

GENERIC PUBLIC SPEECH STRUCTURE

Regardless of the general purpose of your speech, there are several elements which remain consistent. In order for listeners to follow your train of thinking, always try to adhere to the "golden rule" of public speaking. (*i.e.*, 1. Tell them what you're going to tell them. 2. Tell them. 3. Tell them what you told them.) These macrostructural elements are described in the following sample outline form.

SAMPLE OUTLINE

Introduction

The introduction should serve to set up the rest of the speech for listeners. (In the "golden rule" of public speaking this is the "Tell them what you're going to tell them" part.)

- I. **Attention Catcher** (This statement serves two functions: it catches listeners' attention and tunes them into your topic. You may use a rhetorical question, a direct question, a humorous anecdote, a famous quotation, a hypothetical example, an actual example, a startling statistic, and so on.)
- II. **Listener Relevance** (Once you have your listeners' attention, you need to reveal why they should listen to this particular speech. How does this material affect them? Why should they care?)
- III. **Speaker Credibility** (In this step, you need to let listeners know why they should listen to you in particular. How/Why do you know more about this topic than they do? You may have personal experience with the topic; you may have researched extensively; you may have written articles about the topic. The point is, let your listeners know at the outset that you know a good deal about the topic.)
- IV. **Thesis Statement** (This one-sentence summary of your speech is formed by, first, combining the general purpose to inform, to persuade, to entertain, to introduce, and the specific purpose about what? Be sure to state your thesis quite clearly. If listeners miss this part, they will have difficulty following the rest of the speech.)
- V. **Preview** (In this statement, alert your listeners to the main points of your speech. As with the thesis statement, be very clear so listeners can easily follow the organizational pattern of the speech.)

Body

(In the "golden rule," this is the "Tell them." part.)

- I. **First main point**
 - A. Subpoint (These supporting points help listeners understand your perspective. They learn why you stated your main point in the way you did. Consider breadth, depth, and listener relevance as you support each main point.)
 - B. Subpoint

Transition (Verbally tie the two main points together, in this case the first and second main points, so that listeners know you're moving forward structurally.)

II. Second main point

A. Subpoint

B. Subpoint

Transition (Verbally tie the second and third main points together to create a sense of forward motion.)

III. Third main point

A. Subpoint

B. Subpoint

Conclusion

(This serves the “golden rule” function of telling them “what you told them.”)

I. **Thesis Restatement** (You may simply use the Thesis statement from the introduction, changing it to past tense.)

II. **Summarize Main Point** (Remind listeners of the two to four main points about which you elaborated during the speech.)

III. **Clincher** (The clincher serves several functions: provides closure, often ties back to the attention catcher, heightens speech to aid in retention, helps listeners remember. . . . “Thank you” is ~~NOT~~ a clincher.)

References

Cite sources just as you would for a written paper, using complete references. Refer to the APA style guide for appropriate format.