

# Chapter Eight

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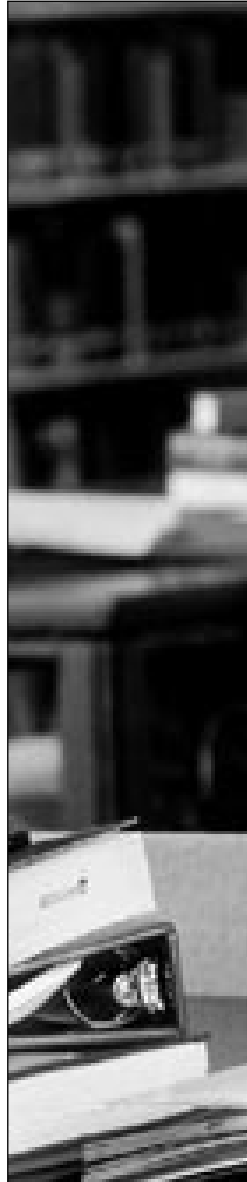
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# ORGANIZING THE BODY OF THE SPEECH



**I**f you thumb through any mail-order catalogue today, you will discover that many of the items for sale are *organizers*—closet organizers, kitchen organizers, office organizers, audio and video equipment organizers. Read enough catalogues, and you must conclude that if something exists, it can be organized.

Why all this quest for organization? Obviously, when the objects you possess are well organized, they serve you better. There's little point in having multiple possessions if you can't find them when you need them. Organization allows you to see what you have and to put your hands immediately on the garment, the tool, the tape, the piece of paper, the CD you want without a frenzied search.

Much the same is true of your speeches. If they are well organized, they will serve you better. Organization allows you—and your listeners—to see what ideas you have and to put mental “hands” on the most important ones.

## Organization Is Important

Several years ago a college professor took a well-organized speech and scrambled it by randomly changing the order of its sentences. He then had a speaker deliver the original version to one group of listeners and the scrambled version to another group. After the speeches, he gave a test to see how well each group understood what they had heard. Not surprisingly, the group that heard the original, unscrambled speech scored much higher than the other group.<sup>1</sup>

A few years later, two professors repeated the same experiment at another school. But instead of testing how well the listeners comprehended each speech, they tested to see what effects the speeches had on the listeners' attitudes toward the speakers. They found that people who heard the well-organized speech believed the speaker to be much more competent and trustworthy than did those who heard the scrambled speech.<sup>2</sup>

These are just two of many studies that show the importance of organization in effective speechmaking.<sup>3</sup> They confirm what most of us know from experience. How many times have you listened to someone who rambled aimlessly from one idea to another? You realize how difficult it is to pay attention to the speaker, much less to understand the message. In fact, when students explain what they hope to learn from their speech class, they almost always put “the ability to organize my ideas more effectively” near the top of the list.

This ability is especially vital for speechmaking. Listeners demand coherence. They have little patience with speakers who bounce wildly from idea to idea. Keep in mind that listeners—unlike readers—cannot flip back to a previous page if they have trouble grasping a speaker's ideas. In this respect a speech is much like a movie. Just as a director must be sure viewers can follow the plot of a film from beginning to end, so must a speaker be sure listeners can follow the progression of ideas in a speech from beginning to end. This requires that speeches be organized *strategically*. They should be put together in particular ways to achieve particular results with particular audiences.

Speech organization is important for other reasons as well. As we saw in Chapter 1, it is closely connected to critical thinking. When you work to organize your speeches, you gain practice in the general skill of establishing

clear relationships among your ideas. This skill will serve you well throughout your college days and in almost any career you may choose. In addition, there is evidence that using a clear, specific method of speech organization can boost your confidence as a speaker and improve your ability to deliver a message fluently.<sup>4</sup>

The first step in developing a strong sense of speech organization is to gain command of the three basic parts of a speech—introduction, body, and conclusion—and the strategic role of each. In this chapter we deal with the body of the speech. The next chapter will take up the introduction and the conclusion.

There are good reasons for talking first about the body of the speech. The body is the longest and most important part. Also, you will usually prepare the body first. It is much easier to create an effective introduction after you know exactly what you will say in the body.

The process of organizing the body of a speech begins when you determine the main points.

strategic organization  
Putting a speech together in a particular way to achieve a particular result with a particular audience.

## Main Points

The main points are the central features of your speech. You should select them carefully, phrase them precisely, and arrange them strategically. Here are the main points of a student speech about the medical uses of hypnosis:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the major uses of hypnosis.

*Central Idea:* The major uses of hypnosis today are to control pain in medical surgery, to help people stop smoking, and to help students improve their academic performance.

*Main Points:*

- I. Hypnosis is used in surgery as an adjunct to chemical anesthesia.
- II. Hypnosis is used to help people stop smoking.
- III. Hypnosis is used to help students improve their academic performance.

main points  
The major points developed in the body of a speech. Most speeches contain from two to five main points.

These three main points form the skeleton of the body of the speech. If there are three major *uses* of hypnosis for medical purposes, then logically there can be three *main points* in the speech.

How do you choose your main points? Sometimes they will be evident from your specific purpose statement. Suppose your specific purpose is “To inform my audience about the origins, events, and philosophy of the Special Olympics.” Obviously, your speech will have three main points. The first will deal with the origins of the Special Olympics, the second with the events of the Special Olympics, the third with the philosophy of the Special Olympics. Written in outline form, the main points might be:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the origins, events, and philosophy of the Special Olympics.



**Research studies confirm that clear organization is vital to effective public speaking. Listeners must be able to follow the progression of ideas in a speech from beginning to end.**

*Central Idea:* The Special Olympics gives people who are mentally or physically challenged a chance to experience athletic competition.

*Main Points:*

- I. The Special Olympics was founded in 1968 to promote fitness for the mentally and physically challenged.
- II. Held locally every year and internationally every four years, the Special Olympics has sports events similar to those in the Olympic Games.
- III. Although medals are awarded, the Special Olympics stresses effort and participation rather than winning.

Even if your main points are not stated expressly in your specific purpose, they may be easy to project from it. Let's say your specific purpose is "To inform my audience of the basic steps in making stained-glass windows." You know each of your main points will correspond to a step in the window-making process. They might look like this in outline form:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience of the basic steps in making stained-glass windows.

*Central Idea:* There are four steps in making stained-glass windows.

- Main Points:*
- I. The first step is designing the window.
  - II. The second step is cutting the glass to fit the design.
  - III. The third step is painting the glass.
  - IV. The fourth step is assembling the window.

You will not always settle on your main points so easily. Often they will emerge as you research the speech and evaluate your findings. Suppose your specific purpose is “To persuade my audience that our state should not approve proposals for online voting.” You know that each main point in the speech will present a *reason* why online voting should not be instituted in your state. But you aren’t sure how many main points there will be or what they will be. As you research and study the topic, you decide there are two major reasons to support your view. Each of these reasons will become a main point in your speech. Written in outline form, they might be:

*Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that our state should not approve proposals for online voting.

*Central Idea:* Our state should not approve online voting because it will increase voter fraud and disfranchise people without Internet access.

- Main Points:*
- I. Our state should not approve online voting because it will increase voter fraud.
  - II. Our state should not approve online voting because it will disfranchise people without access to the Internet.

Now you have two broad areas around which to organize your ideas.

## Number of Main Points

You will not have time in your classroom speeches to develop more than four or five main points, and most speeches will contain only two or three. Regardless of how long a speech might run, if you have too many main points, the audience will have trouble sorting them out. When everything is equally important, nothing is important.

Imagine, for example, that you have a particularly lenient professor who gives everyone in the class an A. Your A won’t have much value for you. But if only three students in the class get an A and you are one of them, then you stand out from the crowd. That is what you must aim to do in your speeches—to make a few main points stand out and be remembered.

If, when you list your main points, you find you have too many, you may be able to condense them into categories. Here is a set of main points for a speech about lasers:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the uses of lasers.

*Central Idea:* Lasers harness the power of light for a wide range of uses.

*Main Points:*

- I. Laser gravity wave detectors allow astronomers to “see” deep into space.
- II. Automobile manufacturers use lasers for many purposes in making cars.
- III. Neurosurgeons use lasers to vaporize brain tumors.
- IV. Lasers help create billions of industrial goods every year.
- V. With lasers, scientists can chart the fastest of chemical reactions.
- VI. The telephone industry sends phone calls underseas to Europe with lasers.
- VII. Eye specialists routinely use lasers to “weld” loose retinas back in place.
- VIII. Lasers allow doctors to make early diagnoses of certain kinds of cancer.

You have eight main points—which is too many. But if you look at the list, you see that the eight points fall into three broad categories: lasers in science, lasers in industry, lasers in medicine. You might, therefore, restate your main points this way:

- I. Lasers have many important uses in science.
- II. Lasers have become indispensable to industry.
- III. Lasers are revolutionizing the practice of medicine.

## Strategic Order of Main Points

Once you establish your main points, you need to decide in what order you will present them in your speech. This is extremely important, for it will affect both the clarity and the persuasiveness of your ideas.

The most effective order depends on three things—your topic, your purpose, and your audience. Chapters 14 and 15 will deal with special aspects of organizing informative speeches and persuasive speeches. Here let us look briefly at the five basic patterns of organization used most often by public speakers.

### Chronological Order

Speeches arranged chronologically follow a time pattern. They may narrate a series of events in the sequence in which they happened. For example:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience how the Great Wall of China was built.

*Central Idea:* The Great Wall of China was built in three major stages.

- Main Points:*
- I. Building of the Great Wall began during the Qin dynasty of 221–206 B.C.
  - II. New sections of the Great Wall were added during the Han dynasty of 206 B.C.–220 A.D.
  - III. The Great Wall was completed during the Ming dynasty of 1368–1644.

chronological order  
A method of speech organization in which the main points follow a time pattern.



The main points of a speech should be organized to communicate the speaker's message. Chronological order might be highly effective for a speech on how the Great Wall of China was built.

Chronological order is also used in speeches explaining a process or demonstrating how to do something. For example:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience of the steps in getting a professional tattoo.

*Central Idea:* There are four main steps in getting a professional tattoo.

*Main Points:*

- I. First, the skin is shaved and sterilized in the area to be tattooed.
- II. Second, the main lines of the tattoo are traced on the skin with a machine called an outliner.
- III. Third, colored pigments are applied inside the outline with a machine called a shader.
- IV. Fourth, the tattoo is sterilized and bandaged.

As this outline shows, chronological order is especially useful for informative speeches.

### Spatial Order

Speeches arranged in spatial order follow a directional pattern. That is, the main points proceed from top to bottom, left to right, front to back, inside to outside, east to west, or some other route. For example:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the design of the Eiffel Tower.

*Central Idea:* The Eiffel Tower is divided into three sections.

**spatial order**  
A method of speech organization in which the main points follow a directional pattern.

- Main Points:*
- I. The lowest section of the tower contains the entrance, a gift shop, and a restaurant.
  - II. The middle section of the tower consists of stairs and elevators that lead to the top.
  - III. The top section of the tower includes an observation deck with a spectacular view of Paris.

Or:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience of five major civilizations that existed in different parts of North America centuries before the arrival of Columbus.

*Central Idea:* Centuries before the arrival of Columbus there were major civilizations in what is today New York, Florida, New Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, and the Mississippi Valley.

- Main Points:*
- I. In New York, the Onondaga were skilled agriculturalists and fierce warriors.
  - II. In Florida, the Calusa developed one of the most advanced cultures to flourish without agriculture.
  - III. In New Mexico, the people of Chaco Canyon were sophisticated architectural planners and builders.
  - IV. In the Pacific Northwest, the Makah were expert mariners and foresters.
  - V. In the Mississippi Valley, the Cahokia created a complex, prosperous society whose burial mounds are still evident today.

Spatial order, like chronological order, is used most often in informative speeches.

### Causal Order

Speeches arranged in causal order organize main points so as to show a cause-effect relationship. When you put your speech in causal order, you have two main points—one dealing with the causes of an event, the other dealing with its effects. Depending on your topic, you can either devote your first main point to the causes and the second to the effects, or you can deal first with the effects and then with the causes.

Suppose your specific purpose is “To persuade my audience that the widespread use of Ritalin to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a serious problem.” You would begin with the causes for the use of Ritalin and work toward its effects:

*Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that the widespread use of Ritalin to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a serious problem.

*Central Idea:* Widely prescribed for children who suffer from ADHD, Ritalin has a number of extremely serious side effects.

causal order  
A method of speech organization in which the main points show a cause-effect relationship.

- Main Points:*
- I. Ritalin is widely prescribed for children who suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
  - II. Ritalin has been linked with a number of serious side effects, including liver damage, heart disease, depression, stunted growth, and Tourette's syndrome.

When the effects you are discussing have already occurred, you may want to reverse the order and talk first about the effects and then about their causes—as in this speech about the Mayan civilization of Central America:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the possible causes for the collapse of Mayan civilization.

*Central Idea:* The causes for the collapse of Mayan civilization have not yet been fully explained.

- Main Points:*
- I. Mayan civilization flourished for over a thousand years until 900 A.D., when it mysteriously began to disintegrate.
  - II. Scholars have advanced three major explanations for the causes of this disintegration.

Because of its versatility, causal order can be used both for persuasive speeches and informative speeches.

### Problem-Solution Order

Speeches arranged in problem-solution order are divided into two main parts. The first shows the existence and seriousness of a problem. The second presents a workable solution to the problem. For example:

*Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that legislation is needed to control the abuses of fraudulent charity fund-raisers.

*Central Idea:* Fraudulent fund-raising for charities is a serious problem that requires action by government and individuals alike.

- Main Points:*
- I. Fraudulent charity fund-raising has become a widespread national problem.
  - II. The problem can be solved by a combination of government initiative and individual awareness.

Or:

*Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that action must be taken to deal with the environmental hazards created by discarded computers.

*Central Idea:* Discarded computers are creating serious environmental hazards that require decisive action by government, consumers, and businesses.

#### problem-solution order

A method of speech organization in which the first main point deals with the existence of a problem and the second main point presents a solution to the problem.

- Main Points:*
- I. Discarded computers have become a major source of lead and radiation pollution in landfills.
  - II. Solving the problem requires government regulation and personal action by consumers and businesses.

As these examples indicate, problem-solution order is most appropriate for persuasive speeches.

### Topical Order

Speeches that are not in chronological, spatial, causal, or problem-solution order usually fall into topical order. Topical order results when you divide the speech topic into *subtopics*, each of which becomes a main point in the speech. The main points are not part of a chronological, spatial, causal, or problem-solution sequence, but are simply parts of the whole. If this sounds confusing, a few examples should help make it clearer.

Suppose your specific purpose is “To inform my audience of the major kinds of fireworks.” This topic does not lend itself to chronological, spatial, causal, or problem-solution order. Rather, you separate the subject—kinds of fireworks—into its constituent parts, so that each main point deals with a single kind of fireworks. Your central idea and main points might look like this:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience of the major kinds of fireworks.

*Central Idea:* The major kinds of fireworks are skyrockets, Roman candles, pinwheels, and lances.

- Main Points:*
- I. Skyrockets explode high in the air, producing the most dramatic effects of all fireworks.
  - II. Roman candles shoot out separate groups of sparks and colored flames with a series of booming noises.
  - III. Pinwheels throw off sparks and flames as they whirl on the end of a stick.
  - IV. Lances are thin, colorful fireworks used in ground displays.

To take another example, let’s say your specific purpose is “To inform my audience about the athletic achievements of Babe Didrikson.” Didrikson, who is considered the greatest American female athlete of all time, competed during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. So you could organize your speech chronologically—by discussing Didrikson’s exploits during each decade of her career. On the other hand, you could arrange the speech topically—by dividing Didrikson’s accomplishments into categories. Then your central idea and main points might be:

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the athletic achievements of Babe Didrikson.

*Central Idea:* Babe Didrikson was a world-class athlete in track and field, basketball, and golf.

#### topical order

A method of speech organization in which the main points divide the topic into logical and consistent subtopics.

- Main Points:*
- I. As a track-and-field athlete, Didrikson set two world records in the Olympic Games.
  - II. As a basketball player, Didrikson was twice named to the women's All-America team.
  - III. As a professional golfer, Didrikson set a record that still stands by winning 17 tournaments in a row.

Notice that in both of the preceding examples, the main points subdivide the speech topic logically and consistently. In the first example, each main point deals with a single category of fireworks. In the second example, each main point isolates one aspect of Didrikson's achievements as an athlete. But suppose your main points look like this:

- I. As a track-and-field athlete, Didrikson set two world records in the Olympic Games.
- II. As a basketball player, Didrikson was twice named to the women's All-America team.
- III. In the 1940s Didrikson dominated American women's sports.

This would *not* be a good topical order because main point III is inconsistent with the rest of the main points. It deals with a *period* in Didrikson's career, whereas main points I and II deal with *kinds* of athletic events.

All the examples so far refer to informative speeches. But topical order also works for persuasive speeches. Usually the topical subdivisions are the *reasons* why a speaker believes in a certain point of view. Here, for example, are the main points of a speech on why the United States should continue its program of space exploration:

*Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that the United States should continue its program of space exploration.

*Central Idea:* The United States should continue its program of space exploration because it will open access to vital natural resources, expand scientific knowledge, and further the search for extraterrestrial life.

- Main Points:*
- I. Space exploration will open access to vital natural resources that are in limited supply on earth.
  - II. Space exploration will produce scientific knowledge that will benefit life on earth.
  - III. Space exploration will further the search for extraterrestrial life.

Because it is applicable to almost any subject and to any kind of speech, topical order is used more often than any other method of speech organization.<sup>5</sup>

## Tips for Preparing Main Points

### Keep Main Points Separate

Each main point in a speech should be clearly independent of the other main points. Take care not to lump together what should be separate main

points. Compare these two sets of main points for a speech about the process of producing a Broadway play:

**Ineffective**

- I. The first step is choosing the play.
- II. The second step is selecting the cast.
- III. The third step is conducting rehearsals and then performing the play.

**More Effective**

- I. The first step is choosing the play.
- II. The second step is selecting the cast.
- III. The third step is conducting the rehearsals.
- IV. The fourth step is performing the play.

The problem with the left-hand list is that point III contains two main points. It should be divided, as shown in the right-hand list.

Try to Use the Same Pattern of Wording for Main Points

Consider the following main points for an informative speech about the benefits of exercise.

**Ineffective**

- I. Regular exercise increases your endurance.
- II. Your sleeping pattern is improved by regular exercise.
- III. It is possible to help control your weight by regular exercise.

**More Effective**

- I. Regular exercise increases your endurance.
- II. Regular exercise improves your sleeping pattern.
- III. Regular exercise helps control your weight.

The set of main points on the right follows a consistent pattern of wording throughout. Therefore, it is easier to understand and easier to remember than the set on the left.

You will find that it is not always possible to use this kind of parallel wording for your main points. Some speeches just don't lend themselves to such a tidy arrangement. But try to keep the wording parallel when you can, for it is a good way to make your main points stand out from the details surrounding them.

Balance the Amount of Time Devoted to Main Points

Because your main points are so important, you want to be sure they all receive enough emphasis to be clear and convincing. This means allowing sufficient time to develop each main point. Suppose you discover that the proportion of time devoted to your main points is something like this:

- I. 85 percent
- II. 10 percent
- III. 5 percent

A breakdown of this sort indicates one of two things. Either points II and III aren't really *main* points and you have only one main point, or points II and III haven't been given the attention they need. If the latter, you should revise the body of the speech to bring the main points into better balance.

This is not to say that all main points must receive exactly equal emphasis, but only that they should be roughly balanced. For example, either of the following would be fine:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| I. 30 percent   | I. 20 percent   |
| II. 40 percent  | II. 30 percent  |
| III. 30 percent | III. 50 percent |

The amount of time spent on each main point depends on the amount and complexity of supporting materials for each point. Supporting materials are, in effect, the “flesh” that fills out the skeleton of your speech.

## Supporting Materials

By themselves, main points are only assertions. As we saw in Chapter 7, listeners need supporting materials to accept what a speaker says. When the supporting materials are added, the body of a speech looks like the following in outline form:

- I. Hypnosis is used in surgery as an adjunct to chemical anesthesia.
  - A. Hypnosis reduces both the physical and psychological aspects of pain.
    1. Hypnosis can double a person's pain threshold.
    2. It also reduces the fear that intensifies physical pain.
  - B. Hypnosis is most useful in cases when the patient is known to have problems with general anesthesia.
    1. Quotation from Dr. Harold Wain of Walter Reed Army Hospital.
    2. Story of Linda Kuay.
    3. Statistics from *Psychology Today*.
- II. Hypnosis is used to help people stop smoking.
  - A. Many therapists utilize hypnosis to help people break their addiction to cigarettes.
    1. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers hypnosis a safe and effective means of stopping smoking.
    2. Success rates are as high as 70 percent.
      - a. Story of Alex Hamilton.
      - b. Quotation from New York psychiatrist Dr. Herbert Spiegel.
  - B. Hypnosis does not work for all smokers.
    1. A person must want to stop smoking for hypnosis to work.
    2. A person must also be responsive to hypnotic suggestion.
- III. Hypnosis is used to help students improve their academic performance.
  - A. Hypnosis enables people to use their minds more effectively.
    1. The conscious mind uses about 10 percent of a person's mental ability.
    2. Hypnosis allows people to tap more of their mental power.

- B. Studies show that hypnosis can help people overcome many obstacles to academic success.
  1. It improves ability to concentrate.
  2. It increases reading speed.
  3. It reduces test anxiety.

supporting materials  
The materials used to support a speaker's ideas. The three major kinds of supporting materials are examples, statistics, and testimony.

In Chapter 7 we discussed the major kinds of supporting materials and how to use them. Here, we need stress only the importance of *organizing* your supporting materials so they are directly relevant to the main points they are supposed to support. Misplaced supporting materials are confusing. Here's an example:

- I. There are several reasons why people immigrate to the United States.
  - A. Over the years, millions of people have immigrated to the United States.
  - B. Many people immigrate in search of economic opportunity.
  - C. Others immigrate to attain political freedom.
  - D. Still others immigrate to escape religious persecution.

The main point deals with the reasons immigrants come to the United States, as do supporting points B, C, and D. Supporting point A (“Over the years, millions of people have immigrated to the United States”) does not. It is out of place and should not be included with this main point.



**Organizing ideas strategically is important regardless of the speaker or occasion. Here Michael J. Fox speaks about the need for additional research to combat Parkinson's disease.**

If you find such a situation in your own speeches, try to reorganize your supporting points under appropriate main points, like this:

- I. Over the years, millions of people have immigrated to the United States.
  - A. Since the American Revolution, an estimated 60 million people have immigrated to the U.S.
  - B. Today there are over 20 million Americans who were born in other countries.
- II. There are several reasons why people immigrate to the United States.
  - A. Many people immigrate in search of economic opportunity.
  - B. Others immigrate to attain political freedom.
  - C. Still others immigrate to escape religious persecution.

Now you have two supporting points to back up your “millions of people” point and three supporting points to back up your “reasons” point.

Once you have organized your main points and supporting points, you must give attention to the third element in the body of a speech—connectives.

## Connectives

Carla Maggio was speaking to her class about the need for students to vote in state and local elections. She had rehearsed the speech several times, had a well-defined central idea, three sharp main points, and strong evidence to support her position. But when Carla delivered the speech, she said “All right” every time she moved from one thought to the next. All told, she said “All right” 10 times in six minutes. After a while, her classmates started counting. By the end of the speech, most had stopped listening. They were too busy waiting for the next “All right.” Afterward, Carla said, “I never even thought about saying ‘All right.’ I guess it just popped out when I didn’t know what else to say.”

This experience is not unusual. We all have stock phrases that we habitually use to fill the space between thoughts. In casual conversation they are seldom troublesome. But in speechmaking they create a problem—particularly when they call attention to themselves.

What Carla’s speech lacked were strong *connectives*—words or phrases that join one thought to another and indicate the relationship between them. Connectives in the body of a speech are like ligaments and tendons in a human body. Without connectives, a speech is disjointed and uncoordinated—much as a person would be without ligaments and tendons to join the bones and hold the organs in place. Four types of speech connectives are transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

### connective

A word or phrase that connects the ideas of a speech and indicates the relationship between them.

## Transitions

Transitions are words or phrases that indicate when a speaker has just completed one thought and is moving on to another. Technically, the transitions state both the idea the speaker is leaving and the idea she or he is coming up to. In the following examples, the transitional phrases are underlined:

Now that we have a clear understanding of the problem, let me share the solution with you.

### transition

A word or phrase that indicates when a speaker has finished one thought and is moving on to another.

View these transitions from student speeches.



CD 1: VIDEO 8.1

I have spoken so far of bravery and patriotism, but it is the sacrifice of the Massachusetts 54th that has etched them into the pages of history.

Now that we've seen how drinking too much is a serious problem for students and their communities, let's look at some causes.

Keeping these points in mind about sign language, let's return to the sentence I started with and see if we can learn the signs for "You are my friend."

Now that we've taken a look at what feng shui is, let's put this ancient art into practice.

Notice how these phrases remind the listener of the thought just completed, as well as reveal the thought about to be developed.

## Internal Previews

### internal preview

A statement in the body of the speech that lets the audience know what the speaker is going to discuss next.

Internal previews let the audience know what the speaker will take up next, but they are more detailed than transitions. In effect, an internal preview works just like the preview statement in a speech introduction, except that it comes in the body of the speech—usually as the speaker is starting to discuss a main point. For example:

In discussing how Asian Americans have been stereotyped in the mass media, we'll look first at the origins of the problem and second at its continuing impact today.

After hearing this, the audience knows exactly what to listen for as the speaker develops the "problem" main point.

Internal previews are often combined with transitions. For example:

[*Transition*]: Now that we have seen how serious the problem of faulty credit reports is, let's look at some solutions. [*Internal Preview*]: I will focus on three solutions—instituting tighter government regulation of credit bureaus, holding credit bureaus financially responsible for their errors, and giving individuals easier access to their credit reports.

You will seldom need an internal preview for each main point in your speech, but be sure to use one whenever you think it will help listeners keep track of your ideas.

## Internal Summaries

### internal summary

A statement in the body of the speech that summarizes the speaker's preceding point or points.

Internal summaries are the reverse of internal previews. Rather than letting listeners know what is coming up next, internal summaries remind listeners of what they have just heard. Such summaries are generally used when a speaker finishes a complicated or particularly important main point or set of main points. Rather than moving immediately to the next point, the speaker takes a moment to summarize the preceding point or points. For example:

In short, palm reading is an ancient art. Developed in China more than five thousand years ago, it was practiced in classical Greece and Rome, flourished during the Middle Ages, survived the Industrial Revolution, and remains popular today in many parts of the world.



**When organizing your speeches, be sure to include transitions and other connectives to help listeners keep track of your ideas. The result will be a crisp presentation that moves clearly from point to point.**

I hope I've made clear the benefits of walking as a form of exercise. Unlike running, which often causes as many injuries as it prevents, walking is a gentle but no less effective way to keep in shape. Regular walking at a brisk pace strengthens the heart, increases lung capacity, improves blood circulation, and burns calories—all without the strain on the knees and ankles caused by running.

Such internal summaries are an excellent way to clarify and reinforce ideas. By combining them with transitions, you can also lead your audience smoothly into your next main point:

*[Internal Summary]*: So far we have seen that the normal individual's need for a three-minute burst of stimuli has produced a growing demand for thrill rides and has helped launch a coaster war between amusement parks. Then we looked at the roller coaster's past and present. *[Transition]*: Now I'd like to show you what's in store for us in the future.

*[Internal Summary]*: Let's pause for a moment to summarize what we have found so far. First, we have seen that America's criminal justice system is less effective than it should be in deterring crime. Second, we have seen that prison programs to rehabilitate prisoners have been far from successful. *[Transition]*: We are now ready to explore solutions to these problems.

## Signposts

Signposts are very brief statements that indicate exactly where you are in the speech. Frequently they are just numbers. Here is how one student used

**signpost**

A very brief statement that indicates where a speaker is in the speech or that focuses attention on key ideas.

simple numerical signposts to help her audience keep track of the major causes for the continuing problem of famine in Africa:

The first cause of this problem is inefficient agricultural production.

The second cause is recurrent drought in the affected countries.

The final cause is mismanagement of available food resources by local leaders.

Another way to accomplish the same thing is to introduce your main points with a question, as did one student in his speech titled “Seatbelts: A Habit That Can Save Your Life.” His first main point demonstrated the extent to which seatbelts are proven lifesavers. He introduced it this way:

So, first, to what extent will you be protected by wearing a seatbelt?

His second main point explained how seatbelts absorb the force of a collision and keep drivers from being thrown around a vehicle’s interior. He introduced it like this:

But why is this true? What does a seatbelt do to protect you?

His third main point looked at the reasons people give for not using seatbelts on a consistent basis. He introduced it by saying:

So the evidence is strongly in favor of wearing seatbelts. This brings me to the next question—why don’t people wear seatbelts?

Questions are particularly effective as signposts because they invite subliminal answers and thereby get the audience more involved with the speech.

Besides using signposts to indicate where you are in the speech, you can use them to focus attention on key ideas. You can do this with a simple phrase, as in the following example:

The most important thing to remember about abstract art is that it is always based on forms in the natural world.

The underlined words alert the audience to the fact that an especially significant point is coming up. So do phrases such as these:

Be sure to keep this in mind . . .

This is crucial to understanding the rest of the speech . . .

Above all, you need to know . . .

Let me repeat that last statement . . .

Depending on the needs of your speech, you may want to use two, three, or even all four kinds of connectives in combination. You needn’t worry too much about what they are called—whether this one is a signpost and that a transition. In fact, many people lump them all together as “transitions.” The important thing is to be aware of their functions. Properly applied, connectives can make your speeches much more unified and coherent.

View these signposts from Andrew Kinney, “Seatbelts: A Habit That Can Save Your Life.”



CD 1: VIDEO 8.2

## Summary

Clear organization is vital to speechmaking. Listeners demand coherence. They get only one chance to grasp a speaker's ideas, and they have little patience for speakers who ramble aimlessly from one idea to another. A well-organized speech will enhance your credibility and make it easier for the audience to understand your message.

Speeches should be organized strategically. They should be put together in particular ways to achieve particular results with particular audiences. The first step in organizing speeches is to gain command of the three basic parts of a speech—introduction, body, conclusion—and the strategic role of each. In this chapter we have dealt with the body of the speech.

The process of planning the body of a speech begins when you determine the main points. These are the central features of your speech. You should choose them carefully, phrase them precisely, and organize them strategically. Because listeners cannot keep track of a multitude of main points, most speeches should contain no more than two to five main points. Each main point should focus on a single idea, should be worded clearly, and should receive enough emphasis to be clear and convincing.

You can organize main points in various ways. The strategic order will be determined by your topic, your purpose, and your audience. Chronological order means that your speech follows a time pattern. Speeches arranged in spatial order follow a directional pattern. To put your speech in causal order, you organize main points according to their cause-effect relationship. Topical order results when you divide your main topic into subtopics, each of which covers one aspect of the main topic. For problem-solution order you break the body of your speech into two main parts—the first showing a problem, the second giving a solution.

Supporting materials are the backup ideas for your main points. When organizing supporting materials, make sure they are directly relevant to the main points they are supposed to support.

Once you have organized your main points and supporting materials, you are ready to work out the third element in the body of your speech: connectives. Connectives help tie a speech together. They are words or phrases that join one thought to another and indicate the relationship between them. The four major types of speech connectives are transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts. Using them effectively will make your speeches more unified and coherent.

strategic organization (203)  
 main points (203)  
 chronological order (206)  
 spatial order (207)  
 causal order (208)  
 problem-solution order (209)  
 topical order (210)

supporting materials (214)  
 connective (215)  
 transition (215)  
 internal preview (216)  
 internal summary (216)  
 signpost (218)

## Key Terms

Review these terms  
 by doing the  
 Chapter 8 crossword  
 puzzle at  
[www.mhhe.com/lucas8](http://www.mhhe.com/lucas8).



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## Review Questions

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. Why is it important that speeches be organized clearly and coherently?
2. How many main points will your speeches usually contain? Why is it important to limit the number of main points in your speeches?
3. What are the five basic patterns of organizing main points in a speech? Which are appropriate for informative speeches? Which is used only in persuasive speeches? Which is used most often?
4. What are three tips for preparing your main points?
5. What is the most important thing to remember when organizing supporting materials in the body of your speech?
6. What are the four kinds of speech connectives? What role does each play in a speech?

For further review, go to the Study Questions for this chapter.



**CD 1: STUDY QUESTIONS**

## Exercises for Critical Thinking

1. Identify the organizational method used in each of the following sets of main points.
  - I. Cesar Chavez is best known for his efforts to protect the rights of Hispanic farmworkers in California.
  - II. Cesar Chavez was also a tireless advocate for Hispanic racial and cultural pride in general.
  
- I. The game we know as golf originated in Scotland during the 15th century.
- II. Most of golf's rules and traditions developed during the 19th century.
- III. Professional golf tours for men and women emerged during the 20th century.
- IV. Today golf is at a peak of popularity among everyday players and as a spectator sport.
  
- I. Caused by the bite of infected mosquitos, West Nile virus is spreading throughout the United States.
- II. The effects of West Nile virus include flulike symptoms, convulsions, swelling of the brain, and, in some cases, death.
  
- I. The outer layer of the skin, the epidermis, is about as thick as a sheet of paper.
- II. The middle later of the skin, the dermis, is 15 to 40 times thicker than the epidermis.
- III. The innermost layer of the skin, the subcutaneous tissue, is by far the thickest layer.
  
- I. Childhood obesity has reached crisis proportions in the United States.
- II. Solving the problem will require changes in attitudes, eating habits, and exercise.

2. What organizational method (or methods) might you use to arrange main points for speeches with the following specific purpose statements?

To inform my audience about the major events in the development of the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1970.

To inform my audience of the causes and effects of the erosion of America's seacoasts.

To inform my audience about the nonviolent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

To inform my audience about the geographical regions of the Philippines.

To persuade my audience that our state legislature should enact tougher laws to deal with the problem of motorists who run red lights.

To inform my audience about the major kinds of symbols used in traditional Native American art.

3. Turn to the outline of main points and supporting materials for the speech about hypnosis on pages 213–214. Create appropriate transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts for the speech.

## Applying the POWER of PUBLIC SPEAKING

After working for two other firms, you have spent the last several years at a Fortune 500 company that, as part of its operations, is a major manufacturer of lawn care equipment. The company has recently acquired three specialized European businesses that produce similar products. With your engineering degree and experience as part of the fast-growing Product Quality Group, you were the logical candidate to visit the newly acquired companies and evaluate their products for safety, quality, and emissions controls.

You have just returned from a weeklong trip to the three sites in Scotland, France, and Germany. You will deliver your findings and recommendations to the management group for new acquisitions, but you're unsure how best to organize your speech. Your major choices are chronological order, spatial order, and topical order. What might be the main points of your speech in each of these methods of organization? Explain which method you think would be most effective for your presentation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ernest C. Thompson, "An Experimental Investigation of the Relative Effectiveness of Organizational Structure in Oral Communication," *Southern Speech Journal*, 26 (1960), pp. 59–69.

<sup>2</sup>Harry Sharp, Jr., and Thomas McClung, "Effects of Organization on the Speaker's Ethos," *Speech Monographs*, 33 (1966), pp. 182–183.

<sup>3</sup>For two recent studies, see B. Scott Titsworth, "The Effects of Teacher Immediacy, Use of Organizational Lecture Cues, and Students' Notetaking on Cognitive Learning," *Communication Education*, 50 (2001), pp. 283–297; Joseph L. Chesebro and James C. McCroskey, "The Relationship of Teacher Clarity and Immediacy with Student State Receiver Apprehension, Affect, and Cognitive Learning," *Communication Education*, 50 (2001), pp. 59–68.

<sup>4</sup>John O. Greene, "Speech Preparation Processes and Verbal Fluency," *Human Communication Research*, 11 (1984), pp. 61–84.

<sup>5</sup>For an interesting study of the role of structure in speeches and other public discourses, see Regina M. Hoffman, "Temporal Organization as a Rhetorical Resource," *Southern Communication Journal*, 57 (1992), pp. 194–204.