

Exploring Public Speaking:

The Open Educational Resource College

Public Speaking Textbook

4th Edition



**A Creative Commons Licensed
Open Educational Resource
for Introductory College Public Speaking Courses**

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

6.2 – Patterns of Organization

6.3 – Connective Statements

6.4 – Outlining

6.1 – Why We Need Organization in Speeches

Have you had this experience? You 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 and learning. 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. Sources on how audiences need organization are listed in the references at the end of the book, 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 this 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, & Rouders, 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 greater 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.

Secondly, the categories of information should be distinct, different, and clear. You might think about organization in public speaking as having three steps. These steps are *grouping*, *labeling*, and *ordering* (putting into a good order). We will return to the order of parts and labeling sections of the speech later in the chapter. Before you can label your main points clearly or put them in the right order, you have to group your information.

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.

Grouping

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.

One of the authors frequently does the following exercise in class. She has all the students take some object from their pocket, purse, or backpack and place it on a table at the front of the room. (It’s interesting what gets put on the table!). Then she has the students gather around and look at the items and “group them”—put them into categories, with each group having at least two items and all items being put in some group. Afterward, she gets the different grouping schema and discusses them. Of course, most of the groups are “correct,” even if just based on color. However, she then asks, “If you had to communicate to a classmate who is absent what is on the table, which schema or grouping pattern would you use?” The point is that grouping can be done on the basis of many characteristics or patterns, but some are clearer and better for communicating. By the way, the “functionality” pattern usually wins.

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 minor steps as “subpoints.”

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.

At this point we will address the third step of organization, *ordering*, and return to *labeling* later. However, in actually composing your speech, you would want to be sure that you name or label your groups of ideas and content clearly for yourself and then even more clearly for your audience. Labeling is an iterative process, which means you may “tweak” how you label your main points for clarity as you progress in the speech.

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 outlines 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.

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 of changing the oil in a 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 months or 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. The 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

Chronological pattern

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

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).

We should say here that, realistically, the example given above is still too broad. It would be useful, perhaps, for an audience with almost no knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, but too basic and not really informative for other audiences. Just one of the Roman numeral points would probably be a more specific focus.

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 the White House.

- I. The East Wing includes the entrance ways and offices for the First Lady.
 - II. The most well-known part of the White House is the West Wing.
 - III. The residential part of the White House is on the second floor.
- (The emphasis here is the movement a tour would go through.)

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 before 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 principles. 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 this example 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 Ebola epidemic in Africa in 2014.

- I. The outbreak began in March 2014 in Guinea with the death of one-year-old child who played in a tree with infected bats.
- II. The virus next spread to Sierra Leone and Liberia.
- III. In Fall of 2014 it spread to the U.S. and Europe by travelers from Liberia.

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 a problem to an audience, 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 will be fully explained in Chapter 13. The Monroe’s Motivated Sequence requires a discussion of cause to create a logical speech.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the 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 driver’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 that were abandoned in his backyard.

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.

Earlier in the chapter, we said that organizing a speech involves grouping, labeling, and ordering. Let’s address **labeling here**. 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.

Parallelism

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

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.

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.

We have included examples of outlines at the ends of chapters 12, 13, and 15. We have tried to give examples of different kinds of formats, but individual instructors prefer specific format for outlines. Your instructor should give you examples of how they want the outline to be developed and formatted, and you should follow their directions.

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 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 or “connective statements” are broad terms that encompass several types of statements or phrases. They 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 they are methods for helping the audience listen, retain information, and follow

Connectives

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

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?
- Explain the logical connection between the previous main idea(s) and next one or previous subpoints and the next one
- Explain your own mental processes in arranging the material as you have
- Keep 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.

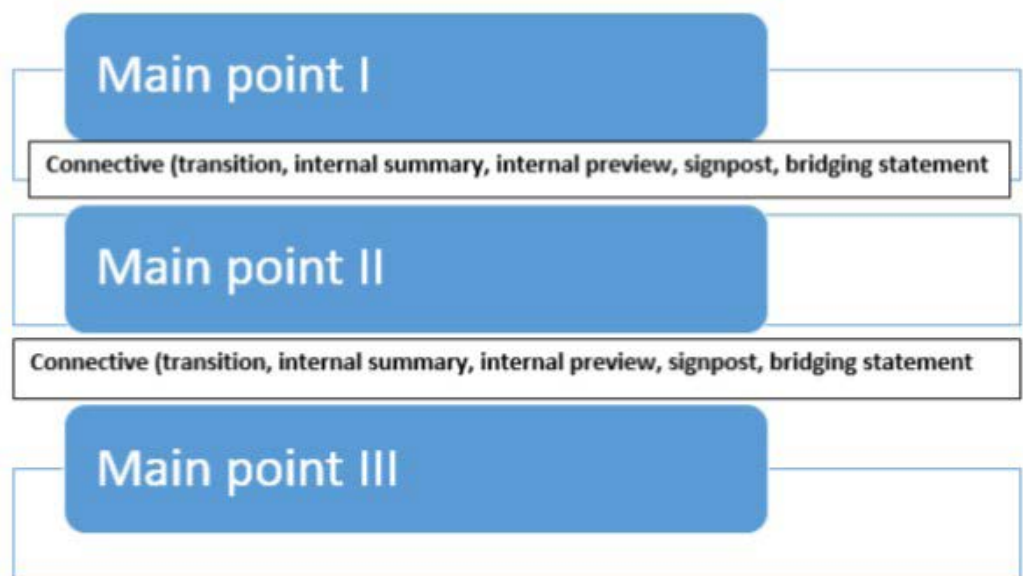


Figure 6.1 - Visual of Connectives

Internal summaries

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

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 like the mile markers you see along interstates that tell you where you are or like 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.”



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

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

“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?”

There is no standard format for connectives. 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 when they are present 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 skill 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 unhealthy 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.

You may wonder, “What’s the deal with outlines in speech class? Why can’t I just write out my speech in essay form?” There are good reasons for your instructor’s insistence on an outline, and your instructor may respond negatively if you hand in an essay instead of an outline.

In Chapter 11, which is on delivery, we look at the concept of extemporaneous speaking versus impromptu, manuscript, and memorized speeches. Most public speaking instructors in the United States focus their classes on extemporaneous speaking. Extemporaneous speaking requires a well-pre-

pared outline. The outline requires you to clearly designate each part of the speech and use a system where the BIG IDEAS are distinct from the supporting or “smaller ideas.” Usually this is done with indentation to the left and certain symbols for each unit. If you have to edit the speech for time or for a particular audience, it’s much easier to subtract or add when you know the relative importance of the idea.

You should think of the outline as the blueprint for your speech. It is not the speech—that is what comes out of your mouth in front of the audience. The outline helps you prepare it just as the blueprint guides the building of the house. You do not live on a blueprint, but in a house built by a blueprint.

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 stack of 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.

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 paranormal 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 soldiers (SLIDE)

Figure 6.2 - Speaking Notes Example

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 a TED Talk, 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.

Case study

Roberto is thinking about giving an informative speech on the status of HIV-AIDS currently in the U.S. He has different ideas about how to approach the speech. Here are his four main thoughts:

1. pharmaceutical companies making drugs available in the developing world
2. changes in attitudes toward HIV-AIDS and HIV-AIDS patients over the last three decades
3. how HIV affects the body of a patient
4. major breakthroughs in HIV-AIDS treatment

Assuming all of these subjects would be researchable and appropriate for the audience, write specific purpose statements for each. What organizational patterns would he probably use for each specific purpose?