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Organizing the Body of the Speech



Organization Is Important

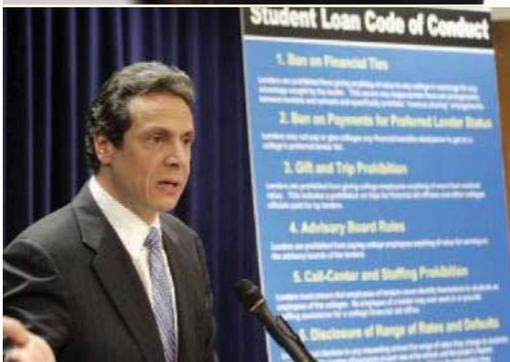
Main Points

- Number of Main Points
- Strategic Order of Main Points
- Tips for Preparing Main Points

Supporting Materials

Connectives

- Transitions
- Internal Previews
- Internal Summaries
- Signposts





Think about shopping in a store such as Ikea, Target, or Best Buy. Many of the items for sale are *organizers*—drawer organizers, desk organizers, closet organizers, kitchen organizers, bathroom organizers, office organizers, audio and video organizers.

Why all this quest for organization? Obviously, when the objects you possess are well organized, they serve you better. Organization allows you to see what you have and to put your hands immediately on the garment, the tool, 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

In a classic study, 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.¹

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.²

These are just two of many studies that show the importance of organization in effective speechmaking.³ Listeners demand coherence. Unlike readers, they 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, using a clear, specific method of speech organization can boost your confidence as a speaker and improve your ability to deliver a message fluently.

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

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

body first. It is 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.

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 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 development, technology, and benefits of hydrogen fuel cells.” Obviously, your speech will have three main points. The first will deal with the development of hydrogen fuel cells, the second with the technology behind hydrogen fuel cells, the third with the benefits of hydrogen fuel cells. Written in outline form, the main points might be:

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the development, technology, and benefits of hydrogen fuel cells.

Central Idea: Developed as a highly efficient form of energy, hydrogen fuel cells use sophisticated technology and offer a number of economic and environmental benefits.

Main Points:

- I. Hydrogen fuel cells were developed to provide a highly efficient form of energy.
- II. Hydrogen fuel cells produce power through an electro-chemical reaction involving hydrogen gas.
- III. Hydrogen fuel cells provide an economically and environmentally superior method of powering motor vehicles.

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.

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.

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

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the practice of yoga.

Central Idea: Yoga is an ancient practice that involves the whole body.

Main Points:

- I. Yoga breathing starts with deep inhalation.
- II. Yoga breathing requires slow exhalation.
- III. Yoga breathing includes prolonged pauses.
- IV. Yoga breathing provides many benefits.
- V. Yoga postures involve all parts of the body.



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.

- VI. Yoga postures increase flexibility.
- VII. Yoga postures strengthen muscle tone.
- VIII. Yoga postures demand precise movements.

You have eight main points—which is too many. But if you look at the list, you see that the eight points fall into two broad categories: yoga breathing and yoga postures. You might, therefore, restate your main points this way:

- I. One part of practicing yoga involves proper breathing.
- II. Another part of yoga involves body postures.

STRATEGIC ORDER OF MAIN POINTS

Once you establish your main points, you need to decide the order in which you will present them. The most effective order depends on three things—your topic, your purpose, and your audience. Chapters 14 and 15 will cover special aspects of organizing informative speeches and persuasive speeches. Here we 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.



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View an excerpt from “Yoga: Uniting Mind, Body, and Spirit” in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 8.1).

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

- 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 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 laser-assisted corrective eye surgery.

Central Idea: There are three main steps in laser-assisted corrective eye surgery.

- Main Points:*
- I. First, a thin layer is sliced off the surface of the eye to expose the cornea.
 - II. Second, an ultraviolet laser is used to reshape the cornea.
 - III. Third, the thin layer sliced off at the beginning of the surgery is reattached to the eye.

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 structure of a hurricane.

Central Idea: A hurricane is made up of three parts going from inside to outside.

- Main Points:*
- I. At the center of a hurricane is the calm, cloud-free eye.
 - II. Surrounding the eye is the eyewall, a dense ring of clouds that produces the most intense wind and rainfall.
 - III. Rotating around the eyewall are large bands of clouds and precipitation called spiral rain bands.

Or:

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the three major regions in Italy.

Central Idea: Northern, central, and southern Italy have their own identities and attractions.

- I. Northern Italy is home to Venice and its world-famous canals.



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View an excerpt from “The Great Wall of China” in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 8.2).

spatial order

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



The main points of a speech should be organized to communicate the speaker's message. Chronological order would work very well for a speech on the history of the U.S. space program.

- II. Central Italy is home to Rome and its historical treasures.
- III. Southern Italy is home to Sicily and its culinary traditions.

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 a growing shortage of air-traffic controllers is a serious problem for U.S. aviation.” Then you would begin with the causes of the shortage and work toward its effects:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that a growing shortage of qualified air-traffic controllers is a serious problem for U.S. aviation.

Central Idea: The growing shortage of certified air-traffic controllers threatens the safety of air travel.

Main Points:

- I. The U.S. aviation system faces a growing shortage of qualified air-traffic controllers.
- II. If this shortage continues, it will create serious problems for airline safety.

causal order

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

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 for both persuasive speeches and informative speeches.

Problem-Solution Order

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.

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 action is needed to combat the abuses of puppy mills.

Central Idea: Puppy mills are a serious problem that can be solved by a combination of legislation and individual initiative.

Main Points:

- I. Puppy mills are a serious problem across the United States.
- II. Solving the problem requires legislation and individual initiative.

Or:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the electoral college should be abolished.

Central Idea: Because the electoral college does not give equal weight to the vote of each citizen, it should be replaced with direct popular election of the President.

Main Points:

- I. The electoral college is a serious problem in the U.S. political system because it does not give equal weight to each citizen's vote in electing the President.
- II. The problem can be solved by abolishing the electoral college and electing the President by popular vote.

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



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View an excerpt from “The Horrors of Puppy Mills” in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 8.3).

Topical Order

Topical order results when you divide the speech topic into *subtopics*, each of which becomes a main point in the speech.

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 achievements of Ida Wells-Barnett.” Wells-Barnett, an African American who lived at the turn of the 20th century, was an outspoken champion of social and political justice for her race. You could organize your speech chronologically—by discussing Wells-Barnett’s exploits during each decade of her career. On the other hand, you could arrange the speech topically—by dividing Wells-Barnett’s accomplishments into categories. Then your central idea and main points might be:

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the achievements of Ida Wells-Barnett.

Central Idea: Ida Wells-Barnett was a multitalented figure in the fight for racial justice.

- Main Points:*
- I. As a teacher, Wells-Barnett spoke out against inferior school facilities for African-American children.
 - II. As a journalist, Wells-Barnett campaigned against lynching.
 - III. As a civic organizer, Wells-Barnett helped found the NAACP.

Notice how the main points subdivide the speech topic logically and consistently. Each main point isolates one aspect of Wells-Barnett’s achievements. But suppose your main points look like this:

- I. As a teacher, Wells-Barnett spoke out against inferior school facilities for African-American children.
- II. As a journalist, Wells-Barnett campaigned against lynching.
- III. In the early 20th century, Wells-Barnett expanded her activities and the scope of her influence.

topical order

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

Checklist Main Points

YES		NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Does the body of my speech contain two to five main points?
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Are my main points organized according to one of the following methods of organization? (Check the one that applies.)
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronological order
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Spatial order
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Causal order
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Topical order
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Problem-solution order
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Are my main points clearly separate from one another?
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	4. As much as possible, have I used the same pattern of wording for all my main points?
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Have I roughly balanced the amount of time devoted to each main point?
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Is each main point backed up with strong, credible supporting materials?
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Do I use connectives to make sure my audience knows when I am moving from one main point to another?



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This checklist is also available in the online Study Tools for this chapter.

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 Wells-Barnett's life, whereas main points I and II deal with *kinds* of activism.

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.

TIPS FOR PREPARING MAIN POINTS

Keep Main Points Separate

Each main point in a speech should be clearly independent of the others. 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. 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

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:

supporting materials

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

- 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.

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.

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, almost 90 million people have immigrated to the U.S.
 - B. Today there are 37 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 medical malpractice reform. 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. After a while, her classmates started counting. By the end of the speech, most were too busy waiting for the next “All right” to pay attention to Carla’s message. 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.”

We all have stock phrases that we use to fill the space between thoughts. In casual conversation they are seldom troublesome. But in speechmaking they distract listeners by calling 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. 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.

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.

connective

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

transition

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

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.

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."

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 usually used when a speaker finishes a complicated or particularly important main point or set of main 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.

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]: 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.



Experienced speakers include transitions and other connectives to help listeners keep track of their ideas. The result is a crisp presentation that moves clearly from point to point.

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 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 on mail-order fraud. His first main point showed that mail-order fraud continues to be a serious problem despite the growth of the Internet. He introduced it this way:

So just how serious is the problem of mail-order fraud? Is it just a few isolated cases, or is it widespread enough to require serious measures to protect consumers?

His second main point dealt with ways to curb mail-order fraud. He introduced it by saying:

So how can we solve this problem? Is there a way to protect the rights of legitimate mail-order companies while attacking the fraudulent ones?

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:

signpost

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

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 . . .

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. The important thing is to be aware of their functions. Properly applied, connectives can make your speeches much more unified and coherent.

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.

The process of planning the body of a speech begins when you determine the main points. 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. Each 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, depending on your topic, purpose, and audience. Chronological order follows a time pattern, whereas spatial order follows a directional pattern. In causal order, main points are organized according to their cause-effect relationship. Topical order results when you divide your main topic into subtopics. Problem-solution order breaks the body of the 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.

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.

KEY TERMS

strategic organization (166)
 main points (167)
 chronological order (169)
 spatial order (170)
 causal order (171)
 problem-solution order (172)
 topical order (173)

supporting materials (176)
 connective (177)
 transition (177)
 internal preview (178)
 internal summary (178)
 signpost (179)

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?



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

EXERCISES FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. 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 geographical regions of Australia.
 - To inform my audience about the major kinds of symbols used in Native American art.
 - To inform my audience of the causes and effects of Parkinson's disease.
 - To persuade my audience that the state legislature should enact tougher laws to curb the problem of repeated drunk-driving offenders.
 - To inform my audience about the educational philosophy of Jean Piaget.
 - To inform my audience about the major stages of the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1970.
2. Turn to the outline of main points and supporting materials for the speech about hypnosis on page 176. Create appropriate transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts for the speech.

3. 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 Mexican-American farmworkers in California.
 - II. Cesar Chavez was also a tireless advocate for Mexican-American racial and cultural pride in general.
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- I. The peak of Mount Kilimanjaro has an arctic climate with snow, ice, and violent winds.
 - II. The middle of Mount Kilimanjaro has a rain forest climate with lush vegetation and diverse animal species.
 - III. The base of Mount Kilimanjaro has a bushland climate with grassy pastures and farming communities.
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- I. Caused by an antibiotic-resistant strain of staphylococcus bacteria, MRSA has become increasingly prevalent among college students.
 - II. The effects of MRSA include skin infections, damage to internal organs, pneumonia, and, in some cases, death.
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- I. Fraudulent charity fund-raising is a widespread national problem.
 - II. The problem can be solved by a combination of government regulation and individual awareness.
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- I. Founded in 1948, NASCAR was limited primarily to the South through the 1950s and 1960s.
 - II. The modern era of NASCAR began in the 1970s with the development of the points system to crown a yearly champion.
 - III. Today NASCAR is second only to football as the most popular spectator sport in America.

Applying *the Power of Public Speaking*

You are in the purchasing department of a large clothing manufacturer. The company's design team has come up with an idea for a new shirt requiring a lightweight, stretchable fabric. The fabric cannot be provided by your company's usual suppliers, so you were sent to visit a number of textile firms in the U.S. and abroad to see what they can offer. You were asked to evaluate their products for quality, availability, and cost.

You have just returned from a 10-day trip to textile manufacturers in North Carolina, Italy, India, and China. You will present your findings and recommendations to the purchasing and design departments, but you're not sure how best to organize your speech. Your major choices are chronological order, problem-solution order, and topical order. What might be the main points of your speech with each of these methods of organization? Explain which method you think would be most effective for your presentation.