

# Basic Speech Organization Skills

Several famous speakers have commented on what the most important thing to remember for effective public speaking is: "*Tell 'em what you're going to tell, 'em; tell 'em; and then tell 'em what you told 'em.*"

It is important to explore the nature of these three speech elements.

# Introduction

The Introduction has three major roles: to catch the listener's interest, to move the topic from general to specific, and to deliver the Speech Focusing Statement

Whatever you do, do not start your speech by merely stating your topic!

# Will Ferrell Speech



# Catching the Listeners' Interest

To catch the listener's interest you may want to try a few techniques. You could ask a rhetorical question or you could start with a short story that will pull the listener in. It really does not matter what technique you use to attract the listener as long as you follow two basic rules:

*1) The story or question you choose is germane to your topic*

*2) You finish the story or answer your question in your conclusion*

# Moving Down the Funnel

Once you have everyone's attention, you next move your introduction towards your exact topic. Most speakers give a general background of the topic. Then once you have set the stage, you can begin to tighten the message in the body of the speech. Think of the process like a funnel sitting on a bottle. You start with a wide discussion at the top, and then constrict your discussion sliding down to the specifics of your topic. By the time you hit the neck of the funnel, the audience knows exactly where you are heading and what the elements of your topic will be.

# Speech Construction Methods

To answer these concerns, there are several logical patterns you can follow when designing your speech. Some of the most obvious methods for construction are as follows:

***-Trace** - show the exact steps taken on how your topic came about.*

***-Define and differ** - first, place your topic into its class (e.g., a koala is an animal that lives in a tree). Next, show how your topic differs from all other members of its class (the koala differs from all other tree-dwelling animals as far as it lives in Australia, is a marsupial, has thick, gray fur, and does television commercials).*



**-Process** - show how something is done or how to do something.

**-Problem solving** - show how to address a specific or general concern about something.

**-Describe** - describe your topic with details, trying to create a mood for your listeners. This style works well when talking about out of the ordinary topics (e.g., paint a word picture to affect the listeners' emotions. If there was a fire, describe the searing heat and the blue-red fire rather than just listing the factual details).



# Methods of Presentation

Once you have decided on the logical development of your topic, you can consider some of the various methods to present the order of your ideas:

**-Chronological order** - *the time order in which events took place.*

**-Cause to effect** - *show how your topic was the result of essential events.*

**-Climax order** - *work from the least important information to the most important.*

# Methods of Presentation

Once you have decided on the logical development of your topic, you can consider some of the various methods to present the order of your ideas:

*-**Anti-climax order** - work from the most to least important information.*

*-**Spatial order** - describe the physical setup of your topic.*

# Conclusion

Finally, you move to your conclusion. To begin, never say, "in conclusion," or "at last," in your speech. This gives the listener permission to tune you out. It is a much better idea to simply restate your introduction and tell the audience why it was important that they listened, and what you want them to do or to get out of the presentation.