

## 13.3: Building a Sample Speech

### Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate how to build a sample speech by expanding on the main points you wish to convey.
2. Demonstrate how to use the five structural parts of any speech.

As you begin to investigate your topic, make sure you consider several sides of an issue. Let's say you are going to do a speech to inform on the history of the First Transcontinental Railroad. At first you may have looked at just two sides, railroaders versus local merchants. Railroad tycoons wanted to bring the country together—moving people, goods, and services in a more efficient way—and to make money. Local merchants wanted to keep out competition and retain control of their individual markets.

Take another look at this issue and you see that several other perspectives have bearing on this issue. Shipping was done primarily by boat prior to the railroad, so shippers would not want the competition. Recent Chinese immigrants were in need of work. Native Americans did not want to lose their culture or way of life, and a railroad that crossed the country would cut right through the buffalo's migration patterns. We now have five perspectives to the central issue, which makes the topic all the more interesting.

The general purpose is to inform the audience on the First Transcontinental Railroad and its impact on a young but developing United States. The thesis statement focuses on shipping, communication, and cultures across America.

- *Topic.* First Transcontinental Railroad
- *General purpose statement.* I want the audience to be more informed about the impact of the First Transcontinental Railroad.
- *Thesis statement.* The First Transcontinental Railroad changed shipping, communication, and cultures across America.

With the information we have so far, we can now list three main points:

1. Change in shipping
2. Change in communication
3. Change in cultures

Think of each one of these main points as a separate but shorter speech. The point is to develop each of these main points like you have developed your overall speech. What do you want to focus on? The major types of shipping at the time of the First Transcontinental Railroad? One aspect you may want consider is to what degree is your audience familiar with this time in history. If they are not very familiar, a little background and context can help make your speech more meaningful and enhance its relevance to your thesis statement. By taking time to consider what you want to accomplish with each point, you will help yourself begin to address how you need to approach each point. Once you have thought about what you want to focus on for each point, list each subheading next to the main points. For example,

1. Change in shipping
  1. Navigating the waterways via barges and boats
  2. Overland stagecoaches
  3. Timetables for modes of travel
2. Change in communication
  1. Letters in the days of the Pony Express
  2. How the Morse Code telegraph system followed railroad lines
  3. Bringing people together across distances
3. Change in cultures
  1. Prerailroad immigration
  2. Impact on Native Americans
  3. Territories become States

By now you've identified your key points and are ready to start planning your speech in more detail. While your organizational structure will vary from speech to speech, there are nonetheless five main parts of any speech: attention statement, introduction, body, conclusion, and residual message. These are basic to the rhetorical process and you will see time and time again, regardless of audience or culture, these same elements in some form utilized to communicate in public. They will serve to guide you, and possibly even save you should you get a last minute request to do a speech or presentation.

Place your hand on the table or desk and you'll more likely see a thumb and four fingers. Associate your hand with these five elements. Each digit is independently quite weak, but together they make a powerful fist. Your thumb is quite versatile and your most important digit. It's a lot like your attention statement. If you don't gain the audience's attention, the rest of the speech will be ineffective.

Each successive digit can represent the remaining four parts of any speech. One day you will be asked to speak with little or no time for preparation. By focusing on this organizational model, and looking down at your hand, you can quickly and accurately prepare your speech. With the luxury of time for preparation, each step can even be further developed. Remember the five-finger model of public speaking, as summarized in Table 13.3.1, and you will always stand out as a more effective speaker.

Table 13.3.1: Five-Finger Model of Public Speaking

Attention Statement	The attention statement is the way you focus the audience's attention on you and your speech.
Introduction	Your introduction introduces you and your topic, and should establish a relationship with your audience and state your topic clearly.
Body	In the body, or main content area of your speech, you will naturally turn to one of the organizational patterns.
Conclusion	Your conclusion should provide the audience with a sense of closure by summarizing the main points and relating the points to the overall topic.
Residual Message	The residual message is an idea or thought that stays with your audience well after the speech.

### Key Takeaway

Speeches are built by identifying the main points to be communicated and by following five structural elements (attention statement, introduction, body, conclusion, and residual message).

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