

# 3: Organize Your Speech

## OBJECTIVES

- ☆ To organize your thoughts into a logical sequence that leads the audience to a clearly defined goal.
- ☆ To build a speech outline that includes an opening, body and conclusion.

## TIMING

Five to seven minutes:

- ☆ Fifth minute - green light
- ☆ Sixth minute - amber light
- ☆ Seventh minute - red light
- ☆ Seventh and a half minute - all three lights

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## Why Organize?

If your speech is to make sense to the audience and be easily followed, it must be logically organized. Organization is really nothing more than putting your ideas together in an orderly manner.

As a speaker, your business is persuading others to accept your ideas, and success comes only when you carefully organize your approach. You must clearly identify the key point of your subject for the audience and then lead them logically toward that point. Merely talking around the subject in a haphazard manner will leave your listeners confused.

As a persuader, you must always speak from your audience's point of view. They will be motivated only what they want, not by what you want. Remember this as you organize your talk. Analyze what will motivate your audience to agree with you, understand you, or take action on your behalf. Then develop your ideas so they supply that motivation. Good organization is the key to success.

## Define Your Mission

Your first step in creating your talk is to decide what to talk about. Select a subject of interest to you and your audience. Be sure the subject is not too broad. For example, instead of talking about sports – a general topic – narrow the subject to children's sports or, more specific still, children's soccer.

Remember, you will be speaking for only a few minutes, and you will need all of that time to fully develop a single facet of the larger subject. Be sure your topic is timely and relevant for your audience, a topic on which you can speak with some degree of authority, and one to which you can bring enthusiasm and conviction.

Once you know your topic, you must determine your presentation's mission. Do you want to inspire, entertain, persuade, or inform your listeners? What do you want the audience to feel, know, or do after hearing your speech? What single point do you want to make? The answers to these questions will determine your speech's mission or purpose. If the topic is children's sports, for example, what do you want your speech to do? Do you want to inspire your listeners to support children's sports? Do you want to convince listeners that adults are making children's sports too competitive? Do you want to entertain your audience with funny stories about your child's soccer team?

Write down your mission in one clear, concise sentence. This will be the basis for the development of your speech.

## Develop an Outline

The next step in preparing your speech is to logically assemble your ideas into a sequence that will help you achieve your objectives.

An effective speech is organized into an opening, a body, and a conclusion.

The opening of your speech is designed to catch immediate attention. It must arouse the audience's interest in your topic. It also must lead into the speech subject of your speech and the main point you are making.

Example of a good opening are:

- A startling question or a challenging statement
- An appropriate quotation, illustration, or story
- A display of some appropriate object or picture
- An attention-getting generalization that ties in with your subject.

Avoid these common weak openings:

- An apologetic statement
- A story or joke that does not relate to your topic
- A commonplace observation delivered in a commonplace manner
- A long or slow-moving statement or story
- A trite question, such as "Did you ever stop to think...?"

The body of your speech contains the factual. The amount of information you include in the body of your speech will be limited by the amount of time available to you and how much your audience can remember. Most listeners will remember only three to five main facts or ideas. For a five- to seven-minute talk, three most likely will be plenty.

What facts or ideas do you want to present? You may find it useful to write down all of those related to your topic on small file cards, using one card per idea or fact. You may have quite a few. Next, you will need to weed out ideas or facts until only the three best ones remain. These will be the main facts or ideas of your talk. Arrange and rearrange these last three cards, determining the most effective order for your speech.

The next step is to elaborate on each idea or fact. Explain it in several sentences, then provide a shorter anecdote or story for illustration. You could also quote an authority or use simple statistics to support your idea. If appropriate, you should briefly mention contrary views and refute them.

The audience always remembers best what it hears last. This means closing must be memorable. It should reinforce your ideas and leave your listeners with a lasting impression. If your mission was to inform your listeners, you may want to conclude simply with a summary of the ideas presented in the body of the speech. If your purpose was to persuade or motivate the audience to take some action, you may want to suggest a course of action listeners could take.

Do not introduce any new material in the conclusion. You will only confuse your listeners. And, also do not apologize for anything you may or may not have done or said during your talk. Finish forcefully and confidently.

Examples of a good closing are:

- A summary of the points you have made and the conclusions to be drawn from them
- A specific appeal for action
- A story, quotation, or illustration that emphasizes the point you are making
- A rhetorical question.

Be sure to use smooth transitions when moving from the opening to the body to the conclusion of your speech. Good transitions provide continuity and help the audience to follow your presentation.

### For Instance

Suppose you will be talking on the danger of accidents in the home and your mission is to increase safety awareness. You could engage the audience's interest by saying, "You are far more likely to be injured in an accident at home than in any other place," (audience self-interest in the opening). Then expand on this theme.

Then you might begin the body of the speech by giving an example. "Suppose someone fell down the stairs in your home. That's exactly what happened at our house, and..." For analogy, you might say: "You are safer walking down the middle of the street in heavy traffic than you are walking down a staircase without a light."

You could then quote common arguments, such as, "Some people say, 'I know my house so well I could walk around blindfolded.'" Then quote statistics that prove more people injured at home than anywhere else.

For your conclusion, restate your opening theme and make an appeal for greater care at home. Close on a strong note: "If you don't worry about yourself, at least set a good example in home safety for your family."

### Your Evaluation

In this project, the primary focus is on how effective you organize your speech. However, your evaluator will also consider your use of skills from previous two projects, such as enthusiasm and conviction and your ability to control nervousness. To be effective, your outline must be useful to you in organizing your thoughts, and your organization must be clear to your listeners, so they can understand exactly what you're trying to accomplish.

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### INSTRUCTIONS

- ☆ Attach this to your Manual once you have received them.
- ☆ Follow closely the guidelines in this Manual.
- ☆ Underline the key statements requiring your emphasis or attention.
- ☆ Refer to the Evaluation Guide as reference when preparing and making your speech.
- ☆ Remember to use the skills learned from previous projects.

### TIPS

- ☆ Think of a speech title. This will guide you in preparing your opening, body and conclusion. Often, speakers underestimate the value of a good and appropriate title in enhancing the overall speech value.
- ☆ Focus on three supporting statements in the body of your talk and elaborate. Support with facts, statistics, etc.

# EVALUATION GUIDE FOR "ORGANIZE YOUR SPEECH"

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Title Evaluator Date

**Note To The Evaluator:** For this assignment, the speaker's objectives are to organize a talk that includes a beginning, a body, and a conclusion and that leads the audience to a clearly defined goal. The speaker is also to practice the skills learned in the previous two projects. These skills include speaking with conviction and sincerity and controlling nervousness. In addition to your oral evaluation, please complete this evaluation form by rating the speech in each category.

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Above average (for speaker's experience level)
- 3 = Satisfactory
- 2 = Should improve
- 1 = Must improve (require immediate attention)

Add your comments in the space provided, but don't comment on each item. Select those items where special praise is warranted, or where you can offer specific suggestions for improvement.

CATEGORY	RATING					COMMENTS / RECOMMENDED ACTION
SPEECH VALUE (Interesting, meaningful)	5	4	3	2	1	
PREPARATION (Research, rehearsal)	5	4	3	2	1	
MANNER (Direct, confident, sincere)	5	4	3	2	1	
ORGANIZATION (Purposeful, clear)	5	4	3	2	1	
OPENING (Attention-getting, led into topic)	5	4	3	2	1	
BODY OF SPEECH (Logical flow, ideas supported by facts)	5	4	3	2	1	
CONCLUSION (Effective, climatic)	5	4	3	2	1	

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**