



INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- Describe the five types of informative speeches.
- Apply the four most common patterns of organization for informative speeches.
- Identify three tips for giving effective informative speeches.
- Identify three principles for giving ethical informative speeches.



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Types of Informative Speeches

Organizational Patterns for Informative Speeches

Tips for Giving Effective Informative Speeches

Ethical Informative Speaking

As you read in an earlier chapter, most of our days are spent listening to others. If you could select three informative speech topics you would like to listen to, what would those topics be? Why would you select those topics?

People have a lot to learn about ecology—but first you have to get their attention.

—David de Rothschild, Environmental Storyteller and National Geographic Emerging Explorer



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When we need information on what a new health-care plan will mean, how to fix a flat tire, or which bottled water is the highest quality, we need complete and accurate information. To meet that need, speakers in the workplace, in the classroom, and in our communities often speak informatively. An **informative speech** *communicates knowledge and understanding about a process, an event, a place or person, an object, or a concept*. Informative speakers share what they know or have researched to familiarize an audience with a topic its members want or need to understand.

informative speech
speech that communicates knowledge and understanding about a process, an event, a place or person, an object, or a concept

informative speaking environments
environments in which a speaker has expertise or knowledge that an audience needs but does not already have.

Informative speakers create **informative speaking environments**, *environments in which a speaker has expertise or knowledge that an audience needs but does not already have*. Informative speakers attempt to enhance an audience's understanding of how some part of the world works.

As you enter the public dialogue, you will give many informative speeches (Johnson & Szczupakiewicz, 1987). In fact, across professions, demand is growing for employees with strong public communication skills and an ability to share information with others in a wide range of settings (Dannels, 2001; Morreal, Osborn, & Pearson, 2000; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2012; Wolvin, 1989). We emphasize informative speaking because we need information every day—for example, to understand how a new medication will affect us, to learn how to parallel park, to deliberate over the governor's proposal for spending a budget surplus, or to complete the complex assignment our boss just gave us.

Types of Informative Speeches

The five types of informative speeches most common in classes that teach public speaking and in the workplace are speeches about processes, events, places and people, objects, and concepts. Each type of speech has a different focus, and each is suited to a different occasion.

Speeches about Processes

Commonly called a how-to or a demonstration speech, **speeches about processes** *describe how something is done, how something comes to be*

speeches about processes
informative speech that describes how something is done, how something comes to be what it is, or how something works.

what is *how something works*. Process speeches help an audience learn how to complete a task, understand how something develops over time, or comprehend how a process unfolds. The fundamental goal of a process speech is to show your audience how to perform a process or how to better understand a process. Sample topics for process speeches include the following:

- How to get a passport
- How coal is mined in the United States
- How a solar panel converts the sun's heat into our energy
- How to protect yourself from harmful sunburns
- How to decide how much to tip a server in a restaurant

Process speeches are common because people are constantly learning how to perform new tasks. For example, your boss may ask you to explain to a colleague how to fill out and submit an expense report. Or you may be asked to explain to new staff how an employee incentive program came to be implemented, especially if you have a history with that particular program. In the classroom, you may be required to speak about a process that your classmates will benefit from learning more about.

The following two examples illustrate process speeches about a very familiar topic: coffee. In the first example, Tracee describes how coffee came to be a popular drink in North America.

- Specific purpose:** To inform my audience how coffee became one of the most popular drinks in North America.
- Thesis statement:** Through a series of historical events beginning in the 1500s, coffee replaced tea as one of the most popular drinks in North America.
- Main points:**
- I. Coffee found its way to North America in the 1500s when trade routes opened between coffee-growing countries and Europe, then expanded to North America.
 - II. Coffee began to gain in popularity as tensions with England accelerated in the 1700s and imports of tea decreased.
 - III. By the 1900s, international commerce, marketing techniques, and individual lifestyles made coffee one of the most popular drinks in North America.

In the second example, Wynton describes how the process of growing and harvesting a particular kind of coffee works.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER TIP

Mireya Mayor
Emerging Explorer, Primatologist, and Conservationist

When giving an informative speech, what types of visual aids have you used and which have been most effective?

My most popular presentation is based on my life, so the materials come from me and my experiences. What I really like to bring to those presentations are visuals. I start telling stories about my childhood and being an NFL cheerleader and going to these wild and remote places and the animals there. I try to support that with visuals.

I think it's really important to use visual aids to connect people to what I'm talking about. They might not be able to visualize what a tropical rainforest in Madagascar looks like, so I show them, or the amazing array of species there, so I show them. I also try to find timely references that relate to, say, the science that I'm talking about or things that have inspired me. For example, there was an article in *Time* magazine entitled "Death Row," and it showed these critically endangered primates. And that's what really captured my attention and was actually the motivating factor in me going into this field. And years later I dug that article up, scanned it, and I use that as one of the pictures in my PowerPoint. It's so important to show them, to really show them what you are talking about.



Specific purpose: To inform my audience how shade-grown coffee is grown and harvested.

Thesis statement: The process of growing and harvesting shade-grown coffee differs from the process used by coffee plantations in three significant ways.

Main points:

- I. Shade-grown coffee is grown in small plots, quite unlike the more familiar coffee plantation method.
- II. As the plants grow, these plots provide non-chemical forms of fertilizer and pest control.
- III. When the coffee beans are mature, they are harvested and stored in ecologically friendly ways.

Notice how each speech follows a progression of steps from first to second to third. Because process speeches describe step-by-step progressions, they are almost always organized chronologically. A chronological pattern of organization allows you to develop your speech from the first step to the last or from the earliest signs to the most recent examples. (Later in this chapter, you will explore organizational patterns for informative speeches more fully.)

Speeches about Events

Speeches about events describe or explain significant, interesting, or unusual occurrences. These speeches help an audience understand what happened, why it happened, and what effect the event had. Just as we

speeches about events

informative speeches that describe or explain significant, interesting, or unusual occurrences.

often describe what happens in our personal lives so we can better understand how events influence our lives, public speakers share what happens with audiences to help them understand a significant event in the context of history or society or community. In some ways, speeches about events are mini history lessons that educate audiences about key moments. Sample topics for speeches about events would be

the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak,
the radioactive leaks at Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant,
the origins of the Occupy movement, and
large-scale food recalls.

Speakers are often asked to speak about events, usually in professional settings. Consider Sophia, whose boss asked her to speak to her fellow employees about the latest recall of beef in their region.

Specific purpose: To inform our staff of the most recent recall of beef and products that contain beef.

Thesis statement: This most recent recall of beef from our stores requires that we identify all beef purchased within the last three months, identify all products containing beef purchased within the last three months, and remove and dispose of these products in very specific ways.

In a community setting, people may decide to speak about local events as a way to inform councils, planning boards, or community service agencies and perhaps assist them with the decisions they make.

Specific purpose: To inform the city council about the high rate of accidents at the corner of College and Elm Streets.

Thesis statement: The intersection of College and Elm is the site of an unusually high rate of accidents during certain hours of the day.

When you are required to speak about an event, select a topic your audience will find interesting and relevant. For example, inform your classmates of an event that affects your own campus (a public hearing to improve public transportation to the campus), the community that houses your campus (an annual jazz festival that showcases successful musicians from the community), or your state or region (a recognition ceremony for local volunteers who helped elect a candidate to Congress).

Most speeches about events, especially historical events, are arranged chronologically. However, if the way an event unfolds is not the focus of your speech, then you can organize your speech topically. Or if you want to analyze why an event occurred and what effect it had, you can use a causal pattern. (These and other patterns of organization are examined later in the chapter.)

speeches about places and people

speeches that describe significant, interesting, or unusual places or people.

Speeches about Places and People

Speeches about places and people describe significant, interesting, or unusual places or people. These speeches can be fun to give in a classroom because you can share your experiences with places and people you have visited or have found fascinating. In the workplace or the community, speeches about places and people help audiences understand the importance, nature, appeal, charm, or integrity of a particular place or person or the contributions a particular person has made to an organization or a community. Sample topics for speeches about places and people might be

service agencies in the community,

Lady Gaga,

New Orleans,

Nelson Mandela,

Haiti, or

Jane Goodall.

Because you will not have time in a speech to discuss all there is to know about a place or a person, the goal of this type of speech is to capture the *spirit* of that place or person. You want audience members to understand why this place or person is important or useful to them or their community, important historically, or just interesting and worth learning about. Look at this example of a speech that Adrianna gave in her public-speaking course.

Specific purpose: To inform my audience about the history and features of the Freedom Trail in Boston, Massachusetts.

Thesis statement: The Freedom Trail, which originated in the late 1950s, is a pedestrian path through downtown Boston that links sites of historical importance to the United States, such as our first public school and the site of the Boston Massacre.

In the next example, Garrett informs his classmates about Captain Nicole Malachowski, the first woman selected to join the Thunderbirds, the Air Force's most elite team of pilots.

Specific purpose: To inform my classmates of Lieutenant Colonel Nicole Malachowski, the first woman selected to fly with the Thunderbirds.

Thesis statement: In 2005, the Thunderbirds, a small elite team of the best pilots in the Air Force, selected its first woman pilot, Nicole Malachowski, to join them, opening the doors for other talented female pilots to fly the most advanced aircraft in the world.

Speeches about places or people can be organized topically (how the Freedom Trail was conceived, the importance of the historical sites to

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION



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To the Rescue!

Often people join the public dialogue to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Sometimes these unheard voices belong to other people, such as children, or to entities such as the environment. Many times, these voices belong to animals (LeBeau, 2008; Weise, 2009).

Dog owner Lori Weise, a manager at a furniture store in Los Angeles, crossed paths one day with a homeless man named Benny Josephs and his pit bull, Iron Head. The bond between this man and his dog had a profound impact on Weise. "I was so impressed with how the two were really one," she says. "Iron

Head was never on a leash and never strayed too far from Benny's sight." Her interactions with Josephs and Iron Head inspired her to found Downtown Dog Rescue in 1996. Since then, the organization has rescued and adopted out more than 3,000 dogs, provided resources for homeless people and their pets, and raised awareness in the Los Angeles area about animal cruelty. Lori is a tireless advocate for healthy and responsible pet ownership, using many channels to get the word out, including community events, letter-writing campaigns, speeches at conferences, and Twitter.

Luigi "Shorty" Rossi, also from Los Angeles, credits pit bulls with saving his life when he was young and providing loyal companionship during the hardest times of his life, including a stint in prison for gang-related activity. In 2001, after having made a successful career for himself as an entertainer and talent manager, he founded Shorty's Pit Bull Rescue. Just as Downtown Dog Rescue does, Shorty's Rescue rescues, rehabilitates, and adopts out neglected and abused pit bulls. The organization also promotes a positive view of this misunderstood breed, using education and activism to help prevent animal cruelty. Shorty's forums for speaking out include short films, public service commercials, and *Pit Boss*, Animal Planet's reality show about his endeavors ("Meet Shorty Rossi," 2010).

What Do You Think?

1. If you could give an informative speech about "unheard voices" which group would you speak about and why? How would you capture the spirit of that group?

which the trail leads), chronologically (events in Captain Malachowski's life that led to her selection), or spatially (Big Bend National Park in Texas features recreational areas in the mountains, in the desert, and along the Rio Grande River).

Speeches about Objects

Speeches about objects are about *anything that is tangible—that is, can be perceived by the senses*. When we speak informatively about objects, we describe the components or characteristics of something so an audience can better understand it and why it might be important or valued. Sample topics for speeches about objects include

credit cards,
honeybees,

speeches about objects

informative speeches about anything that is tangible—that is, can be perceived by the senses.

often makes an interesting topic for a speech. Make a list of your favorite photos, paintings, music, or other art forms. Could you give a speech on one of these topics?

hybrid automobiles, and poisonous frogs.

Speeches about objects are common in the working world. For example, a product-development coordinator might speak regularly to her colleagues about new products that come across her desk, describing their qualities, uses, and appeal. Similarly, tour guides often speak about local objects of importance or interest, describing buildings, sculptures, and pieces of art. For a required classroom speech about an object, you might describe something useful, rare, or interesting to a speech class audience. For example, Jun Lee gave a speech about *Mona Lisa's* mysterious smile.

Specific purpose: To inform my audience about the *Mona Lisa* and the many theories about her famous smile.

Thesis statement: One of the most famous paintings of all time, the *Mona Lisa* has inspired several theories about why she has such a mysterious smile.

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A very popular topic for speeches about *animate* objects is animals and their behaviors, habitats, and ways of interacting with humans and other animals. Here is a sample specific purpose and a thesis statement for Shana's speech about the African serval.

Specific purpose: To inform my audience about keeping the African serval as a house pet.

Thesis statement: Although the African serval's legs, ears, and coloration aid in its survival in the wild, these same adaptations have a whole new meaning in the context of keeping a serval as an exotic house pet.

Many speeches about objects are organized topically (the characteristics of the poisonous frog). Others are organized using a causal pattern (possible causes of the colony collapse disorder plaguing our honeybees) and sometimes, a speech about an object can be organized chronologically (hybrid automobile, from the first to the latest model) or spatially (the different features of a hybrid car). Be sure to select the pattern that helps you express your ideas clearly and efficiently.

Speeches about Concepts

Speeches about concepts are *about abstractions, things you cannot perceive with your senses—such as ideas, theories, principles, worldviews, or beliefs*. The goal of a speech about a concept is to help your audience understand your subject, its history, its characteristics, and its effect on society or individuals. Some sample topics for speeches about concepts are

- the new frugality,
- sustainability,
- adult literacy,
- theories of adolescent development,
- health-care reform, and
- global citizenship.

When you give speeches about concepts, you help audiences more fully understand or appreciate issues, principles, systems, and the like. Consider Tory's speech about the new frugality, sometimes described as "less is more."

Specific purpose: To inform my audience about the new frugality, which is sometimes called "less is more."

Thesis statement: Because of our country's economic crisis, many people are embracing the values of frugality, which involve owning fewer material possessions, being less "possession-identified" and more "self-identified," and, of course, spending less money.

speeches about concepts

informative speeches about abstractions, things you cannot perceive with your senses—such as ideas, theories, principles, worldviews, or beliefs.

Practicing Human Communication

Select an Informative Speech Topic and Type

As a class, brainstorm as many different informative speech topics as you can. Next, group the topics according to the five types of informative speeches you have just read about. Some might fit into several groups, depending on how you phrase your thesis statement for a particular topic. Discuss which of these topics you find most interesting and why. Save this list for the next Practicing Human Communication activity.

Speeches about concepts can be challenging because it might be difficult to explain an abstraction clearly. However, this type of speech is also very helpful because sometimes audiences need to understand concepts before they can understand how something works or why a person is significant. Speeches about concepts are often organized topically (the principles behind health-care reform) or chronologically (early theories of adolescent development to the most recent theories). Sometimes, a speech about a concept can be organized causally (the causes of the idea of global citizenship).

Organizational Patterns for Informative Speeches

Informative speeches can be organized in a variety of ways, and you will probably use a wide range of organizational patterns as you become a proficient public speaker. These organizational patterns are chronological, spatial, causal, and topical. Using these patterns, you can organize your main points logically.

chronological pattern

a pattern of organization in which you illustrate how a topic has developed over time or what sequential steps an audience must take to complete a task.

Chronological Pattern

With a **chronological pattern**, you can *organize your main points to illustrate how a topic has developed over time or what sequential steps an audience must take to complete a task*. Most of us are familiar with the chronological pattern because most stories we tell or hear progress from start to finish chronologically. Chronological patterns are especially effective for process speeches, but as you learned earlier in this chapter, they also are well suited for other kinds of informative speeches. In the following example, Alan gives a speech to explain to his audience how the Ford Mustang set the standard for the so-called muscle cars of the 1960s.

Specific purpose: To inform my audience of the history of the Ford Mustang.

Thesis statement: The Ford Mustang, which quickly became the muscle car to beat in 1964 with its combination of high performance and low cost, continues to be the most popular car of that decade.

Main points:

- I. Pontiac's GTO—which stands for “gas, tires, oil”—is credited as the first of the muscle cars of the 1960s.
- II. Ford quickly took the top spot among muscle cars, releasing the high-performance, low-cost Mustang to the public on April 17, 1964.
- III. Ford then added new makes with increasingly attractive features and options to maintain its popularity—among them the Fastback, the Grande, the Mach I, the Boss 302, and the Boss 429.
- IV. The muscle cars of the 1960s remain some of the most popular cars of that decade, and the newer Mustangs give us a glimpse into why this is so.

Alan takes his audience through the evolution of muscle cars in the 1960s, beginning with the Pontiac GTO; moving on to Ford's first Mustangs and the company's release of newer makes, features, and options; and then showing the current influence of those features on today's cars. By using this pattern, Alan provides his listeners with basic information they can build on as he progresses through his speech.

Spatial Pattern

The **spatial pattern** allows you to *address topics logically in terms of location or direction*. With this pattern, you can arrange your main points by the position they represent within a physical space. You also can use this pattern to inform your audience of the places that relate to your topic, the activities that occur in those places, or the activities that are necessary to the functioning of your topic. In the following example, Scott uses a spatial pattern to describe the different parts of a guitar and how each part works to produce sound.

spatial pattern

a pattern of organization that allows you to address topics logically in terms of location or direction.

Specific purpose: To inform my audience of how the different parts of the guitar work together to produce sound.

Thesis statement: The guitar has three main parts—the head, neck, and body—and each works with the others in intricate ways to produce the sounds we call music.

Main points:

- I. The top of the guitar is the head, which houses the nut and the tuning pegs.
- II. The next part is the neck, which contains three essential parts: the frets, the truss rod, and the fingerboard.
- III. The bottom part is the body, which is made of a reinforced front, back and side panels, a sound hole, and the bridge and saddle.

The spatial pattern is a clear and effective way to describe the different parts of an object.

Causal Pattern

Causal patterns highlight cause-and-effect relationships. A cause is an event that makes something happen, and an effect is the response, impression, or change that results from that cause. When you use causal patterns, you inform your audience about what causes certain events, places, objects, or concepts to come into being.

In the following example, Kelsey describes the causes of the onion's tearful effect as well as methods to prevent tears when cutting an onion.

Specific purpose: To inform my audience about the cause of an onion's tearful effect and methods used to prevent tears when cutting an onion.

Thesis statement: The internal chemistry of the onion is the cause of its tearful effect when being chopped, but various methods may be used to prevent this occurrence.

- Main points:**
- I. The onion's chemical makeup combines with the physiology of the human eye to induce tears.
 - II. The first method to prevent tears is chilling the onion.
 - III. The second method involves using an open flame during onion preparation.
 - IV. Using water around the onion is a helpful technique to reduce tears as well.
 - V. The last method involves cutting the core from an onion, where most tear-producing compounds—lachrymators—are thought to be stored.

Kelsey's use of the causal pattern helped her explain what caused the tears, and then show certain ways of cutting an onion to reduce tear production.

Topical Pattern

The topical organizational pattern allows a speaker to address different aspects of a topic. For example, in Shana's speech on the African serval, she organized her ideas topically to address the physical characteristics that make the animal so suited to life in the wild and then the consequences of bringing it into a domestic setting.

causal patterns

a pattern of organization that allows you to highlight cause-and-effect relationships.

topical organizational pattern

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PRACTICING HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Select an Organizational Pattern for Your Informative Speech

Return to the list of possible informative speech topics you prepared in Practicing Human Communication earlier in this chapter. In groups, select a single topic and see if you can create a rough thesis statement and main points for four different informative speeches on this topic, using each of the organizational patterns you have just read about. As a class, discuss which of these speeches you would find most interesting and why. As you discuss your favorite topic and organizational pattern, consider the tips for giving effective informative speeches in the next section.

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Topical patterns work well in informative speeches with topics that can be easily and logically divided into subtopics. Using a topical pattern, you can highlight the aspects of a topic that are most useful and important for an audience to understand. In Lauren's speech about the nursery rhyme, she used a topical pattern to discuss their dark history.

Specific purpose: To inform the audience about the dark history of the origin of nursery rhymes.

Thesis statement: Nursery rhymes are seen as innocent and light-hearted tales because they are always associated with children, but the truth is that stories such as "Ring Around the Rosie," "Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater," and "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" may have dark and often gruesome origins that would seem anything but appropriate for children.

Main points:

- I. The rhyme "Ring Around the Rosie" goes all the way back to the year 1350 Europe when the Black Plague was at its peak.
- II. The rhyme "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater" is actually a rhyme about a man who forced his mistress to wear a chastity belt.
- III. "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" is actually the most gruesome rhyme of the three.

By using this organizational pattern, Lauren was able to inform her audience of the dark origins of many of their favorite childhood nursery rhymes.

Tips for Giving Effective Informative Speeches

In an informative speaking environment, you contribute to the public dialogue by sharing your knowledge with your audience, illustrating with clarity and detail the relevance of that knowledge to your listeners. Three tips that will help you create informative speaking environments and give effective informative speeches are (1) bring your topic to life, (2) tailor your information to your audience, and (3) use language that is clear and unbiased.

Bring Your Topic to Life

When you give an informative speech, you want your audience to understand your topic in a detailed and dynamic way. Effective informative speakers bring a subject to life for an audience, engaging their listeners so they appreciate the information they receive. Take careful stock of your topic and your audience so you can be sure to share information that is both *engaging* and *relevant*. Engaging material draws audience members in and excites or interests them. Listeners find material

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Thesis statement:

Nursery rhymes are seen as innocent and light-hearted tales because they are always associated with children, but the truth is that stories such as "Ring Around the Rosie," "Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater," and "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" may have dark and often gruesome origins that would seem anything but appropriate for children.

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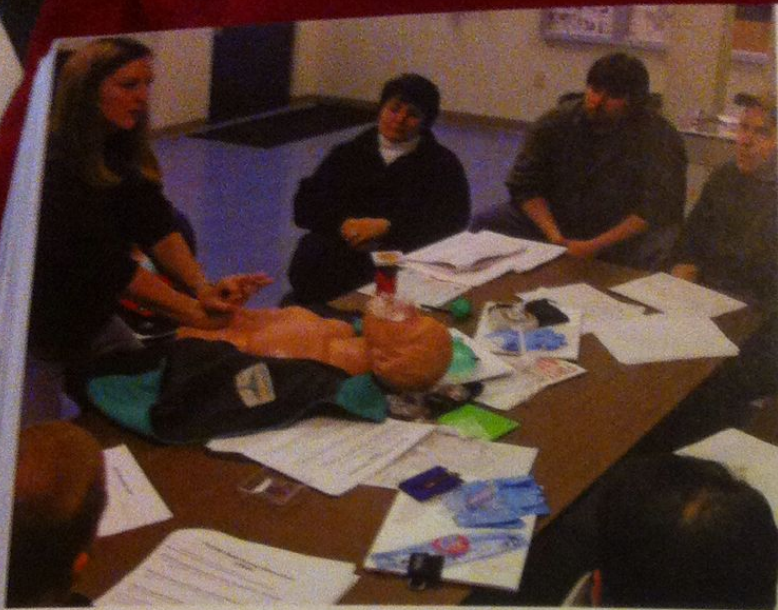
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Susan Van Eman/Photo Edit

Demonstration speeches are often very engaging because they provide audiences with especially relevant and useful information. Whether you give this type of speech, remember to avoid overwhelming your audience with too much information. Consider a demonstration speech you might like to give. What is the most important information you think your audience would need?

relevant if it is useful or something they must know to do their jobs, live in a community, or make informed decisions.

One way to bring a topic to life is to stay audience centered. As you craft your speech, continually ask yourself how your overall topic, main points, and subpoints relate to your audience.

What do audience members need to know?

How will they use the information you present?

How can you make the information clear?

If you keep these questions in mind throughout your preparation process, you will be more likely to present your material in an engaging and relevant way. For example, in the speech

about school violence, Erin brought her second point—manipulation by other students—to life by asking her audience a rhetorical question: “Think back to high school. How many examples of manipulative behavior can you think of? Probably too many. In my junior year, I remember one group of students who constantly picked on my friends and me. It felt like no matter what we did, we were the brunt of their jokes and the focus of their hostility.” By sharing her own experience of manipulation, she touched on an experience common to many members of her audience.

Another way to bring your topic to life is to share the human side of your topic. If you are presenting technical information, explaining intricate details, or carefully outlining a process, try to use examples, images, and descriptions that help your audience connect to your topic personally. If you are presenting numbers or statistics, give the figures a human face. As one student asked after hearing an informative speech about how to avoid the kinds of sunburns that lead to skin cancer, “What do all those SPF factors and fancy names mean for me and my skin tone personally?” As you prepare your speech, anticipate this kind of question and look for opportunities to relate your information to the human experience. For example, in a speech on modern art, you might personalize different techniques and styles by drawing parallels to skills learned in art classes or by asking your audience to attempt the techniques on their own as you describe them.

Tailor Your Information to Your Audience

Just as you can feel overwhelmed by the abundance of information you find in your research, your audiences can be equally overwhelmed by the information you share with them in your speech—no matter how engaging and relevant you make that information. As an informative speaker, one of your most challenging tasks is to decide how much information to include in a speech and how much to leave out. Here are reasons why:

- When you present too much information, you run the risk of overwhelming an audience.
- When you present too little information, you run the risk of leaving them unclear or confused about your topic.
- If you present material that is too technical, detailed, and complicated, your audience will have a hard time following it.
- If the information in your speech is too simple, audience members will become bored or feel that you are talking down to them.

Given these dilemmas, the best way to tailor your information to your audience is to *stay audience centered* throughout the speech process. As you develop and present your speech, continually reflect on the needs and interests of your audience. Include information that you think would be of the greatest educational value for your audience, and then adjust your presentation of this information so that it matches your audience's level of knowledge, expertise, and experience.

Use Language That Is Clear and Unbiased

Because informative speeches focus on describing, defining, and explaining, use language that is descriptive and instructive. To ensure your audience can follow you, define all new terminology, break complicated processes into steps, and explain language specific to a particular field or activity. For example, when Wynton spoke about shade-grown coffee, he explained what the terms *shade grown*, *fair trade*, *organic*, and *sustainable* mean. Similarly, when Sophia spoke to her colleagues about the beef recall affecting their company, she made sure her audience understood the specific dates and the exact methods of disposal. You can also make a point of explaining familiar words you use in new ways. For example, Lauren took time to link what her audience thought were lighthearted phrases and words from the nursery rhymes to their darker historical origins.

Informative language should be as objective as you can make it. Focus on presenting your information as clearly and accurately as you can and avoid expressing your own views (as in invitational speaking) or trying to sway your audience (as in persuasive speaking). Remember that the goal of informative speaking is to pass along information your audience needs or wants. Make sure the language of your speech is fair and unbiased. Use phrases like "My research indicates that" or "According to the experts" rather than "I hope I've convinced you that this is the best way."

Similarly, when you incorporate personal knowledge into an informative speech, which is common when you describe or explain something you have experience with, make sure the language you use reflects your *experience*, not your biases or preferences. For example, phrases like "After seven years with these machines, I'd recommend the following steps" and "I've been involved in four food recalls since I began in this industry, so I can give you some background and details" are more informative than persuasive.

Ethical Informative Speaking

Ethical informative speakers make sure their speeches are based on careful research, unbiased information, and the honest presentation of information. Take a look at each of these components of ethical informative speaking.

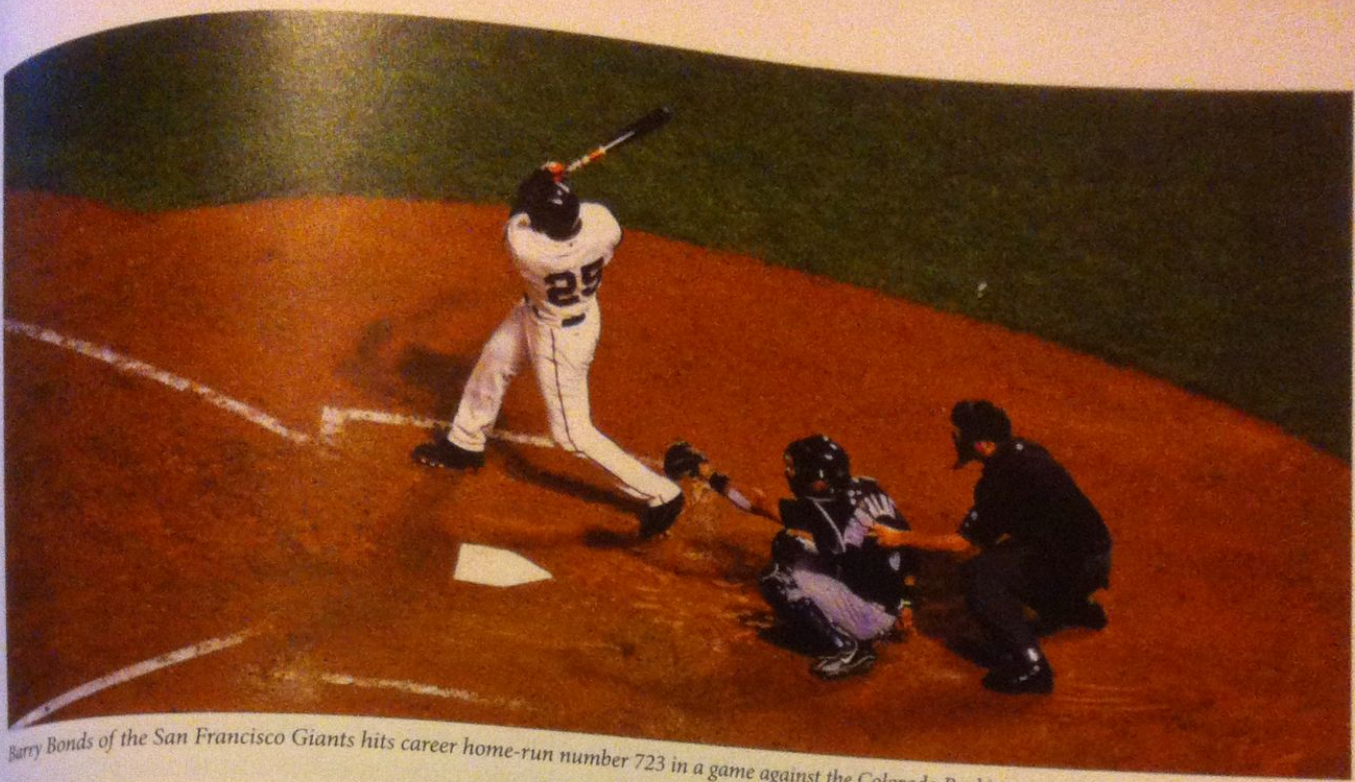
First, our audiences expect that we have taken the time to find information that is accurate and complete, so we must carefully research the details of our topic and share the full story with our audiences. If we have not done this, then we may wind up giving our audiences inaccurate or incomplete information.

Second, as an informative speaker, you want to present unbiased information to your audience. Although we all hold biases, we can take steps to minimize them. You can minimize your biases by presenting examples, statistics, testimony, and other materials as fairly and as neutrally as possible, regardless of your personal positions. In your preferences for your persuasive speeches, use your informative speeches to help your audiences gain a full understanding of your topic.

Finally, present your information honestly. Do not distort your evidence or make up supporting material as you need it. A healthy public dialogue depends on accuracy. If you misrepresent your speech topic, your audience will come away with an inaccurate view of important issues and situations. Ethical informative speaking relies on the honest and accurate distribution of information, which can happen only if speakers present that information truthfully.

Robert Kyncl, vice president of global content partnerships at YouTube, delivered the keynote speech at the Entertainment Matters 2012 International Consumer Electronics Show. What would you listen for to evaluate whether this speech was an ethical informative speech?





Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants hits career home-run number 723 in a game against the Colorado Rockies on August 4, 2006, in San Francisco.

Daniel M. Silva/Shutterstock.com

ETHICAL MOMENT



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When Must We Speak?

In 2003, as part of a federal case against the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative (BALCO) for distributing illegal “designer steroids” to professional athletes, baseball great Barry Bonds told a grand jury that he had not taken steroids during his career. Bonds provided this information because he and other athletes were offered immunity if they testified in the case, which targeted Victor Conte, the founder of BALCO, and Greg Anderson, Bond’s trainer and longtime friend. Bonds explained that he trusted Anderson and used the creams and gels Anderson supplied because he thought they were simply flax seed oil and arthritis pain relievers. His testimony, which was supposed to be secret, was leaked to outside sources. Believing that Bonds had lied under oath, prosecutors began a perjury investigation. Bond’s attorney, Mike Raines, responded by claiming that the federal government was persecuting Bonds and “going after his client because of his name and notoriety, not the allegations leveled against him.” He said, “You offer immunity and you get him in there and then you ask them questions and you get them on lying to federal officers. That’s the trap. That’s exactly what they got Martha [Stewart] for.” In 2011, however, “a federal court jury found [Bonds] guilty of obstruction of justice,” for “giving an evasive answer under oath”

in 2003. Although Bonds was acquitted on three other charges of making false statements, he was convicted on the obstruction of justice charges, and he received a sentence of two years of probation and 30 days of house arrest (Martinez and Simon, 2011; Quinn, 2007; Rosynsky, 2007; Rowlands, 2006; Williams and Fainaru-Wada, 2004).

What Do You Think?

1. Both Barry Bonds and Martha Stewart were required to speak in a court of law about cases that were not about them specifically. Do you think people should be required to speak in this way? Why or why not?
2. Whether Bonds was telling the truth or not, do you think that people should always be completely forthcoming about what they are required to speak about? Should some information be kept private and immune from punishment? Why or why not?
3. When potentially damaging information that is supposed to be private is leaked, as in Bonds’s case, is it ethical to use that information against the person? Why or why not?

Preparation Outline with Commentary: Tap by Rachel Rota

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the art of tap dancing.

Thesis Statement: Tap dancing, one of the oldest forms of dance, is based on just a few basic steps and was popularized in modern times in part by the great tap dancer and choreographer Gregory Hines.

You may have already given an informative speech in your class. Whether you have or whether this is the first time you have spoken informatively, you can use the following outline as a model.



CourseMate Connection: Go to cengagebrain.com to access your CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* to view a video about Rachel Rota giving this speech and see her transcript and speaking outline.

Rachel gave this speech in an introductory public-speaking class in 2006. The assignment was to give a four- to six-minute speech, citing a minimum of four sources. Students were also asked to create a preparation outline that included a Works Cited section and to use at least one visual aid in their speech. (Remember that you can go to your CourseMate to access videos of several other informative speeches, including Chungyan Man's "Chinese Fortune Telling," Elizabeth Lopez's "The Three C's of Down Syndrome," and Josh Valentine's "The Dun Dun Drum.")

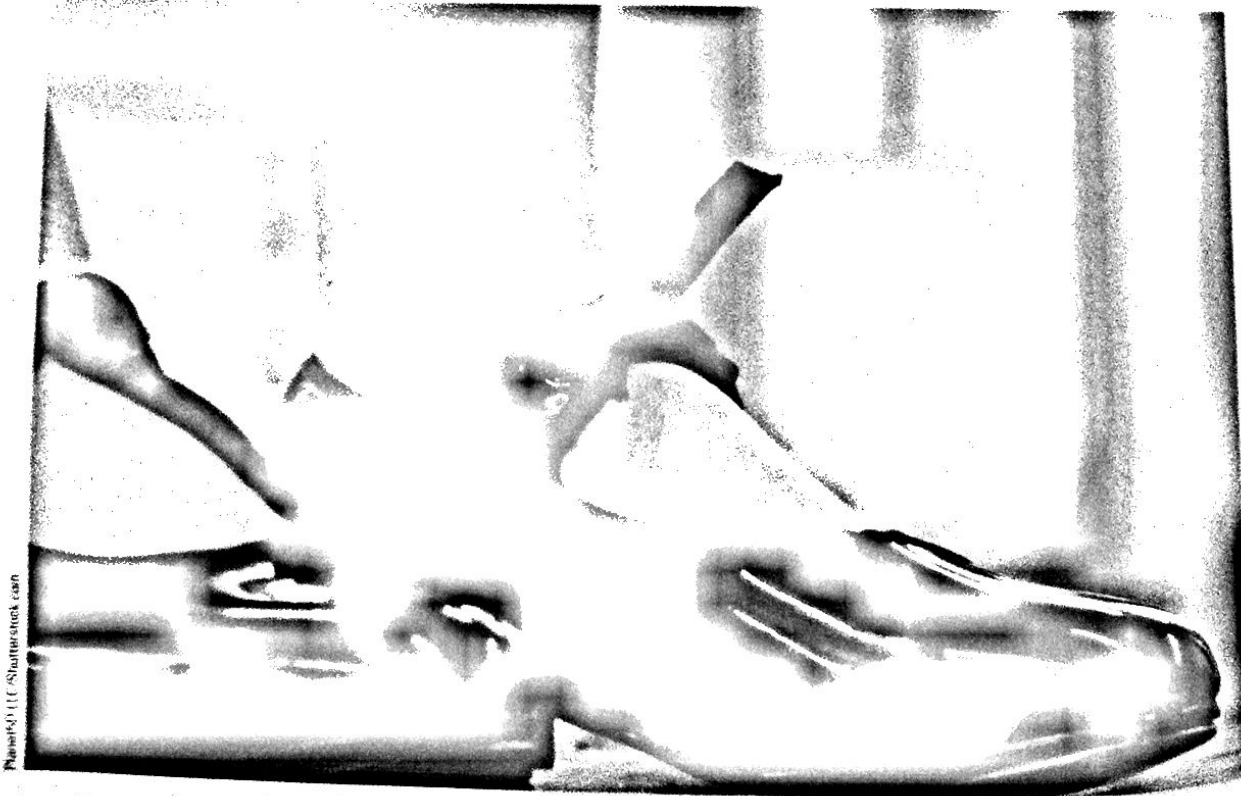


Photo © iStockphoto.com

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

(Begin by doing a short tap routine) (*catch attention*)

- I. Tap dancing is a vibrant art that is popular around the world and continues to appeal to people. (*reveal topic*)
 - A. According to performingarts.net, tap artist Gregory Hines once said, "Tap is here, now."
 - B. The art of tap dancing can be found all around our nation, with style variations around the world.
 - C. Public interest in tap is growing, and tap can be seen in many forms of entertainment, such as films and theatrical Broadway shows.
- II. Still alive today, tap is one of the oldest styles of dance.
 - A. Many may think tap went out with performers like Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire, but it is still thriving.
 - B. Have you encountered tap dancing? (*connect to the audience*)
- III. I am interested in this topic because I have been dancing since the age of four and have found tap quite enjoyable. (*establish credibility*)
 - A. Not only have I been a student of tap, but I have also taught tap to young dancers.
 - B. I also enjoy watching entertainment that includes tap dancing.
- IV. Today I will tell you about the beginnings of tap dancing, some basic techniques of tap, and I will also discuss a tap great, the late Gregory Hines. (*reveal thesis statement and preview main points*)

BODY

- I. According to performingarts.net, tap is a combination of elements of African drumming and dancing and European clog and step dancing.
 - A. The core of all forms of tap is percussive footwork, but the unique rhythms of jazz distinguish American tap dance from other types of tap.
 - B. From the 1600s to the early 1800s, tap evolved from European step dances (for example, clog and jig) and African religious dances (for example, juba and ring shout).
 - C. These dances were performed mostly by African slaves.
 1. Around 1828 the juba and the jig evolved to dances performed on the minstrel stage.
 2. Later these dances were polished into what is now American tap dance.
 - D. The article "The History of Tap" from performingarts.net outlines the evolution of modern tap.
 1. Vaudeville talents like Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and John Bubbles helped define the rhythm of tap dance.
 2. Hollywood popularized tap in films starring Fred Astaire and the Nicholas Brothers.
 3. According to offjazz.com, Gene Kelly became a star in the 1950s and created his own style of tap by adding movements from ballet and modern dance.

Commentary

Rachel begins her speech with a demonstration and a quotation pertaining to her speech topic, and she cites the source of the quotation.

After Rachel reveals the topic of her speech, she proceeds by asking her audience to think about their experiences with her speech topic. Notice how Rachel uses this strategy to connect the audience to her topic.

Rachel clearly establishes her credibility as a speaker by revealing her personal experience as both a student and teacher of tap.

Rachel briefly previews the main points of her speech, revealing her topical organizational pattern. Notice how she will elaborate on each main point in the same order provided in this internal preview statement.

Rachel's first main point discusses the evolution of tap to provide her audience a brief overview of the history of her topic. Within her explanation of how tap evolved, Rachel cites the Web sites that contain the information provided in her speech. Notice that she cites them in her speech as well as in her outline.

Rachel provides a clear transition from her first to her second main point to signal that she has finished discussing the history of tap and will move on to discuss tap steps. She also performs the steps she describes in her first subpoint. This demonstration adds clarity to her speech.

Again, between Rachel's second and third main points, she provides a short internal summary and transitions to her third point.

Notice how her three main points are fairly balanced, providing approximately the same amount of information in each. Also notice how each of her points, subpoints, and sub-subpoints includes only one complete sentence.

Rachel signals that she is concluding her speech by saying, "As we have seen today." She provides a clear internal

4. Although tap lost some popularity in the 1950s, it became known as an art form as well as a form of entertainment in the 1960s.
5. In the 1970s tap returned to film, the concert stage, and the theater in the United States, Europe, and Japan.
6. Tap still flourishes in the entertainment industry today and can be seen on stage, TV, and in the movies.

Transition: In light of the early beginnings of tap, the steps that created the history are just as important.

- II. Tapdance.org lists a few basic movements and steps in tap dance.
 - A. The shuffle, flap, heel drop, brush, tip, step, stomp, and stamp create the basis of all the steps and sounds of tap.
 - B. These basics create steps like the cramp role, time steps, Maxi-ford, and the rolling pullback.
 - C. To successfully create these sounds, tap shoes have hard leather soles with metal "taps" screwed into them.
 - D. Although there are many variations of tap shoes, the sounds and steps of American tap dancing remain the same.

Transition: We've heard about the history and the basics of tap. Now, let's take a deeper look into the life of a tap dancing great.

- III. According to an article at the Web site cigaraficnado.com, one famous modern tap dancer, Gregory Hines, led an interesting life and became a highly acclaimed dancer and choreographer.
 - A. When he was five years old, he was in a tap group called the Hines Kids with his older brother, Jake.
 1. When the boys reached adolescence, they were called the Hines Brothers, and they spent much of their time performing at the Apollo Theatre.
 2. In 1954, Gregory debuted on Broadway at the age of eight in the musical *The Girl in Pink Tights*.
 3. In 1963, the family group became Hines, Hines, and Dad, and they performed in New York nightclubs and on television.
 4. In 1992, Gregory was awarded a Tony for his role in *Jelly's Last Jam*.
 5. He showcased his dancing talent in movies such as *The History of the World*, *The Cotton Club*, and *White Nights*.
 - B. Gregory has left his mark on the world of tap, and his technique and style continue to be studied.
 - C. His untimely death in August 2003 from liver cancer has been a great loss not only for the tap community but also for the entire entertainment industry.

CONCLUSION

- I. As we have seen today, tap is a very old form of dance, and the steps and sounds of tap have been performed by many talented people throughout its history. (*reinforce thesis and summarize main points*)

- A. The basic steps of tap remain about the same as they have throughout tap's history.
- B. The work of Gregory Hines contributed greatly to tap.
- II. If any of you desire to be a tap dancer, I hope I have equipped you with enough information to get you started.
- III. Just go and screw some metal taps into the bottom of your shoes and start tapping! (*end memorably*)

summary, briefly recapping her three main points. Her conclusion is short, and she ends memorably.

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Chapter Summary

To Speak Informatively Is to Share Knowledge with an Audience to Increase Their Understanding of a Particular Topic

- To create an informative speaking environment is to bring a topic to life for an audience and to illustrate its relevance so audience members better understand its impact on their world.

The Five Types of Informative Speeches Are about Processes, Events, Places and People, Objects, and Concepts

- Process speeches describe how something is done, how something comes to be what it is, or how something works.
- Speeches about events describe or explain a significant, interesting, or unusual occurrence.
- Speeches about places and people describe something significant, interesting, or unusual about places and people.
- Speeches about objects inform your audiences about anything that can be perceived by the senses.
- Speeches about concepts describe or explain abstractions, or things you cannot perceive with your senses, such as ideas, theories, principles, worldviews, or beliefs.

The Five Different Types of Informative Speeches Can Be Organized Chronologically, Spatially, Causally, or Topically

- Chronological patterns illustrate the development of an event or a concept or describe the steps necessary for completing a task.
- Spatial patterns reveal how various locations relate to a topic or how activities related to a topic occur in specific locations.
- Causal patterns are useful when you want to show important cause-and-effect relationships or clarify how ideas or behaviors relate to one another.
- Topical patterns allow you to highlight the different facets or characteristics of a topic for an audience.
- Three tips that can help you give an effective a speech are
 - bring your topic to life,
 - tailor your information to your audience, and
 - use language that is clear and unbiased.

When You Bring Your Subjects to Life, You Relate Your Topic to Your Audience by Sharing the Human Side of That Topic with Engaging and Relevant Details

- When you tailor your information to your audience, you remain audience centered so you can determine how much an audience knows about a topic and thus how much information to present.

- Use language that focuses on descriptions, definitions, and explanations so audiences can more easily learn new information.
- The principles of ethical public speaking include careful research and presenting unbiased and honest information.

Key Concepts

causal pattern (340)

chronological pattern (338)

informative speaking environments (330)

informative speech (330)

spatial pattern (339)

speeches about concepts (337)

speeches about events (332)

speeches about objects (335)

speeches about places and people (334)

speeches about processes (330)

topical organizational pattern (340)

Invitation to Human Communication Online

Speech Communication CourseMate includes an interactive eBook and interactive learning tools, including National Geographic Explorer videos, student videos, quizzes, flash cards, and more. Speech Builder Express 3.0 and Speech Studio 2.0 are also available. Go to cengagebrain.com to access your CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* where these resources can be found.

Further Reflection and Discussion

1. Consider the following subjects as possible informative speaking topics for your next assigned speech:

carpets
making pizza
graffiti
religion
Eminem
subways

How many different kinds of informative speeches could you give on each topic? What would be the strengths or advantages of choosing one type of speech over another for these topics? How would your speech be relevant to the public dialogue?

2. Create a preparation outline for an informative speech on the topic of the U.S. response to natural disasters. How

many different organizational patterns could you use for this topic? How would each pattern highlight a different aspect of this topic? How would you reduce the scope of your speech to make it manageable for your public-speaking course?

3. In groups or as a class, identify five or six of the most commonly used but poorly defined terms you hear regularly. Use informative language to define those terms for your classmates. Some terms to define might be include the following:

democracy
socialism
free speech
hate speech
gun control
conservation

4. Select one of the topics from question 3 and write a specific purpose and thesis statement for a speech about that topic. Next, choose your organizational pattern and

develop the main points for this speech. How might you bring this topic to life and manage the information you have about this topic so it is relevant to the audience?

Activities and Web Links

Visit cengagebrain.com to access the CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* where these activities and web links can be found.

1. Choose one of the speeches from the list at this Web site. As you listen to the speech, write down which pattern of organization is used for this speech, which parts of the speech are information, and which parts might be persuasive. Go to *Web link 13.1*.
2. Look online for resources that will provide information on organic farming, laser surgery, or alternative fuels for automobiles. Create a speech outline for a process speech on one of these topics.