most important point and then list the other main points in *descending order* of importance, spending proportionately less time on each. For example, in a problem-solution persuasive speech, if listeners must be convinced there actually is a problem, you would devote most of your time to meeting the challenge of the first main point. On the other hand, if listeners generally agree there is a problem, but don't know what to do about it, then you should devote most of your time to discussing the second main point, your proposed solution. Your main points would then develop in *ascending order* of importance. Careful consideration of your topic and careful analysis of your audience will usually suggest how to allocate time within the body of your speech.

3. *The introduction and conclusion should be approximately equal in length.* For example, if you begin a brief story in your introduction leading into the body of your speech, you might end the story as you conclude the speech. That should strike listeners as a balanced introduction and conclusion, leading you gracefully into and out of your speech. Once again, the total amount of time spent on the introduction and conclusion should be less than that spent on the body of your speech. As a general rule, we advise our students that in a five-minute presentation the combined length of the introduction and conclusion should be about a minute long. This leaves them with four minutes to develop the main points of their messages

ORDER

The parts of your speech should not only be well balanced; they should also fit and work well together. They should satisfy your listeners' need for order. An orderly speech follows a consistent pattern of development. At the most basic level, you must begin with an introduction, develop your main ideas in the body of your speech, then end with a conclusion. You should develop the body of your speech first so that your introduction and conclusion fit your message. Your speech will also fit together better, as well as be better balanced, if you can tie the introduction to the conclusion. If the introduction asked a question, the conclusion could supply an answer based on ideas from the speech. Or, if you began with a story of defeat, your conclusion might offer a related story of victory.

Order also applies to the way you arrange the main points in your speech. If you want to propose a solution to a problem, you should first present the problem and then the solution. Why? Because that is the way our minds work. We don't normally come up with solutions, then look for problems to fit them. Orderly thinking also governs the presentation of steps in a process. You begin with the step that starts the process, then cover the remaining steps in the order in which they occur. If you jump around in your presentation, the audience is apt to get lost on one of the jumps.

How well a speech fits together depends on the way the individual parts relate to each other and to the overall pattern they form. As you move from introduction to body, from point to point within the body, and from the body to the conclusion, you should use transitions to help listeners see the larger picture. We discuss the use of transitions in greater detail later in this chapter.

CHECKLIST FOR COMPOSING BUSINESS MESSAGES

A. Organization

1. Recognize good organization.
 - a. Subject and purpose are clear.
 - b. Information is directly related to subject and purpose.
 - c. Ideas are grouped and presented logically.
 - d. All necessary information is included.

2. Achieve good organization through outlining.
 - a. Decide what to say.
 - i. Main idea
 - ii. Major points
 - iii. Evidence
 - b. Organize the message to respond to the audience's probable reaction.
 - i. Use the direct approach when your audience will be neutral, pleased, interested, or eager.
 - ii. Use the indirect approach when your audience will be displeased, uninterested, or unwilling.

3. Choose the appropriate organizational plan.
 - a. Short messages
 - i. Direct request
 - ii. Routine, good-news, or goodwill message
 - iii. Bad-news message
 - iv. Persuasive message
 - b. Long messages
 - i. Informational pattern
 - ii. Analytical pattern

B. Formulation

1. Compose your first draft.
 - a. Get ideas down as quickly as you can.
 - b. Rearrange, delete, and add ideas without losing sight of your purpose.

2. Vary the style to create a tone that suits the occasion.
 - a. Establish your relationship with your audience.
 - i. Use the appropriate level of formality.
 - ii. Avoid being overly familiar, using inappropriate humor, including obvious flattery, sounding preachy, bragging, and trying to be something you're not.

 - b. Extend your audience-centered approach by using the "you" attitude.
 - c. Emphasize the positive aspects of your message.
 - d. Establish your credibility to gain the audience's confidence.
 - e. Use a polite tone.
 - f. Use the style that your company prefers.

DEVELOPING YOUR FIRST SPEECH

The first speech that you give in class will usually be very brief. You may be asked to introduce yourself or a classmate, to describe a place or object, or to make a point and support it with information and an example or story. Whatever your first assignment, you must keep its design simple. *You:* speech must move quickly to its purpose and develop concisely. Plan care-fully so that every word counts.

Designing Your Speech

The overall design of your speech will be shaped by the topic you select your purpose, and the main points you wish to make. Different topics or purposes will suggest different kinds of designs. We discuss these options in Chapters 12 and 13, and you may wish to refer to these chapters as you plan your first speech. Let us look at how a design might develop in a self- introductory speech.

If you decide that the major factor in your life was environmental the neighborhood in which you grew up - then you might select a *categorical* design. You could begin with the setting, a description of a street scene in which you capture the sights, sounds, and smells of the locale: III can always tell a Swedish neighborhood by the smell of *lutefisk* on Friday afternoons. II Next you might describe the people, focusing on a certain neighbor who influenced you - perhaps the neighborhood grocer, who loved America with a patriotic passion, helped those in need, and always voted stubbornly for the Socialist party. Finally, you might talk about the street games you played as a child and what they taught you about people and yourself. This “setting-people-games” categorical design structures your speech in an orderly manner.

The example also suggests how the introduction, body, and conclusion of your speech should be closely related. Your introduction could be the opening street scene that sets the stage for the rest of your speech. In the body of the speech you could describe the people, using the grocer as an extended example, then go on to describe the childhood games that rein-forced the lessons of sharing. Your conclusion should make clear the point of the speech:

I hope you have enjoyed this “tour” of my neighborhood, this “tour” of my past. If you drove down this street tomorrow, you might think it was just another crowded, gray, urban neighborhood. But to me it is filled with colorful people who care for each other and who dream great dreams of a better tomorrow. That street runs right down the center of my life.

Other topics and purposes might suggest other designs. If you select an experience that influenced you, such as *II An Unforgettable Adventure,* your speech might follow a *sequential* pattern as you tell the story of what happened. You would talk about events in the actual time sequence in which they occurred. Again, you could use the introduction to set the scene and the conclusion to summarize the effect this experience had on you. Should you decide to tell about a condition that has had a great im-pact on you, a *causation* design might be most appropriate. Maria One Feather, a Native American student, used such a design in her speech “Growing Up Red - and Feeling Blue - in White

America.” In this in-stance’ she treated the condition as the cause and its impact on her as the effect.

The stepping stones to success in your first speech are to select your topic, decide on your purpose, focus what you want to say, and determine the design best suited to develop the speech. The design you choose will suggest how you should proceed to open the speech, develop its body, and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Let us consider some additional examples of how this process of developing the introduction, body, and conclusion may work in introductory speeches. Although we discuss these parts of the speech separately, keep in mind that they are part of a larger whole. To be effective, they must fit and work together in the finished product.

Introduction

The basic purposes of an introduction are to arouse the? interest of your audience, to prepare them for the rest of the speech, and to build a good re-lationship between yourself and listeners. Randy Block captured the atten-tion of his audience when he opened his introductory speech with this statement:

I want to ten you about a love affair of mine that won’t upset my wife, even if she finds out about it!

This opening startled his audience into listening and aroused curiosity about what would follow. Randy next revealed his thesis statement: his “love affair” was with a bicycle. He used a categorical design to explain the main reasons he was fond of his bicycle. Fortunately, Randy’s speech was colorful and interesting, for any speaker who creates such intense curiosity in an introduction must justify that interest with the substance of the speech. An introduction should never upstage the message of a speech.

Eric Whittington engaged his listeners by reciting a list of place. names, pausing after each name:

Guam. . . Hawaii. . . California. . . Washington. . . Michigan. . . Vir-ginia . . . South Carolina. . . Florida. . . Tennessee. I’m twenty years old. I’ve lived in eight different states and one trust territory. I’ve moved eighteen times in my life and attended schools in nine different school systems. You might think that moving so much wouldn’t be good for a person, but it provided me with the opportunity to get to know and. appreciate many different lifestyles. Come with me on this journey through my life and share the experience.

This introduction prepared the audience for the speech’s *spatial* design; Eric showed how three of these areas in particular had enriched his life.

Suzette Carter opened her introductory speech by establishing a per-sonal relationship with her listeners:

last Monday Elizabeth told us how she enjoyed being an “obedient wife.” I admire her honesty and her courage for saying that. I too was an obedient

wife and daughter most of my life_ But the result was that it took a long time to learn who I was and how I could be independent. I'd like to tell you about this quest for myself, in hopes that it may help some of you who have the same problem.

Suzette's speech "followed a sequential design, tracing major relevant events in her life. Introductions serve a vital function: they set the tone for the speech, to come and give the audience a "(mental map" of the design the speech will follow. The best introductions tend to be written after the body of the speech - after all, it is difficult to draw a map if you don't know where you are going. We provide other suggestions for preparing introductions in Chapter 7.

Body

The body is the most important part of your speech. It is here that you develop your main points, the most important ideas in your message. In a short presentation you cannot cover many main points and support them adequately. Limit their number so you can develop them in depth. For a three-to-five-minute assignment, you should restrict yourself to two or three main points. (Determining and wording main points is covered in more detail in Chapter 7).

Returning to our student examples, Randy developed two main points in explaining why he loved his bike: (1) biking gave him a sense of freedom, and (2) biking provided him with an opportunity for adventure. Eric explained his appreciation for diversity with three main points: (1) living in the relaxed multicultural society of Hawaii, (2) living in an industrial town in Michigan, and (3) living in Charleston, South Carolina - a city steeped in the tradition of the Old South. Eric's use of examples to develop these points provided interesting, specific detail that illustrated and enlivened his theme. Had he tried to talk about all the places he mentioned in his opening, he would have gone well over the time limit assigned by his teacher and might have bored his listeners as well. Suzette described three main phases in her quest for self: (1) her life in an overprotective home, (2) her life with a domineering husband, and (3) finally finding her-self on her own. *Suzette managed this self-disclosure carefully so that she could control her materials emotionally and not embarrass her listeners with stories that were too private and painful.* Keep discretion in mind as you develop the body of your introductory speech - you are not on a tabloid talk show. If you are uncertain about what you wish to disclose, you should discuss it with your instructor, but the general rule to follow is: *When in doubt, leave it out!*

Every main point in your speech should be bolstered with some form of supporting material - facts and figures, testimony, examples, or narratives. Supporting materials' provide content and substance to your message, especially in the body of your speech (see Chapter 6 for further information). Using facts and figures builds the impression that you know what you are talking about. For example, Randy might have mentioned the number of bicycles sold in the United States last year to suggest that others shared his passion for biking. These figures would not only have added an interesting bit of

information: they would also have enhanced his perceived competency. Testimony involves citing what others, especially experts in the field, have to say about your subject. Had Eric cited child development experts on the connection between exposure to many cultures and the development of desirable qualities in children, he could have provided even more in-depth knowledge about his subject and himself.

Examples and narratives are especially useful in the introductory speech because they help develop a feeling of closeness between the audience and the speaker. They hold the interest of the audience while revealing some important truth about the speaker or the topic. Narratives “would be short and to the point, moving in natural sequence from the beginning of the story to the end. The language of narration should be colorful, concrete, and active; the presentation, lively and interesting. Randy used a narrative: effectively to show how his bicycle provided him with an opportunity for adventure. He told about the time he traveled 130 miles in fourteen hours of continuous biking, and of what happened when he crawled under a bridge to escape the blazing mid afternoon sun.

By concentrating on two or three main points in the body of your speech and developing them with facts and figures, testimony, examples, or narratives, you can provide your audience with useful and appealing listening experiences.

Conclusion

These students all concluded by showing how the experiences they related had affected their lives. The conclusion often includes a summary statement, which restates the main points and the thesis statement, and concluding remarks, which often tie back to the introduction, apply the message to the audience, and end on a high or humorous note. Randy used these techniques to end his speech:

Now you know why I have this “love affair” with my bike. I love the sense of freedom and the opportunity for adventure that it gives me. Perhaps you would also enjoy this kind of affair. Give it a fling!

Eric concluded his speech by explaining that moving so much had allowed him to develop an appreciation for different cultures. Suzette explained that although she now considers herself liberated and independent, she does not think of herself as a stereotype. She is not so much a feminist as an individual. “I’m not Gloria Steinem,” she said in her conclusion. “My name is Suzette Carter.”

OUTLINING YOUR FIRST SPEECH

You should prepare an outline using complete sentences to help you organize your thoughts. The outline should contain your introduction, thesis statement, main ideas find supporting materials, and your conclusion so that you can see if all these vital elements work together as you plan to speak. In addition, your outline should contain transitions to help you move from one point to another. You should also prepare a key-word outline, to use as you practice and present your speech. As its name suggests, this abbreviated outline contains only key words and phrases to prompt your memory. It can also contain

presentation cues, such as “pause here” or “talk slowly and softly.” Although the full outline may require several pages to complete, the key-word outline often fits on one or two index cards. We say more about outlining in Chapter 8.

In the following outline for a self-introductory speech, several critical parts of the speech - the introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion -are written out word for word. They anchor the meaning you intend to convey and make your entrance into and exit from the speech both smooth and effective. Thus, it is important that they be planned carefully. Note, however, that the body of the speech is not written out, encouraging spontaneity in the actual presentation.

“FREE AT LAST”

by Rod Nishikawa

Introduction

Attention-arousing and orienting material: Three years ago I presented the valedictory speech at my high school graduation. As I concluded, I borrowed a line from Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech: “Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty were free at last!” The words had a joyful, humorous place in that speech, but for me personally, they were a lie.

Thesis statement: I was not yet free, and would not be free until I had conquered an ancient enemy, both outside me and within me -that enemy was racial prejudice.

Body

- I. When I was eight years old I was exposed to anti-Japanese prejudice.
 - A. I was a “Jap” who didn’t belong in America.
 - B. The bully’s words burned into my soul.
 - 1. I was ashamed of my heritage.
 - 2. I hated having to live in this country.
- (Transition: “So I obviously needed some help.”)
- II. My parents helped me put this into perspective.
 - A. They survived terrible prejudice in their youth during World War II.
 - B. They taught me to accept the reality of prejudice.
 - C. They taught me the meaning of *gaman*: how to bear the burden within and not show anger.
- [Transition: “Now, how has *gaman* helped me?”]
- III. Practicing *gaman* has helped me develop inner strength.
 - A. I rarely experience fear or anger.
 - B. I have learned to accept myself.
 - C. I have learned to be proud of my heritage.

Conclusion

Summary Statement: Practicing *gaman*, a gift from my Japanese roots, has helped me conquer prejudice.

Concluding Remarks: Although my Japanese ancestors might not have spoken as boldly as I have today, I am basically an American, which makes me a little outspoken. Therefore, I can talk to you about racial prejudice and of what it has meant to my life. And because I can talk about it, and share it with you, I am finally, truly, “free at last.”

Write an Introduction and a Conclusion

Develop creative ideas for the introduction and conclusion to your speech.

Look it Up

Along with regular dictionaries, you’ll find sources for literature and culture, scientific fields, legal definitions, and Internet terms.

Say it with Style

Check out notes and examples of creative use of language style for speechmaking.

Use Writing Tools

Use these resources to polish the form of your speech, outline ideas and cite your sources

The Archive

Check out historic examples to see how speakers organized their ideas and used language effectively.

Interactive Exercises

5W’s and How for Informative Speeches

Assessing Judicial Arguments

Look It Up

Finding and Citing Research Sources

A well organized speech typically includes three clear parts: a beginning, a middle and an end.

This page will focus on some of the strategies that you can use to develop the middle section of your speech, sometimes called the body or the discussion. We will explore several patterns that you can use to organize your research strategy and outline your ideas.

Topical

Parts to the whole

Chronological

Develop a timeline

Spatial

Map ideas visually or literally with a visual aid

Journalistic Questions

Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?

Ascending or Descending Order

From most to least important-or the reverse

Problem-Solution

Analyze a problem and propose a solution

Method of Residues

Eliminate alternatives and argue for the remaining option

Motivational

Psychological steps of gaining attention, establishing a need, satisfying the need, visualizing the results, and motivating an action response

Classical Judicial

Argument and Counter Argument

The audio examples in this module are in RealAudio format. To listen to them, you need to download the RealPlayer plug-in from Progressive Networks. The plug-in is free and works with most browsers.

A RealAudio recording and text of Clinton's June 7, 1997 speech are available from the White House Library.

Topical

When you use the parts to the whole method you are simply dividing your main idea into several subtopics.

A recent example that uses a topical method of arrangement is President Bill Clinton's Radio Address to the Nation on June 7, 1997. In the speech, the President spoke about the problem of hate in our society and organized his discussion around three types of hate that our society needs to address.

racism and violence against African Americans

homophobia expressed as violence and discrimination toward gay and lesbian people

anti-semitism and hate directed toward Jewish people.

The complete broadcast of the Declaration of War speech is available through the History Outloud project at Oyez. To read the text, go to the "Keeping the Memory Alive" site. The speech was presented to a joint session of the US Congress on December 8, 1941.

Chronological

A chronology is useful for narrating a series of events or steps in a process. A causal argument can also be formed by developing a time line for how a sequence of causes produced an outcome.

A good historical example of the chronological method of arrangement is President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Declaration of War Speech. The main ideas of the speech include:

Yesterday, Japan provoked war by bombing Pearl Harbor.

While attacks were taking place the Japanese were undermining efforts to deal with problems with the U. S. diplomatically.

Last night and this morning, Japan provoked war by attacking other military locations in the Pacific.

We will win the victory in the future no matter how long it will take.

We must declare war now since a state of war has existed since the Japanese attack.

Take a National Geographic tour to explore spatial organization.

Listen to Churchill's speech. A written text of the speech is available at the Churchill Home page. The speech was initially presented as a radio address on May 19, 1940. To access speeches on the History Channel, click on the icon for the Speech Archive for the full list of speeches and scroll down to find the speaker you want to hear.

Spatial

To use a spatial pattern of arrangement, the speaker invites the audience to visualize points in space.

Sometimes, a speaker will literally draw or present a map to enable the audience to see spatial points.

This method works very well for a travelogue or for explaining geographic relationships among points in space.

For examples of this, go to the National Geographic Online and follow the tour of one of its "Hot Spots."

Or, find an historical example with Sir Winston Churchill's speech about the war in Europe. Churchill's goal was to emphasize the spatial location for the battle for France, then the battle in the skies, and finally the battle for Britain.

Interactive Exercise

5W's and How for Informative Speeches

Journalistic Questions

An informative speech can be arranged around several of these journalistic questions.

Or, you can use them to develop a persuasive speech. For instance:

Who: Teenagers should be encouraged to quit smoking

When: as early as possible

Why: so that addiction to nicotine does not become unalterably severe.

Ascending or Descending Order

This is a variation on the topical pattern. The critical difference is that the speaker lists ideas so that they build one upon another. The list culminates with the most important, or least important. A contemporary example is David Letterman's "Top Ten."

Read a text of Mr. Hansenne's speech, "Combating the Most Intolerable Forms of Child Labour: A Global Challenge." The speech was presented in Amsterdam on February 16, 1997.

Problem Solution

A problem solution speech commonly includes three issues:

- analysis of a problem to define the nature of a problem and its severity
- explanation of the causes of the problem
- support for a solution to the problem

An example of this approach is the speech by Michel Hansenne, Director-General of the International Labour Office. In his speech to the Conference on Child Labour, he first spoke about the pervasiveness of child labor practices around the world, emphasizing that the problem persists because of inattention to its severity and that its root cause is poverty in developing countries. From there, he called for adoption of international conventions to prohibit child labor and efforts by rich countries to address the economic needs of developing countries.

Listen to the speech by President Bush from Broadcast.com. For a written text, go to the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. The speech was presented originally from the White House on January 16, 1990.

Method of Residues

The method of residues is a variation on the problem solution speech. The speaker first outlines several solutions to a problem. Then, the speaker explains why each of the proposed solutions — except the last solution — is not satisfactory. Finally, reasons are given for adopting the solution that remains.

A recent example of the method of residues is President George Bush's speech from the Oval Office as the U. S. invaded Kuwait. Bush explained how efforts at negotiation, sanctions, Congressional resolutions, and a United Nations ultimatum had been unsuccessful in persuading Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait. The only remaining choice was to use military force.

Read the speech by Commissioner Ness from the Website of the FCC. The speech was presented on February 16, 1996.

Motivational

The motivated sequence was developed by Alan Monroe on the basis of the psychological dynamics of advertising. The five steps include:

- gaining the audience's attention
- focusing on an unmet need of the audience or a desirable motivational appeal
- proposing a solution that satisfies the need
- visualizing how the solution would work to meet the need
- calling for an action to put the solution into effect.

Susan Ness, a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, used the steps of the motivated sequence in her speech before the American Library Association about

access to the Internet through libraries entitled “Libraries: A Critical Lane on the Information Superhighway.”

Ness gained attention by telling stories about her own how children and their use of the Internet. From there she explained the need to close the “great divide” between those who have Internet access and those who lack it. Her proposed satisfaction step was to make Internet connections available at public libraries. Visualization was accomplished by explaining how provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 would facilitate access. The action step called upon the audience to form strategic partnerships with business leaders to provide Internet access. A second part of the action step was an appeal to support NetDay programs.

Interactive Exercise
Assessing Judicial Arguments

Classical Judicial

The judicial argument employs five steps:

the narration to focus on a specific case and the facts surrounding the controversy that brings the case

the principles of law or justice that are involved in the controversy.

the position of the advocate

the refutation of counter arguments

a conclusion and call for action

Write an Introduction and a Conclusion

Be creative. In the introduction to your speech, gain your listeners’ attention and then focus their attention on your central idea by making a clear statement of your thesis and a preview of your main ideas. The introduction is also a time to develop rapport with your audience and establish your credibility.

As you conclude the speech, provide a summary that recaps the main ideas of your speech. Then, end in a dramatic fashion to give your conclusion a sense of finality. On this page we will look at:

Beginning Your Speech

Resources for gaining attention, developing credibility and orienting the audience

Ending Your Speech

How to wrap up with a summary and give your speech a sense of closure

The audio examples in this module are in RealAudio format. To listen to them, you need to download the RealPlayer plug-in from Progressive Networks. The plug-in is free and works with most browsers.

Listen to the story “Why the Baal Shem Tov Laughed.” It is located on the Story Resources on the Web page.

Beginning Your Speech

Tell a Story

Stories engage the imagination. Folk tales are especially useful at the start of the speech since they have a moral with which the storyteller ends the tale. That moral is often a good lead into your thesis.

The vocal delivery of a story is also important. Effective story tellers dramatize their characters and provide a build up to the end. For instance, listen to “Why the Baal Shem Tov Laughed” by Rebastin Sterna Citron from a collection of stories by the same title. Read a Snappy Quote

For maximum effect to gain attention, the quote you select ought to be written in a style that differs from your own. The elevated language of literature is often arresting in itself. The rhythm and cadence of poetry, or even a line from a popular song, gain attention. You can hear that cadence in the way poets themselves recite their works. Listen to the poem “Rust” as it is read by its author Joe Matzak.

Find quotes from one of these sources:

Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations <http://www.cc.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/bartlett>

Need a quote for your speech? Get it online from this classic source.

Books Online <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Web/bookauthors.html>

Good for finding quotes from classics that have been digitized. Scroll down the alphabetic list of authors.

The Quotations Home Page <http://www.quoteland.com/index.html> Browse through this source with thousands of quotes. You can browse an alphabetic list, by author or by type of saying, such as aphorisms or a category like serious sarcasm.

Listen to Perot’s speech, which was broadcast live via the Internet by AudioNet. The speech was presented in Long Beach on August 11, 1996.

Ask Questions

A series of questions at the start of the speech will engage the audience. You can also design your questions to preview the main topics that you are going to develop in the speech.

Sometimes the questions evoke an overt response from the audience. Other times, one uses rhetorical questions that the listener can respond to silently.

H. Ross Perot effectively used questions at the start of a speech to the Reform Party Convention in 1996.

Perot’s questions evoked a chorus of responses from his audience and set the themes for his speech: need for reform, problems of the budget deficit, and empowerment of the average citizen.

Startle Your Listeners with Statistics

Most of the time, statistical evidence is used in the body of your speech to develop an argument. However, it is also useful to start out with statistics to gain attention.

A handy source to find statistics on a variety of subjects is:

Use Humor

Humor is often an effective means of relaxing yourself at the start of the speech as well as gaining the attention of the audience.

A source for finding jokes and humor on a variety of subjects is:

Yahoo Directory of Entertainment & Humor
http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Humor_Jokes_and_Fun/ Humor files on various topics from A-Z are here.

The Daily Muse <http://www.cais.net/aschnedr/muse1.htm> Humorous commentary and jokes about current news stories can be found here.

Effective delivery of humor is also essential. You can hear a variety of examples of how stand up comedians deliver their lines on “Comedy on the Web.”

A caution. Humor only works when you have the delivery skill to pull it off, and when you analyze your audience correctly. Be responsive to differences in taste and sensitivity about humor.

You can listen to a sound recording of the speech from Broadcast.com. A Refer to the Occasion

Audiences relate to their immediate surroundings. You can thus gain attention by referring to things that are immediate as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did in his “I Have a Dream” speech, which he gave on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Listen to how his speech begins with the references to Lincoln in the beginning.

Listen to Jimmy Carter at the Democratic Convention on July 15, 1976. To access speeches on the History Channel, click on the icon for the Speech Archive for the full list of speeches and scroll down to find the speaker you want to hear.

Make a Personal Reference

Whether you are a stranger or familiar to the audience, it is often useful to talk about yourself at the start. If you are not known to the audience, it is meaningful to tell them who you are, and how you have a background on the topic. But, even if your audience knows you, you can also tell them more about yourself.

At the beginning of the 1976 Presidential campaign, Jimmy Carter was unknown to most people. So, he would usually start his campaign speeches with a personal introduction: “My name is Jimmy Carter and I am running for President.” He continued that technique all the way to the end of the campaign, when, as the nominee of his party he had become well known.

A digital recording of Johnson’s speech, originally part of the Vincent Collection, is available in at the Ocean RealAudio Server. Click here to listen to the start of the speech. The speech text is available at the Johnson Library and Museum.

Relate to the Audience's Feelings

Relate to the emotions of the audience throughout the speech. But it is especially potent to describe your feelings at the beginning of your speech to develop rapport with the audience and engender empathy.

You convey your feelings through speech content that evokes an emotional response. In addition your choice of language, imagery and nonverbal delivery are important for emphasizing your feeling.

One caution. If you are dealing with personal experiences that are emotionally charged, it is important to assess your comfort level for sharing those feelings. Make sure that you have fully processed the emotions.

If, however, you are comfortable with the feelings, and your emotional level fits the tenor of the occasion, you will develop a powerful start to your speech.

For example, President Lyndon B. Johnson made his first address, as President, to the United States Congress shortly after the assassination of his predecessor, John F. Kennedy. In the introduction, Johnson spoke very somberly, describing his own feelings and the emotions of most Americans about the occasion.

State Your Thesis Clearly and Preview Your Main Ideas

After you've gained attention, make your main ideas clear with your thesis and a preview of the important points you are going to develop. Sometimes, it is also useful to do a preview, an outline in numeric form of the points you are going to cover in the speech. By highlighting the plan for your speech at the start, you provide the audience with a kind of mental roadmap as you progress through the speech.

[Click here](#) for examples of using figures of speech.

Use a Figure of Speech

Try out one of the figures of speech such as alliteration, antithesis, parallel structure, metaphor or concrete description.

Listen to MacArthur's speech from the files of Broadcast.com.

Ending your speech

As you end your speech, provide a summary that restates your thesis and main ideas. This will reinforce your points.

It is also critical to give the speech closure with the final content and the delivery that dramatizes the finality of your speech.

As you write the ending, consider using any of the strategies that we looked at to gain attention at the start: a quote, humor, a creative image, a personal reference, a sharing of emotions.

A good historic example that accomplishes the goals of ending a speech well, is the conclusion of General Douglas MacArthur's address to a joint session of Congress on April 20, 1951. MacArthur ended his speech by summarizing some of the options

available to the country in pursuing the conflict in Korea, then provided dramatic closure to his speech by referencing the line from a ballad, “Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.” His vocal delivery was also especially effective to give dramatic finality to his speech.

Look It Up

Along with regular dictionaries, you’ll find sources for literature and culture, scientific fields, legal definitions, and Internet terms. You can also use these references for an ...

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Interactive Exercise

Look It Up

Avoid abstract words

Dates. What we have done is that we have avoided the use of words that merely point in the forward direction and have instead, come up with a specific time plan that enables the writer and the reader to meet the deadline.

Follow a subject- verb- object ordering

(d) *verbs and nouns*. In written communication verbs and nouns should be used as they spell out a positive and concrete rendering of the statement. The simplest pattern of making a statement should be in the order of subject-verb-object ordering which takes into account both the verb and the noun. Adjectives and adverbs should be totally done away with at the time of composing business messages unless, of course, one wishes to be extremely creative. Analyze the following statements.

1. Your project was extraordinary brilliant!
2. It’s hard these day’s to find competent workers like you.
3. You really have made us happy with your performance.

Statements like these are too flamboyant. Restrict the flow of emotions by being specific and concrete and specify the content rather than the pleasure that one obtains as a result of one’s accomplishment. Suppose we were to rephrase the statements and write them as:

1. Your project excelled in the areas of ...
2. Despite difficult circumstances you were able to meet the target.
3. Your dedication and sincerity are appreciated.

In all the three statements there is an objective assessment of the situation and the individual. This is brought about by a choice of well thought out words that neither express too much nor too little gratitude or appreciation for the task accomplished.

Use positive words and a polite tone

(e) *positive words*. At the time of writing, negative words should be totally eliminated from the text. The writing should be both positive and polite. As the basic purpose of any writing revolves round involvement of reader, negative words can totally put him off. Ensure that words and statements made and used gently persuade the reader to take action. The emphasis should not be on what you have not done or what you can't do. On the contrary, it should focus on the person.

Let us take a look at the following statement: "it is next to impossible to complete the assignment today". It is surely going to put off the reader. Suppose we change the sentence and, while retaining the original meaning, write it in the following manner: "the assignment would be completed by tomorrow morning" the receiver cannot miss the positive overtones. The basic issue remains the same, that is, the assignment cannot be completed today. However, the manner in which it is stated spells a level of confidence and even hints at an unspoken promise of not failing to deliver the goods.

To take a look at another example: "you surely did mess up things last week. Now, you'll have to face the music." Suppose we were to change the tenor of the statement and make a proposal of the following nature. "I believe things went amiss last week. Probably everyone makes a mistake. Let's see how things can be sorted out." By the time the reader is through with these lines he has already been won over on the side of the writer.

Politeness is a good strategy to be adopted in difficult situations. Issues are sorted out amicably and cooperation is also sought.

Read the text carefully to ensure that the choice of words is correct

(f) *Correct words*. What we wish to communicate should be absolutely clear in our mind prior to commencing work. Quite often we think in our native language and then try to translate the same idea in English or any other foreign language. The ideas in the text should be carefully read to ensure that what we wish to communicate is clear. For example, let us consider the following example. presenter has but little time to convey himself. In such a sentence construct, the choice of the word "himself" is inappropriate. If each word was to be weighed in the sentence, the writer would realize that an individual does not convey "himself," rather it is the idea that gets conveyed. Suppose we were to restructure it to read: the presenter has but little time to convey his ideas.

In a construct of this kind the message is absolutely clear. The sentence contains only a few words, and the writer has taken pains to ensure that the language is simple with an ordering pattern of subject –verb-object. For example, in some cases, the steps or techniques are not 'performed' but 'demonstrated'. The writer falls in a double trap: one of making an error of logic and, two, of making use of redundant words that we normally refer to as "dead wood" and which need to be immediately eliminated from the sentence.

Delete redundancies

3. Sentence structure. Words alone are insufficient to express the meaning intended by the sender. The manner in which they are arranged in a sentence give coherence to the idea. As far as possible, the sentence construction should

also be simple. Unnecessary words should be done away with, occasionally, redundant words creep into the composition of the sentence. If we could make a conscious effort to read and re-read the text, we should realize that many ideas and concepts are embedded in the sentence itself. Example: new innovations. Innovations themselves are new, hence the usage of “ new “ is redundant.

State on or two ideas

4. Paragraph construction. The next level of construction in written communication is the paragraph. Only one or two ideas should be stated in a paragraph. Since all the paragraphs form a link to provide the final meaning for the written text, there should be what we normally refer to as a topical sentence at the start of the paragraph. This prepares

Preparation of Speech

Like the best laid plans of mice and me, presentations also have a habit of going astray just because they are structured the wrong way. This can happen to even the best of speakers. In fact, this does often happen to the best of speakers simply because they become, over time, too confident of their powers to hold the audience’s attention. What they forget is that public attention is fickle. One has to work on it a new every time.

Structure

All speeches should have a definite structure or format; a talk without a structure is a woolly mess. If we do not order our thoughts into a structured manner, the audience will not be able to follow them. Having established the aim of your presentation we should choose the most appropriate structure to achieve it.

However, the structure must not get in the way of the main message. If it is too complex, too convoluted or simply too noticeable the audience will be distracted. If a section is unnecessary to the achievement of your fundamental objectives, pluck it out.

Sequential Argument: One of the simplest structures is that of sequential argument which consists of a series of linked statements ultimately leading to a conclusion. However, this simplicity can only be achieved by careful and deliberate delineation between each section. One technique is the use of frequent reminders to the audience of the main point which have proceeded and explicit explanation of how the next topic will lead on from this.

Hierarchical Decomposition: In hierarchical decomposition the main topic is broken down into sub-topics and each sub-topics into smaller topics until eventually everything is broken down into very small basic units. In written communication this is a very powerful technique because it allows the reader to re-order the presentation at will, and to return to omitted topics at a later date. In verbal communication the audience is restricted to the order of the presenter and the hierarchy should be kept simple reinforced. As with sequential argument it is useful to summaries each section at its conclusion and to

introduce each major new section with a statement of how it lies in the hierarchical order.

Structuring the Message

The message should not have too many messages: Never try to structure a speech with a number of important ideas. People's retention span is normally not very high, and they certainly will not remember all that you say. Keep your ideas down to a few. The way to do this is to break the whole thing down. Begin with the Topic. Break the topic down into the one most important thing that you want to say.

Break the message into sequentially arranged sub-messages: Break down your major idea into not more than two sub-themes or sub-ideas. Each sub-theme must be integrally linked to the other. This is only to help establish the connectivity during our own presentation. Make sure that the linkage between the sub-themes and the major idea are very clear. That is also necessary to clarify our own ideas on how to develop the subject during our speech.

Provide Examples: Back ideas up with examples. We can use individual examples to back up each sub-theme, or use one comprehensive example to integrate the whole. The better way is to use separate examples first, and then to use an overall example. Remember that the examples have to be linked to the world of experience of the audience, so far as you can judge it. The most important thing is to repeat the major idea in the speech.

Conclusion (Repeat Logic/Repeat major Idea)

In fact, the shorter your presentation, the less chance you have of developing any sub-themes or ideas. The problem normally is when you have been given a wide topic and you have perhaps only ten minutes to spend on it.

For example, say we have been called to give a talk on Direct Taxes. When we arrive, we are "told by the Session Chairman that (as usual) the session is running behind time and our earlier 20 minutes presentation will have to be cut down to 12-15 minutes. Now everyone knows that it is not possible to talk on Direct Taxes only for 15 minutes (the Session Chairman keeps hoping that you will finish it in ten so that he himself can get an extra 3 minutes). So what do we do?

A classic response to this situation is to pick up a single bombshell of an idea from our notes and expand on it. We could begin by saying, 'I am told that I should keep this short and sweet. Since sweetness lingers, I hope the gravity of my presentation will find all the more place in your minds. I would only like to make one comment on Direct Taxes and that is

The assumption is that what we are going to say is the central theme of our presentation.
The Beginning

It is imperative to plan your beginning carefully; there are five main elements:

. Get their attention: Too often in a speech, the first few minutes of the presentation are lost while people adjust their coats, drift in with coffee and finish the conversation they were having with the person next to them. We only have a limited time and every minute is precious so, from the beginning, make sure they pay attention.

. Establish a theme: Basically, we need to start the audience thinking about the subject matter of your presentation. This can be done by a statement of main objective unless for some reason we wish to keep it hidden. They will each have some experience or opinions on this and at the beginning we must make them bring that experience into their own minds.

Present a structure: If we explain briefly at the beginning of a talk how it is to proceed, then the audience will know what to expect. This can help to establish the theme and also provide something concrete to hold their attention to. Ultimately, it provides a sense of security in the promise that this speech too will end.

Create a rapport: If we can win the audience over in the first minute, we will keep them for the remainder. We should plan exactly how we wish to appear to them and use the beginning to establish that relationship. 'we might be presenting yourself as their friend, as an expert, perhaps even as a judge, but whatever role we choose we must establish it at the very beginning.

Administration: When planning our speech we should make a note to find out if there are any administrative details which need to be announced at the beginning of the speech. This is not simply to make our self popular with the people organising the session but also because if these details are over looked the audience may become distracted as they wonder what is going to happen next.

The Ending

The final impression you make on the audience is the one they will remember. Thus it is worth planning your last few sentences with extreme care.

As with the beginning, it is necessary first to get their attention, which will have wandered. This requires a change of pace, a new visual aid or perhaps the introduction of one final culminating idea. In some formats the ending will be a summary of the main points of the talk. One of the greatest mistakes is to tell the audience that this is going to be a summary because at that moment they simply switch off. Indeed it is best that the ending comes unexpectedly with that final vital phrase left hanging in the air and ringing round their memories. Alternatively the ending can be a flourish, with the pace and voice leading the audience through the final crescendo to the inevitable conclusion.

The Techniques of Speech

Every speaker has a set of "tricks of the trade" which he or she holds dear - the following are a short selection of such advice.

Make an impression

The average audience is very busy: they have large number of occupations; and although they might try very hard to concentrate on our speech, their minds will inevitably stray. Our job then is to do something anything, which captures their attention and makes a lasting impression upon them. Once we have planned our speech and honed it down to its few salient points, isolate the most important and devise some method to make it stick.

Often speakers use techniques like using illustrations/examples, Interesting but relevant narratives etc. to help audience get the impression.

Repeat, Repeat

The average audience is very busy; but repetition makes them hear. The average audience is easily distracted, and their attention will slip during the most important message of our speech - so repeat it. We do not necessarily have to use the resonant tonal sounds of the repeated phrase, but simply make the point again and again and again with different explanations and in different ways. The classic advice of the Sergeant Major is: "First you tell what you are going totel'em, then you tell'em, then you tell lem what you told lem!"

Writing an effective presentation means determining what your audience wants - and what you want them to do.

1. After the Draft: Editing Your Content
2. Analyzing an Audience
3. Barriers to Communication
4. Brainstorming with Sticky Notes
5. Closing Presentations Well
6. Don't Forget a Presentation Agenda
7. 4 Easy Steps to a Great Presentation
8. The 4 Key Components of Content
9. Giving Your First Public Presentation
10. Rules for Team Presentations
11. Sample Presentation: Creating Web Site Draw
12. Sample Presentation: Moving Beyond the 1-Page Web Site
13. Those Pesky Grammar Things: 9 Commonly Misused Words
14. Using Abbreviations Correctly
15. Using Good Reasoning