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SPCH 1311 Online Course

Speech Outline Mini-Lecture - Transcript

Welcome to the speech outline mini-lecture.

So, your topic is selected, you've gathered a good bit of research on the topic, now what? It's time to take your big bag of info and begin to shape and mold it into an actual speech. The primary tool we will use for this task is the outline. We will be focusing on EXTEMPORANEOUS delivery. That means that while you have prepared for the speech, you will not be speaking from a full manuscript, or written out version of the speech. Instead, your information will be organized in the form of an outline. The outline will keep you on track from the beginning to the end of your speech, and jog your memory about the particulars and details of your message.

The basic organizational model for public speaking follows three steps:

Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em.

Tell 'em.

Tell 'em what you told 'em.

You can also think of this model in terms of having an introduction, main points, and a conclusion.

The outline template for both of your speeches follows this pattern. Bear in mind, though, that the order in which you DELIVER the speech is not necessarily the most practical or effective order for developing and shaping your speech. More on that in a little while.

Right now – let's just talk through the outline together. The introduction section includes four elements:

- Attention Getter – you want to pique the audience's attention – draw them in so that they want to hear what you are going to say
- Thesis Statement – state the point of your speech – be brief – I aim for 10 words or less
 - MLK is a towering figure of the civil rights movement.
 - Recycling is a simple way to change our future.

(Whatever your topic, I will be surprised if you can't whittle down the thesis to 10 words.)

- Credibility Statement – bridging the topic back to you – why should we listen to YOU talk about this? What is your connection to the information?
- Preview – This is a simple, direct statement of your three main points. (It is MUCH easier to write once you have, in fact, created all three main points.)

I encourage students to begin working on the main points of the outline first. THEN the conclusion, and THEN the intro. My eight grade English teacher introduced me to this principle, and I have found it to be effective for almost three decades. If you are perplexed by it, Google “write introduction last” – you may be surprised by the popularity of this approach. And if it just REALLY bugs you to skip the intro, well, go ahead and write your thesis statement. The attention-getter, credibility statement, and preview, however, will likely flow from your brain more smoothly if you tackle them last.

So, start building the speech with your **three main points**. You need to have a title, or headline for each main point, and then back up that premise with your research. It’s kind of like scaffolding – you need a main idea, sub-points, and details for each sub-point. There are two avenues to get the job done – top down or bottom up. If – based on your research – you have a pretty good idea of how you want to organize the content of your speech into three distinct points, go ahead and fill in the header for each one. This is the top-down approach. You name the main points, then plug in your research according to which main points it supports. Sometimes, though, students survey their research and still aren’t sure what the three main points should be. That’s OK. Start plugging in all of your details (facts, stats, quotes, etc.) and see if they begin to take shape around key ideas. This is the bottom-up approach. Eventually, you should have three main points emerge from how you lumped together different bits of information. Try to be patient with this process. There is no one right way to organize data, so what you see as a solid grouping one day might not appeal to you a few days later. Editing and revising are a natural part of the process, so don’t commit too strongly to how you have organized the info early on, and be willing to shift and shape your main points if need be.

Once your main points are filled in, go ahead and write your transitions, or connectives. These are brief statements that let the audience know you are pivoting to a new point in the speech. Transitions are helpful to the audience because they allow us to keep pace with where you are in the speech. Humans generally do not like the unknown. We like to have some measure of certainty, and give us little clues as to how your speech is progressing helps keep our attention focused on your message. Here is a basic transition:

Now that you have a sense of Gladwell’s early career, next let’s consider his first book.

In this example, Gladwell’s early career is your first main point, and his first book is your second main point. Using the word “next” gives the audience a directional cue that you are shifting gears from one point to the next. Other cue words include “first, second, now, moving on, my next point” and so on. A

great transition mentions the main point you are ending, includes a directional cue, and kicks off the NEXT point you are about to make.

Once your transitions and connectives are good to go, tackle the conclusion.

The conclusion has several key elements, just like the introduction. For the informative speech, your conclusion will incorporate:

- Restating the thesis
- Summary – literally mentioning your three key points again (This should be a mirror image of your preview)
- Landing/Clincher/Closing statement – the last thing the audience hears from you. Could be a quote, a challenge to the audience, an inspiring statement. In my humble opinion, the first sentence of your speech and the LAST sentence of your speech are the most challenging. They require the most creativity, anyway.

And now that the rest of your outline is complete, circle back to the intro. The preview will essentially write itself, since you know your three main points. Knock out the thesis and credibility statements, and then give some thought to how you want to begin and craft your attention getter. You might go light hearted, and use humor to grab the audience's attention. You could also be dramatic, using a startling statistic or story. It may take some time to nail down your attention getter, so be patient with the process.

This concludes the outline mini-lecture.



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