COMM 301: PUBLIC SPEAKING (DEMERCURIO)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

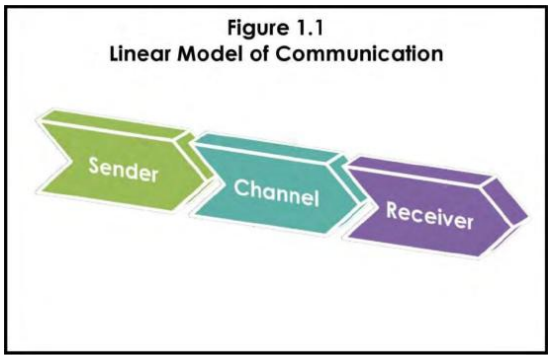
1: What is Communication?

1.1: Model of Communication

It should be clear by now that public speaking happens all around us in many segments of our lives. However, to truly understand what is happening within these presentations, we need to take a step back and look at some of the key components of the communication process.

Linear Model of Communication

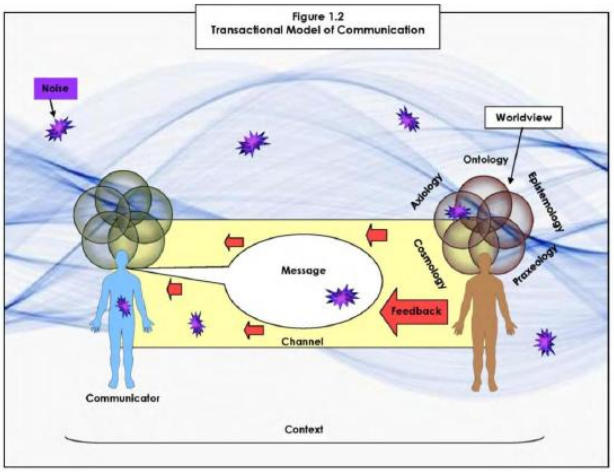
The first theoretical model of communication was proposed in 1949 by Shannon and Weaver for Bell Laboratories (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). This three-part model was intended to capture the radio and television transmission process. However it was later adapted to human communication and is now known as the linear model of communication. The first part of the model is the sender, and this is the person who is speaking. The second part of the model is the channel, which is the apparatus for carrying the message (i.e., the phone or T.V.). The third part of the model is the receiver, and this is the person who picks up the message. In this model, communication is seen as a one-way process of transmitting a message from one person to another person. This model can be found in Figure 1.1. If you think about situations when you communicate with another person face-to-face or when you give a speech, you probably realize that this model is inadequate – communication is much more complicated than firing off a message to others.



He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying. ~ Friedrich Nietzsche

Transactional Model of Communication

Models of communication have evolved significantly since Shannon and Weaver first proposed their well-known conceptual model over sixty years ago. One of the most useful models for understanding public speaking is Barnlund's (2008) transactional model of communication. In the transactional model, communication is seen as an ongoing, circular process. We are constantly affecting and are affected by those we communicate with. The transactional model has a number of interdependent processes and components, including the encoding and decoding processes, the communicator, the message, the channel and noise. Although not directly addressed in Barnlund's (2008) original transactional model, participants' world views and the context also play an important role in the communication process. See Figure 1.2 for an illustration.



1.2: Elements of the Communication Process

Encoding and Decoding

Encoding refers to the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message. So, if you wanted to explain to your aunt the directions to your new apartment, you would picture in your mind the landscape, streets and buildings, and then you would select the best words that describe the route so your aunt could find you.

Decoding is the reverse process of **listening** to words, thinking about them, and turning those words into mental images. If your aunt were trying to find her way to your apartment, she would listen to your words, associate these words with streets and landmarks that she knows, and then she would form a mental map of the way to get to you. Ramsey's "Using Language Well" (Chapter 10) provides additional insight into the encoding and decoding process.

Communicator

The term **communicator** refers to all of the people in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver, because when we are communicating with other people we are not only sending a message, we are receiving messages from others simultaneously. When we speak, we observe others' **nonverbal behavior** to see if they understand us and we gauge their emotional state. The information we gain from these observations is known as feedback. Over the telephone, we listen to paralinguistic cues, such as pitch, tone, volume and fillers (i.e., "um," "uh," "er," "like," and so on). This means that communication is not a one-way process. Even in a public speaking situation, we watch and listen to audience members' responses. If audience members are interested, agree, and understand us, they may lean forward in their seats, nod their heads, have positive or neutral facial expressions, and provide favorable vocal cues (such as laughter, "That's right," "Uh huh," or "Amen!"). If audience members are bored, disagree, or are confused by our message, they may be texting or looking away from us, shake their heads, have unhappy or confused expressions on their faces, or present oppositional vocal cues (like groans, "I don't think so," "That doesn't make sense," or "You're crazy!"). Thus, communication is always a transactional process – a give and take of messages.

Message

The **message** involves those verbal and nonverbal behaviors, enacted by communicators, that are interpreted with meaning by others. The verbal portion of the message refers to the words that we speak, while the nonverbal portion includes our tone of voice and other non-vocal components such as personal appearance, posture, gestures and body movements, eye behavior, the way we use space, and even the way that we smell. For instance, the person who gets up to speak wearing a nice suit will be interpreted more positively than a person giving the exact same speech wearing sweats and a graphic t-shirt. Or if a speaker tries to convince others to donate to a charity that builds wells in poor African villages using a monotone voice, she will not be as effective as the speaker who gives the same speech but speaks with a solemn tone of voice. If there is ever a conflict between the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of a message, people will generally believe the nonverbal portion of the message. To test this, tighten your muscles, clench your fists at your sides, pull your eye brows together, purse your lips, and tell someone in a harsh voice, "NO, I'm NOT angry!" See if they believe your words or your nonverbal behavior.

The message can also be intentional or unintentional. When the message is intentional, this means that we have an image in our mind that we wish to communicate to an audience or a person in a conversation, and we can successfully convey the image from our mind to others' minds with relative accuracy. An unintentional message is sent when the message that we wish to convey is not the same as the message the other person receives. Let's say you are returning from an outing with your significant other and she or he asks, "Did you have a good time?" You *did* have a good time but are distracted by a T.V. commercial when asked, so you reply in a neutral tone, "Sure, I had fun." Your significant other may interpret your apathetic tone of voice and lack of eye contact to mean that you did not enjoy the evening, when in fact you actually did. Thus as communicators, we cannot always be sure that the message we wish to communicate is interpreted as we intended.

Channel

The **channel** is very simply the means through which the message travels. In face-to-face communication the channel involves all of our senses, so the channel is what we see, hear, touch, smell and perhaps what we taste. When we're communicating with someone online, the channel is the computer; when texting the channel is the cell phone; and when watching a movie on cable, the channel is the TV. The channel can have a profound impact on the way a message is interpreted. Listening to a recording of a speaker does not have the same psychological impact as listening to the same speech in person or watching that person on television. One famous example of this is the 1960 televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. According to History.com (2012), on camera, Nixon looked away from the camera at the reporters asking him questions, he was sweating and pale, he had facial hair stubble, and he wore a grey suit that faded into the set background. “Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley reportedly said [of Nixon], ‘My God, they've embalmed him before he even died” (History.com, 2012). Kennedy, on the other hand, looked into the camera, was tanned, wore a dark suit that made him stand out from the background, and appeared to be calm after spending the entire weekend with aides practicing in a hotel room. Most of those who listened to the radio broadcast of the debate felt that it was a tie or that Nixon had won, while 70% of those watching the televised debate felt that Kennedy was the winner.

Noise

The next aspect of the model of communication is noise. **Noise** refers to anything that interferes with message transmission or reception (i.e., getting the image from your head into others’ heads). There are several different types of noise. The first type of noise is **physiological noise**, and this refers to bodily processes and states that interfere with a message. For instance, if a speaker has a headache or the flu, or if audience members are hot or they're hungry, these conditions may interfere with message accuracy. The second type of noise is psychological noise.

Psychological noise refers to mental states or emotional states that impede message transmission or reception. For example, if someone has just broken up with a significant other, or if they're worried about their grandmother who is in the hospital, or if they are thinking about their shopping list, this may interfere with communication processes as well. The third type of noise is actual **physical noise**, and this would be simply the actual sound level in a room. Loud music playing at a party, a number of voices of people talking excitedly, a lawnmower right outside the window, or anything that is overly loud will interfere with communication. The last type of noise is cultural noise. **Cultural noise** refers to message interference that results from differences in peoples’ worldviews. Worldview is discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the greater the difference in worldview, the more difficult it is to understand one another and communicate effectively.

Worldview

Most people don’t give a lot of thought to the communication process. In the majority of our interactions with others, we are operating on automatic pilot. Although the encoding and decoding process may appear to be fairly straightforward, it is actually much more complicated than it seems. The reason for this is because we all have different worldviews. **Worldview** is the overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it. There are five core components to our worldview.

1. **Epistemology** is the way that we acquire knowledge and/or what counts as knowledge. Think about the process of conducting research. Thirty years ago, to find a series of facts one had to use a card catalogue and scour the library stacks for books. Now researchers can access thousands of pages of information via their computer from the comfort of their own home. Epistemology is linked to public speaking because it governs audience members' preferred learning styles and who or what they consider to be credible sources.

2. **Ontology** refers to our belief system, how we see the nature of reality or what we see as true or false. We may (or may not) believe in aliens from outer space, that butter is bad for you, that the Steelers will win the Superbowl, or that humans will be extinct in 200 years. Speech writers should be careful not to presume that audience members share the same beliefs. If a speaker claims that illness can be aided with prayer, but several people in the audience are atheists, at best the speaker has lost credibility and at worst these audience members could be offended.

3. **Axiology** represents our value system, or what we see as right or wrong, good or bad, and fair or unfair. One of the ways that you can tell what people value is to ask them what their goals are, or to ask them what qualities they look for in a life partner. Our values represent the things that we hope for --they do not represent reality. Values can have an impact on multiple levels of the public speaking process, but in particular values impact speaker credibility and effectiveness in persuasion. For instance, some cultures value modest dress in women, so a female speaker wearing a sleeveless blouse while speaking could cause her to lose credibility with some audience members. Or if audience members value the freedom to bear arms over the benefits of government regulation, a speaker will have a difficult time convincing these audience members to vote for stricter gun control legislation.

> *It is always good to explore the stuff you don't agree with, to try and understand a different lifestyle or foreign worldview. I like to be challenged in that way, and always end up learning something I didn't know. ~ Laura Linney*

4. **Cosmology** signifies the way that we see our relationship to the universe and to other people. Cosmology dictates our view of power relationships and may involve our religious or spiritual beliefs. Controversial speech topics (like universal health care and the death penalty) are often related to this aspect of worldview as we must consider our responsibilities to other human beings and our power to influence them. Interestingly, cosmology would also play a role in such logistical points as who is allowed to speak, the order of speakers on a schedule (e.g., from most to least important), the amount of time a speaker has to speak, the seating arrangement on the dais, and who gets the front seats in the audience.

5. **Praxeology** denotes our preferred method of completing everyday tasks or our approach to solving problems. Some speech writers may begin working on their outlines as soon as they know they will need to give a speech, while others may wait until a few days before their speech to begin preparing (we do not recommend this approach). Praxeology may also have an impact on a speaker's preference of delivery style, methods of arranging main points, and choice of slideware (i.e., Power Point versus Prezi).

It is important to understand worldview because it has a profound impact on the encoding and decoding process, and consequently on our ability to be understood by others. Try this simple experiment. Ask two or three people to silently imagine a dog while you imagine a dog at the same time. "Dog" is a very **concrete word** (a word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses), and it is one of the first words children in the United States learn in school. Wait a few seconds and then ask each person what type of dog they were thinking of. Was it a Chihuahua? A greyhound? Golden retriever? Rottweiler? Or some other dog? Most likely each person you asked had a different image in his or her mind than you had in yours. This is our worldview at work.

To further illustrate, you may tell a co-worker, "I can't wait to go home this weekend – we are having lasagna!" Seems like a fairly clear-cut statement, doesn't it? Unfortunately, it is not. While "lasagna" is also a concrete word, our worldviews cause us to interpret each word in the statement differently. Where is "home?" Who is making the meal? What ingredients will be used in the lasagna? Is this dish eaten as a regular meal or for a special occasion? Will there be leftovers? Are friends invited? Since everyone who has eaten lasagna has had a different experience of the cuisine, we all acquire a different image in our mind when we hear the statement "…we are having lasagna!"

Complicating matters is the fact that the more abstract the word becomes, the more room there is for interpretation. **Abstract words** (words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality) like "peace," "love," "immoral," "justice," "freedom," "success," and "honor" can have a number of different meanings; each of which is predicated on one's worldview. Communicators have their own unique worldviews that shape both the encoding and decoding processes, which means that we can never be completely understood by another person. People from the Midwest may call carbonated beverages "pop," while those from the east coast may say "soda," and those from Georgia may say "coke." Even when simple terms are used like "oak tree" or "fire hydrant," each listener will form a different mental image when decoding the message. Never take communication for granted, and never assume your listener will understand you. It takes hard work to make yourself understood by an audience.

Context

> *Context is worth 80 IQ points. ~ Alan Kay*

The last element of the communication process is the **context** in which the speech or interaction takes place. In the 1980's context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of worship, an apartment, a workplace, a noisy restaurant, or a grocery store. People communicate differently in each one of these places as there are unwritten rules of communication (called **norms**) that govern these settings. More recently the concept of context has evolved and expanded to include the type of relationships we have with others and the communicative rules that govern those relationships. So you do not speak the same way to your best friend as you do to a small child, your parent, your boss, your doctor or a police officer. And you may speak to your best friend differently in your apartment than you do in your parents' home, and your communication may also change when you are both out with friends on the weekend. In sum, the context refers to the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Overcoming Public Speaking Fears

2.1: Speaking Confidently

Battling Nerves and the Unexpected

Figure 2.1.1: Ron Bulovs – Speech! – CC BY 2.0.

One of your biggest concerns about public speaking might be how to deal with nervousness or unexpected events. If that's the case, you're not alone—fear of speaking in public consistently ranks at the top of lists of people's common fears. Some people are not joking when they say they would rather die than stand up and speak in front of a live audience. The fear of public speaking ranks right up there with the fear of flying, death, and spiders (Wallechinsky, Wallace, & Wallace, 1977). Even if you are one of the fortunate few who don't typically get nervous when speaking in public, it's important to recognize things that can go wrong and be mentally prepared for them. On occasion, everyone misplaces speaking notes, has technical difficulties with a presentation aid, or gets distracted by an audience member. Speaking confidently involves knowing how to deal with these and other unexpected events while speaking.

In this chapter, we will help you gain knowledge about speaking confidently by exploring what communication apprehension is, examining the different types and causes of communication apprehension, suggesting strategies you can use to manage your fears of public speaking, and providing tactics you can use to deal with a variety of unexpected events you might encounter while speaking.

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2.1.1: What Is Communication Apprehension?

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the nature of communication apprehension.
2. List the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension.
3. Identify different misconceptions about communication anxiety.

"Speech is a mirror of the soul," commented Publilius Syrus, a popular writer in 42 BCE (Bartlett, 1919). Other people come to know who we are through our words. Many different social situations, ranging from job interviews to dating to public speaking, can make us feel uncomfortable as we anticipate that we will be evaluated and judged by others. How well we communicate is intimately connected to our self-image, and the process of revealing ourselves to the evaluation of others can be threatening whether we are meeting new acquaintances, participating in group discussions, or speaking in front of an audience.

Definition of Communication Apprehension

According to James McCroskey, **communication apprehension** is the broad term that refers to an individual's "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 2001). At its heart, communication apprehension is a psychological response to evaluation. This psychological response, however, quickly becomes physical as our body responds to the threat the mind perceives. Our bodies cannot distinguish between psychological and physical threats, so we react as though we were facing a Mack truck barreling in our direction. The body's circulatory and adrenal systems shift into overdrive, preparing us to function at maximum physical efficiency—the "flight or fight" response (Sapolsky, 2004). Yet instead of running away or fighting, all we need to do is stand and talk. When it comes to communication apprehension, our physical responses are often not well adapted to the nature of the threat we face, as the excess energy created by our body can make it harder for us to be effective public speakers. But because communication apprehension is rooted in our minds, if we understand more about the nature of the body's responses to stress, we can better develop mechanisms for managing the body's misguided attempts to help us cope with our fear of social judgment.

Physiological Symptoms of Communication Apprehension

Figure 2.1.1.1: Isaac Mao – Brain – CC BY 2.0.

There are a number of physical sensations associated with communication apprehension. We might notice our heart pounding or our hands feeling clammy. We may break out in a sweat. We may have "stomach butterflies" or even feel nauseated. Our hands and legs might start to shake, or we may begin to pace nervously. Our voices may quiver, and we may have a "dry mouth" sensation that makes it difficult to articulate even simple words. Breathing becomes more rapid and, in extreme cases, we might feel dizzy or light-headed. Anxiety about communicating is profoundly disconcerting because we feel powerless to control our bodies. Furthermore, we may become so anxious that we fear we will forget our name, much less remember the main points of the speech we are about to deliver.

The physiological changes produced in the body at critical moments are designed to contribute to the efficient use of muscles and expand available energy. Circulation and breathing become more rapid so that additional oxygen can reach the muscles. Increased circulation causes us to sweat. Adrenaline rushes through our body, instructing the body to speed up its movements. If we stay immobile behind a lectern, this hormonal urge to speed up may produce shaking and trembling. Additionally, digestive processes are inhibited so we will not lapse into the relaxed, sleepy state that is typical after eating. Instead of feeling sleepy, we feel butterflies in the pit of our stomach. By understanding what is happening to our bodies in response to the stress of public speaking, we can better cope with these reactions and channel them in constructive directions.

Any conscious emotional state such as anxiety or excitement consists of two components: a primary reaction of the central nervous system and an intellectual interpretation of these physiological responses. The physiological state we label as communication anxiety does not differ from ones we label rage or excitement. Even experienced, effective speakers and performers experience some communication apprehension. What differs is the mental label that we put on the experience. Effective speakers have learned to channel their body's reactions, using the energy released by these physiological reactions to create animation and stage presence.

Myths about Communication Apprehension

Figure 2.1.1.2: Speaker at Podium – CC BY 2.0.

A wealth of conventional wisdom surrounds the discomfort of speaking anxiety, as it surrounds almost any phenomenon that makes us uncomfortable. Most of this "folk" knowledge misleads us, directing our attention away from effective strategies for thinking about and coping with anxiety reactions. Before we look in more detail at the types of communication apprehension, let's dispel some of the myths about it.

1. **People who suffer from speaking anxiety are neurotic.** As we have explained, speaking anxiety is a normal reaction. Good speakers can get nervous just as poor speakers do. Winston Churchill, for example, would get physically ill before major speeches in Parliament. Yet he rallied the British people in a time of crisis. Many people, even the most professional performers, experience anxiety about communicating. Such a widespread problem, Dr. Joyce Brothers contends, "cannot be attributed to deep-seated neuroses" (Brothers, 2008).
2. **Telling a joke or two is always a good way to begin a speech.** Humor is some of the toughest material to deliver effectively because it requires an exquisite sense of timing. Nothing is worse than waiting for a laugh that does not come. Moreover, one person's joke is another person's slander. It is extremely easy to offend when using humor. The same material can play very differently with different audiences. For these reasons, it is not a good idea to start with a joke, particularly if it is not well related to your topic. Humor is just too unpredictable and difficult for many novice speakers. If you insist on using humor, make sure the "joke" is on you, not on someone else. Another tip is never to pause and wait for a laugh that may not come. If the audience catches the joke, fine. If not, you're not left standing in awkward silence waiting for a reaction.
3. **Imagine the audience is naked.** This tip just plain doesn't work because imagining the audience naked will do nothing to calm your nerves. As Malcolm Kushner noted, "There are some folks in the audience I wouldn't want to see naked—especially if I'm trying *not* to be frightened" (Kushner, 1999). The audience is not some abstract image in your mind. It consists of real individuals who you can connect with through your material. To "imagine" the audience is to misdirect your focus from the real people in front of you to an "imagined" group. What we imagine is usually more threatening than the reality that we face.
4. **Any mistake means that you have "blown it."** We all make mistakes. What matters is not whether we make a mistake but how well we recover. One of the authors of this book was giving a speech and wanted to thank a former student in the audience. Instead of saying "former student," she said, "former friend." After the audience stopped laughing, the speaker remarked, "Well, I guess she'll be a *former* friend now!"—which got more laughter from the audience. A speech does not have to be perfect. You just have to make an effort to relate to the audience naturally and be willing to accept your mistakes.
5. **Avoid speaking anxiety by writing your speech out word for word and memorizing it.** Memorizing your speech word for word will likely make your apprehension worse rather than better. Instead of remembering three to five main points and subpoints, you will try to commit to memory more than a thousand bits of data. If you forget a point, the only way to get back on track is to start from the beginning. You are inviting your mind to go blank by overloading it with details. In addition, audiences do not like to listen to "canned," or memorized, material. Your delivery is likely to suffer if you memorize. Audiences appreciate speakers who talk naturally to them rather than recite a written script.
6. **Audiences are out to get you.** With only a few exceptions, which we will talk about in Section 3.2 "All Anxiety Is Not the Same: Sources of Communication Apprehension", the natural state of audiences is empathy, not antipathy. Most face-to-face

audiences are interested in your material, not in your image. Watching someone who is anxious tends to make audience members anxious themselves. Particularly in public speaking classes, audiences want to see you succeed. They know that they will soon be in your shoes and they identify with you, most likely hoping you'll succeed and give them ideas for how to make their own speeches better. If you establish direct eye contact with real individuals in your audience, you will see them respond to what you are saying, and this response lets you know that you are succeeding.

7. **You will look to the audience as nervous as you feel.** Empirical research has shown that audiences do not perceive the level of nervousness that speakers report feeling (Clevenger, 1959). Most listeners judge speakers as less anxious than the speakers rate themselves. In other words, the audience is not likely to perceive accurately the level of anxiety you might be experiencing. Some of the most effective speakers will return to their seats after their speech and exclaim they were **so** nervous. Listeners will respond, "You didn't look nervous." Audiences do not necessarily perceive our fears. Consequently, don't apologize for your nerves. There is a good chance the audience will not notice if you do not point it out to them.
8. **A little nervousness helps you give a better speech.** This "myth" is true! Professional speakers, actors, and other performers consistently rely on the heightened arousal of nervousness to channel extra energy into their performance. People would much rather listen to a speaker who is alert and enthusiastic than one who is relaxed to the point of boredom. Many professional speakers say that the day they stop feeling nervous is the day they should stop speaking in public. The goal is to control those nerves and channel them into your presentation.

Key Takeaways

- Communication apprehension refers to the fear or anxiety people experience at the thought of being evaluated by others. Some anxiety is a normal part of the communication process.
- The psychological threat individuals perceive in the communication situation prompts physiological changes designed to help the body respond. These physical reactions to stress create the uncomfortable feelings of unease called speech anxiety and may include sweaty palms, shaking, butterflies in the stomach, and dry mouth.
- A great deal of conventional advice for managing stage fright is misleading, including suggestions that speech anxiety is neurotic, that telling a joke is a good opening, that imagining the audience naked is helpful, that any mistake is fatal to an effective speech, that memorizing a script is useful, that audiences are out to get you, and that your audience sees how nervous you really are.

Exercises

1. Create an inventory of the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension you experience when engaged in public speaking. Which ones are you most interested in learning to manage?
2. With a partner or in a small group, discuss which myths create the biggest problems for public speakers. Why do people believe in these myths?

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2.1.2: All Anxiety Is Not the Same: Sources of Communication Apprehension

Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish among the four different types of communication apprehension.
2. Identify various factors that cause communication apprehension.

We have said that experiencing some form of anxiety is a normal part of the communication process. Most people are anxious about being evaluated by an audience. Interestingly, many people assume that their nervousness is an experience unique to them. They assume that other people do not feel anxious when confronting the threat of public speaking (McCroskey, 2001). Although anxiety is a widely shared response to the stress of public speaking, not all anxiety is the same. Many researchers have investigated the differences between apprehension grounded in personality characteristics and anxiety prompted by a particular situation at a particular time (Witt, et. al., 2006). McCroskey argues there are four types of communication apprehension: anxiety related to trait, context, audience, and situation (McCroskey, 2001). If you understand these different types of apprehension, you can gain insight into the varied communication factors that contribute to speaking anxiety.

Trait Anxiety

Some people are just more disposed to communication apprehension than others. As Witt, Brown, Roberts, Weisel, Sawyer, and Behnke explain, "**Trait anxiety** measures how people *generally* feel across situations and time periods" (Witt, et. al., 2006). This means that some people feel more uncomfortable than the average person regardless of the context, audience, or situation. It doesn't matter whether you are raising your hand in a group discussion, talking with people you meet at a party, or giving speeches in a class, you're likely to be uncomfortable in all these settings if you experience trait anxiety. While trait anxiety is not the same as shyness, those with high trait anxiety are more likely to avoid exposure to public speaking situations, so their nervousness might be compounded by lack of experience or skill (Witt, et. al., 2006). People who experience trait anxiety may never like public speaking, but through preparation and practice, they can learn to give effective public speeches when they need to do so.

Context Anxiety

Figure 2.1.2.1: MTEA – Michelle Alexander at Podium – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Context anxiety refers to anxiety prompted by specific communication contexts. Some of the major context factors that can heighten this form of anxiety are formality, uncertainty, and novelty.

Formality

Some individuals can be perfectly composed when talking at a meeting or in a small group; yet when faced with a more formal public speaking setting, they become intimidated and nervous. As the formality of the communication context increases, the stakes are raised, sometimes prompting more apprehension. Certain communication contexts, such as a press conference or a courtroom, can make even the most confident individuals nervous. One reason is that these communication contexts presuppose an adversarial relationship between the speaker and some audience members.

Uncertainty

In addition, it is hard to predict and control the flow of information in such contexts, so the level of uncertainty is high. The feelings of context anxiety might be similar to those you experience on the first day of class with a new instructor: you don't know what to expect, so you are more nervous than you might be later in the semester when you know the instructor and the class routine better.

Novelty

Additionally, most of us are not experienced in high-tension communication settings. The novelty of the communication context we encounter is another factor contributing to apprehension. Anxiety becomes more of an issue in communication environments that are new to us, even for those who are normally comfortable with speaking in public.

Most people can learn through practice to cope with their anxiety prompted by formal, uncertain, and novel communication contexts. Fortunately, most public speaking classroom contexts are not adversarial. The opportunities you have to practice giving speeches reduces the novelty and uncertainty of the public speaking context, enabling most students to learn how to cope with anxiety prompted by the communication context.

Audience Anxiety

For some individuals, it is not the communication context that prompts anxiety; it is the people in the audience they face. **Audience anxiety** describes communication apprehension prompted by specific audience characteristics. These characteristics include similarity, subordinate status, audience size, and familiarity.

You might have no difficulty talking to an audience of your peers in student government meetings, but an audience composed of parents and students on a campus visit might make you nervous because of the presence of parents in the audience. The degree of perceived similarity between you and your audience can influence your level of speech anxiety. We all prefer to talk to an audience that we believe shares our values more than to one that does not. The more dissimilar we are compared to our audience members, the more likely we are to be nervous. Studies have shown that subordinate status can also contribute to speaking anxiety (Witt, et. al., 2006). Talking in front of your boss or teacher may be intimidating, especially if you are being evaluated. The size of the audience can also play a role: the larger the audience, the more threatening it may seem. Finally, familiarity can be a factor. Some of us prefer talking to strangers rather than to people we know well. Others feel more nervous in front of an audience of friends and family because there is more pressure to perform well.

Situational Anxiety

Situational anxiety, McCroskey explains, is the communication apprehension created by “the unique combination of influences generated by audience, time and context” (McCroskey, 2001). Each communication event involves several dimensions: physical, temporal, social-psychological, and cultural. These dimensions combine to create a unique communication situation that is different from any previous communication event. The situation created by a given audience, in a given time, and in a given context can coalesce into situational anxiety.

For example, I once had to give a presentation at a general faculty meeting on general education assessment. To my surprise, I found myself particularly nervous about this speech. The audience was familiar to me but was relatively large compared to most classroom settings. I knew the audience well enough to know that my topic was controversial for some faculty members who resented the mandate for assessment coming from top administration. The meeting occurred late on a Friday afternoon, and my presentation was scheduled more than an hour into the two-hour meeting. All these factors combined to produce situational anxiety for me. While I successfully applied the principles that we will discuss in Section 3.3 “Reducing Communication Apprehension” for managing stage fright, this speaking situation stands out in my mind as one of the most nerve-wracking speaking challenges I have ever faced.

Key Takeaways

- Communication apprehension stems from many sources, including the speaker’s personality characteristics, communication context, nature of the audience, or situation.
- Many factors exaggerate communication apprehension. Formality, familiarity, novelty, perceived similarity, and subordinate status are a few of the factors that influence our tendency to feel anxious while speaking.

Exercises

1. Make a list of sources of your communication apprehension. What factors contribute most to your anxiety about public speaking?

References

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2.1.3: Reducing Communication Apprehension

Learning Objectives

1. Explain steps for managing anxiety in the speech preparation process.
2. Identify effective techniques for coping with anxiety during delivery.
3. Recognize the general options available for stress reduction and anxiety management.

Figure 2.1.3.1: Freddie Pena – Nervous? – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Experiencing some nervousness about public speaking is normal. The energy created by this physiological response can be functional if you harness it as a resource for more effective public speaking. In this section, we suggest a number of steps that you can take to channel your stage fright into excitement and animation. We will begin with specific speech-related considerations and then briefly examine some of the more general anxiety management options available.

Speech-Related Considerations

Communication apprehension does not necessarily remain constant throughout all the stages of speech preparation and delivery. One group of researchers studied the ebb and flow of anxiety levels at four stages in the delivery of a speech. They compared indicators of physiological stress at different milestones in the process:

- anticipation (the minute prior to starting the speech),
- confrontation (the first minute of the speech),
- adaptation (the last minute of the speech), and
- release (the minute immediately following the end of the speech) (Witt, et. al., 2006).

These researchers found that anxiety typically peaked at the anticipatory stage. In other words, we are likely to be most anxious right before we get up to speak. As we progress through our speech, our level of anxiety is likely to decline. Planning your speech to incorporate techniques for managing your nervousness at different times will help you decrease the overall level of stress you experience. We also offer a number of suggestions for managing your reactions while you are delivering your speech.

Think Positively

As we mentioned earlier, communication apprehension begins in the mind as a psychological response. This underscores the importance of a speaker's psychological attitude toward speaking. To prepare yourself mentally for a successful speaking experience, we recommend using a technique called **cognitive restructuring**. Cognitive restructuring is simply changing how you label the physiological responses you will experience. Rather than thinking of public speaking as a dreaded obligation, make a conscious decision to consider it an exciting opportunity. The first audience member that you have to convince is yourself, by deliberately replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. If you say something to yourself often enough, you will gradually come to believe it.

We also suggest practicing what communication scholars Metcalfe, Beebe, and Beebe call **positive self-talk** rather than **negative self-talk** (Metcalfe, 1994; Beebe, 2000). If you find yourself thinking, "I'm going to forget everything when I get to the front of the room," turn that negative message around to a positive one. Tell yourself, "I have notes to remind me what comes next, and the audience won't know if I don't cover everything in the order I planned." The idea is to dispute your negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones, even if you think you are "conning" yourself. By monitoring how you talk about yourself, you can unlearn old patterns and change the ways you think about things that produce anxiety.

Reducing Anxiety through Preparation

As we have said earlier in this chapter, uncertainty makes for greater anxiety. Nothing is more frightening than facing the unknown. Although no one can see into the future and predict everything that will happen during a speech, every speaker can and should prepare so that the "unknowns" of the speech event are kept to a minimum. You can do this by gaining as much knowledge as possible about whom you will be addressing, what you will say, how you will say it, and where the speech will take place.

Analyze Your Audience

The audience that we imagine in our minds is almost always more threatening than the reality of the people sitting in front of us. The more information you have about the characteristics of your audience, the more you will be able to craft an effective message. Since your stage fright is likely to be at its highest in the beginning of your speech, it is helpful to open the speech with a technique to prompt an audience response. You might try posing a question, asking for a show of hands, or sharing a story that you know is relevant to your listeners' experience. When you see the audience responding to you by nodding, smiling, or answering questions, you will have directed the focus of attention from yourself to the audience. Such responses indicate success; they are positively reinforcing, and thus reduce your nervousness.

Clearly Organize Your Ideas

Being prepared as a speaker means knowing the main points of your message so well that you can remember them even when you are feeling highly anxious, and the best way to learn those points is to create an outline for your speech. With a clear outline to follow, you will find it much easier to move from one point to the next without stumbling or getting lost.

A note of caution is in order: you do not want to react to the stress of speaking by writing and memorizing a manuscript. Your audience will usually be able to tell that you wrote your speech out verbatim, and they will tune out very quickly. You are setting yourself up for disaster if you try to memorize a written text because the pressure of having to remember all those particulars will be tremendous. Moreover, if you have a momentary memory lapse during a memorized speech, you may have a lot of trouble continuing without starting over at the beginning.

What you do want to prepare is a simple outline that reminds you of the progression of ideas in your speech. What is important is the order of your points, not the specifics of each sentence. It is perfectly fine if your speech varies in terms of specific language or examples each time you practice it.

It may be a good idea to reinforce this organization through visual aids. When it comes to managing anxiety, visual aids have the added benefit of taking attention off the speaker.

Adapt Your Language to the Oral Mode

Another reason not to write out your speech as a manuscript is that to speak effectively you want your language to be adapted to the oral, not the written, mode. You will find your speaking anxiety more manageable if you speak in the oral mode because it will help you to feel like you are having a conversation with friends rather than delivering a formal proclamation.

Appropriate oral style is more concrete and vivid than written style. Effective speaking relies on verbs rather than nouns, and the language is less complex. Long sentences may work well for novelists such as William Faulkner or James Joyce, where readers can go back and reread passages two, three, or even seven or eight times. Your listeners, though, cannot "rewind" you in order to catch ideas they miss the first time through.

Don't be afraid to use personal pronouns freely, frequently saying "I" and "me"—or better yet, "us" and "we." Personal pronouns are much more effective in speaking than language constructions, such as the following "this author," because they help you to build a connection with your audience. Another oral technique is to build audience questions into your speech. Rhetorical questions, questions that do not require a verbal answer, invite the audience to participate with your material by thinking about the implications of the question and how it might be answered. If you are graphic and concrete in your language selection, your audience is more likely to listen attentively. You will be able to see the audience listening, and this feedback will help to reduce your anxiety.

Practice in Conditions Similar to Those You Will Face When Speaking

It is not enough to practice your speech silently in your head. To reduce anxiety and increase the likelihood of a successful performance, you need to practice out loud in a situation similar to the one you will face when actually performing your speech.

Practice delivering your speech out loud while standing on your feet. If you make a mistake, do not stop to correct it but continue all the way through your speech; that is what you will have to do when you are in front of the audience.

If possible, practice in the actual room where you will be giving your speech. Not only will you have a better sense of what it will feel like to actually speak, but you may also have the chance to practice using presentation aids and potentially avoid distractions and glitches like incompatible computers, blown projector bulbs, or sunlight glaring in your eyes.

Two very useful tools for anxiety-reducing practice are a clock and a mirror. Use the clock to time your speech, being aware that most novice speakers speak too fast, not too slowly. By ensuring that you are within the time guidelines, you will eliminate the embarrassment of having to cut your remarks short because you've run out of time or of not having enough to say to fulfill the assignment. Use the mirror to gauge how well you are maintaining eye contact with your audience; it will allow you to check that you are looking up from your notes. It will also help you build the habit of using appropriate facial expressions to convey the emotions in your speech. While you might feel a little absurd practicing your speech out loud in front of a mirror, the practice that you do before your speech can make you much less anxious when it comes time to face the audience.

Watch What You Eat

A final tip about preparation is to watch what you eat immediately before speaking. The butterflies in your stomach are likely to be more noticeable if you skip normal meals. While you should eat normally, you should avoid caffeinated drinks because they can make your shaking hands worse. Carbohydrates operate as natural sedatives, so you may want to eat carbohydrates to help slow down your metabolism and to avoid fried or very spicy foods that may upset your stomach. Especially if you are speaking in the morning, be sure to have breakfast. If you haven't had anything to eat or drink since dinner the night before, dizziness and light-headedness are very real possibilities.

Reducing Nervousness during Delivery

Anticipate the Reactions of Your Body

There are a number of steps you can take to counteract the negative physiological effects of stress on the body. **Deep breathing** will help to counteract the effects of excess adrenaline. You can place symbols in your notes, like "slow down" or ☺, that remind you to pause and breathe during points in your speech. It is also a good idea to pause a moment before you get started to set an appropriate pace from the onset. Look at your audience and smile. It is a reflex for some of your audience members to smile back. Those smiles will reassure you that your audience members are friendly.

Physical movement helps to channel some of the excess energy that your body produces in response to anxiety. If at all possible, move around the front of the room rather than remaining imprisoned behind the lectern or gripping it for dear life (avoid pacing nervously from side to side, however). Move closer to the audience and then stop for a moment. If you are afraid that moving away from the lectern will reveal your shaking hands, use note cards rather than a sheet of paper for your outline. Note cards do not quiver like paper, and they provide you with something to do with your hands.

Vocal warm-ups are also important before speaking. Just as athletes warm up before practice or competition and musicians warm up before playing, speakers need to get their voices ready to speak. Talking with others before your speech or quietly humming to yourself can get your voice ready for your presentation. You can even sing or practice a bit of your speech out loud while you're in the shower (just don't wake the neighbors), where the warm, moist air is beneficial for your vocal mechanism. Gently yawning a few times is also an excellent way to stretch the key muscle groups involved in speaking.

Immediately before you speak, you can relax the muscles of your neck and shoulders, rolling your head gently from side to side. Allow your arms to hang down your sides and stretch out your shoulders. **Isometric exercises** that involve momentarily tensing and then relaxing specific muscle groups are an effective way to keep your muscles from becoming stiff.

Focus on the Audience, Not on Yourself

During your speech, make a point of establishing direct eye contact with your audience members. By looking at individuals, you establish a series of one-to-one contacts similar to interpersonal communication. An audience becomes much less threatening when you think of them not as an anonymous mass but as a collection of individuals.

A colleague once shared his worst speaking experience when he reached the front of the room and forgot everything he was supposed to say. When I asked what he saw when he was in the front of the room, he looked at me like I was crazy. He responded,

"I didn't see anything. All I remember is a mental image of me up there in the front of the room blowing it." Speaking anxiety becomes more intense if you focus on yourself rather than concentrating on your audience and your material.

Maintain Your Sense of Humor

No matter how well we plan, unexpected things happen. That fact is what makes the public speaking situation so interesting. When the unexpected happens to you, do not let it rattle you. At the end of a class period late in the afternoon of a long day, a student raised her hand and asked me if I knew that I was wearing two different colored shoes, one black and one blue. I looked down and saw that she was right; my shoes did not match. I laughed at myself, complimented the student on her observational abilities and moved on with the important thing, the material I had to deliver.

Stress Management Techniques

Even when we employ positive thinking and are well prepared, some of us still feel a great deal of anxiety about public speaking. When that is the case, it can be more helpful to use stress management than to try to make the anxiety go away.

One general technique for managing stress is **positive visualization**. Visualization is the process of seeing something in your mind's eye; essentially it is a form of self-hypnosis. Frequently used in sports training, positive visualization involves using the imagination to create images of relaxation or ultimate success. Essentially, you imagine in great detail the goal for which you are striving, say, a rousing round of applause after you give your speech. You mentally picture yourself standing at the front of the room, delivering your introduction, moving through the body of your speech, highlighting your presentation aids, and sharing a memorable conclusion. If you imagine a positive outcome, your body will respond to it as through it were real. Such mind-body techniques create the psychological grounds for us to achieve the goals we have imagined. As we discussed earlier, communication apprehension has a psychological basis, so mind-body techniques such as visualization can be important to reducing anxiety. It's important to keep in mind, though, that visualization does not mean you can skip practicing your speech out loud. Just as an athlete still needs to work out and practice the sport, you need to practice your speech in order to achieve the positive results you visualize.

Systematic desensitization is a behavioral modification technique that helps individuals overcome anxiety disorders. People with phobias, or irrational fears, tend to avoid the object of their fear. For example, people with a phobia of elevators avoid riding in elevators—and this only adds to their fear because they never "learn" that riding in elevators is usually perfectly safe. Systematic desensitization changes this avoidance pattern by gradually exposing the individual to the object of fear until it can be tolerated.

First, the individual is trained in specific muscle relaxation techniques. Next, the individual learns to respond with conscious relaxation even when confronted with the situation that previously caused them fear. James McCroskey used this technique to treat students who suffered from severe, trait-based communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1972). He found that "the technique was eighty to ninety percent effective" for the people who received the training (McCroskey, 2001). If you're highly anxious about public speaking, you might begin a program of systematic desensitization by watching someone else give a speech. Once you are able to do this without discomfort, you would then move to talking about giving a speech yourself, practicing, and, eventually, delivering your speech.

The success of techniques such as these clearly indicates that increased exposure to public speaking reduces overall anxiety. Consequently, you should seek out opportunities to speak in public rather than avoid them. As the famous political orator William Jennings Bryan once noted, "The ability to speak effectively is an acquirement rather than a gift" (Carnegie, 1955).

Key Takeaways

- There are many steps you can take during the speech preparation process to manage your communication apprehension, including thinking positively, analyzing your audience, clearly organizing your ideas, adapting your language to the oral mode, and practicing.
- You can employ a variety of techniques while you are speaking to reduce your apprehension, such as anticipating your body's reactions, focusing on the audience, and maintaining your sense of humor.
- Stress management techniques, including cognitive restructuring and systematic desensitization, can also be helpful.

Exercises

1. Go to http://www.hypknowsis.com and practice a few of the simple beginning visualization exercises presented there.
2. Make a plan for managing your anxiety before and during your speech that includes specific techniques you want to try before your next public speaking assignment.

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2.1.4: Coping with the Unexpected

Learning Objectives

1. Identify common difficulties that may fluster even experienced speakers.
2. Describe some basic strategies for dealing with unexpected events during a public speech.

Figure 2.1.4.1: Des Morris – I H8 PC – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Even the most prepared, confident public speaker may encounter unexpected challenges during the speech. This section discusses some common unexpected events and addresses some general strategies for combating the unexpected when you encounter it in your own speaking.

Speech Content Issues

Nearly every experienced speaker has gotten to the middle of a presentation and realized that a key notecard is missing or that he or she skipped important information from the beginning of the speech. When encountering these difficulties, a good strategy is to pause for a moment to think through what you want to do next. Is it important to include the missing information, or can it be omitted without hurting the audience's ability to understand the rest of your speech? If it needs to be included, do you want to add the information now, or will it fit better later in the speech? It is often difficult to remain silent when you encounter this situation, but pausing for a few seconds will help you to figure out what to do and may be less distracting to the audience than sputtering through a few "ums" and "uhs."

Technical Difficulties

Technology has become a very useful aid in public speaking, allowing us to use audio or video clips, presentation software, or direct links to websites. However, one of the best known truisms about technology is that it does break down. Web servers go offline, files will not download in a timely manner, and media are incompatible with the computer in the presentation room. It is important to always have a backup plan, developed in advance, in case of technical difficulties with your presentation materials. As you develop your speech and visual aids, think through what you will do if you cannot show a particular graph or if your presentation slides are hopelessly garbled. Although your beautifully prepared chart may be superior to the oral description you can provide, your ability to provide a succinct oral description when technology fails can give your audience the information they need.

External Distractions

Although many public speaking instructors directly address audience etiquette during speeches, you're still likely to encounter an audience member who walks in late, a ringing cell phone, or even a car alarm going off outside your classroom. If you are distracted by external events like these, it is often useful, and sometimes necessary (as in the case of the loud car alarm), to pause and wait so that you can regain the audience's attention and be heard.

Whatever the unexpected event, your most important job as a speaker is to maintain your composure. It is important not to get upset or angry because of these types of glitches—and, once again, the key to this is being fully prepared. If you keep your cool and quickly implement a "plan B" for moving forward with your speech, your audience is likely to be impressed and may listen even more attentively to the rest of your presentation.

Key Takeaway

1. Plan ahead for how to cope with unexpected difficulties such as forgetting part of your speech content, having technical trouble with visual aids, or being interrupted by external distractions.

Exercises

1. Talk to people who engage in public speaking regularly (e.g., teachers and professionals) and find out what unexpected events have happened when they were giving speeches. What did they do to deal with these unexpected happenings?
2. Fill out the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA24). The measure can be found at http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/prca24.htm.

2.1.5: Chapter Exercises

Test Your Knowledge of Communication Apprehension

Table 2.1.5 Myths or Facts about Communication Apprehension

Instructions: For each of the following questions, check either “myth” or “fact.”	Myth	Fact
1. Audiences will be able to tell how nervous you feel.		
2. Some stage fright might be a good thing, as you can channel it to make your delivery more energetic.		
3. Most audiences are basically hostile, looking to see you make a fool of yourself.		
4. Experienced speakers don’t feel any stage fright.		
5. Most speakers tend to relax as they progress through their speeches.		
6. Moving around the front of the room during your speech will make you less nervous.		
7. Most audiences would rather see a speaker do well.		
8. Focusing on yourself rather than the audience is an effective way to reduce your stage fright.		
9. The positive or negative label you ascribe to the public speaking situation will influence how nervous you feel.		
10. Telling a joke in your introduction is guaranteed to get the audience on your side.		
Scoring: Myths: 1, 3, 4, 8, and 10; Facts: 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9		

SECTION OVERVIEW

2.2: Speaking with Confidence

2.2.1: Introduction

Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the nature of communicative apprehension (CA), and be in a better position to deal with your particular"brand" of CA
2. Analyze objectively the formation of your habitual frame of reference
3. Apply cognitive restructuring (CR) techniques to create a more positive frame of reference
4. Understand the importance of customized practice to become conversant in your topic
5. Create a personal preparation routine to minimize your apprehension

"I have to do what?"

You receive your syllabus on the first day of history class, and you see that a significant percentage of your overall grade for the semester depends upon one, ten-minute oral presentation in front of the class. The presentation is to be based on an original research project and is due in eight weeks.

You are excited to get an email after a very positive job interview. They ask you to come to a second interview prepared to answer a number of questions from a panel made up of senior management. The questions are contained in an attachment. "Please be ready to stand in the front of the room to answer," the email reads; ending with "See you next week!"

The plans are finalized: You will have dinner to meet your new fiancé's family on Saturday night – just days away. But, then you are told that your fiancé's father, a former Marine and retired police officer, will want to talk about politics and current events – and that he will likely judge what sort of person you are based on how well you can defend your ideas.

> *I get nervous when I don't get nervous. If I'm nervous, I know I'm going to have a good show. ~ Beyonce Knowles*

In this chapter, you will learn about dealing with one of the most common fears in our society: **the fear of public speaking**, which is referred to as **communication apprehension** (CA). If you are one of those folks – take comfort in the fact that you are not alone! Research indicates that 20% or more of the U.S. population has a high degree of communicative apprehension (McCroskey, 1976). CA is an isolating phenomenon; something that makes one feel alone in the struggle. This is true even as programs designed to help people overcome it – like this program and this chapter, for instance – are spreading nationwide. CA is a real phenomenon that represents a well- documented obstacle not only to academic, but also to professional success. CA can impact many diverse areas; from one's level of self-esteem (Adler, 1980) and how you are perceived by others (Dwyer & Cruz, 1998),to success in school, achieving high grade-point averages, and even landing job interview opportunities (Daly & Leth, 1976). People with higher levels of CA have demonstrated that they will avoid communicative interaction in personal and professional relationships, social situations, and importantly, classrooms. Such avoidance can result in miscommunication and misunderstanding, which only becomes compounded by further avoidance. CA left unaddressed can even lead to a negative disposition toward public interaction, which leads to a lesser degree of engagement, thus perpetuating the fear and further compounding the situation (Menzel & Carrell, 1994). The anxiety creates a vicious cycle and becomes a self- fulfilling prophecy. But it is a cycle that need not continue.

By reading this chapter, you will learn about CA; not necessarily how it develops, as that can be different in every individual, but rather about how people can deal with it effectively.
You will learn how therapies employed by psychologists to help people deal with phobias can be translated into effective

techniques to deal with CA. You will learn the differences between trait-anxiety, state-anxiety, and scrutiny fear, and how understanding the differences between them can help a person deal with their “personal brand” of CA. You will learn about how people develop habitual frames of reference that come to define the way they approach an anticipated experience – and how anyone can employ cognitive restructuring to help change habits that are counter- productive to delivering effective presentations. Habits can be very difficult to break, but the first step is becoming aware and wanting to succeed. Going into any activity with a positive attitude is one of the basic ways of maximizing performance. CA is not something that can easily be eliminated – turned “off” as if controlled by an internal toggle switch. But it doesn’t have to remain an obstacle to success either.

Effective public speaking is not simply about learning what to say, but about developing the confidence to say it. For many, it all comes down to overcoming those nerves and convincing yourself that you can actually get up there and speak! Each individual deals with CA most effectively through increased self- awareness and a willingness to work on reducing its impact. To conquer the nervousness associated with public speaking, one must identify the factors that lead to this anxiety, and then take specific steps to overcome this apprehension.

> *As soon as the fear approaches near, attack and destroy it. ~ Chanakya*

2.2.2: Classifying Communication Apprehension (CA)

CA is not the result of a single cause, and so the phenomenon itself comes in many forms. It is important for each person to recognize that their particular sort of CA (we'll call it a "personal brand") is a phenomenon that has developed uniquely through each of their lives and experiences. Just as each individual is different, so too is each case of CA. There are specific distinctions between "stage fright" – a term reserved for the common, virtually universal nervousness felt by everyone– and CA – which is essentially "stage fright" with a corresponding emotional trauma attached. Scholars are somewhat divided, however, on whether CA is something inherent in the individual, or if it is the result of experience. In most people, it is very likely a combination of factors.

trait-anxiety

Some researchers (McCroskey, et al. 1976) describe CA as **trait-anxiety**, meaning that it is a type of anxiety that is aligned with an individual's personality. People who would call themselves "shy" often seek to avoid interaction with others because they are uncertain of how they will be perceived. Avoiding such judgment is generally not difficult, and so becomes a pattern of behavior. These folks, according to researchers, are likely view any chance to express themselves publicly with skepticism and hesitation. This personal tendency is what is known as trait-anxiety.

State-anxiety

Other researchers (Beatty, 1988) describe CA as state-anxiety, meaning that it is a type of anxiety that is derived from the external situation which individuals find themselves. While some may fear public speaking due to some personal trait or broader social anxiety, researchers have found that CA more often stems from the fear associated with scrutiny and negative evaluation. Some people may have had a negative experience in public at an early age – they forgot a line in a play, they lost a spelling bee, they did poorly when called on in front of their class – something that resulted in a bit of public embarrassment. Others may have never actually experienced that stress themselves, but may have watched friends struggle and thus empathized with them. These sorts of experiences can often lead to the formation of a state-anxiety in an individual.

scrutiny fear

Still other researchers (Mattick et al., 1989) discuss CA as what is called a **scrutiny fear**; which stems from an activity that does not necessarily involve interacting with other people, but is simply the fear of being in a situation where one is being watched or observed, or one perceives him or herself as being watched, while undertaking an activity. When asked to categorize their own type of CA, many people will identify with this phenomenon.

In order for anybody to effectively deal with CA, the first step is to consider what may be its primary cause. CA is what is known as a **resultant condition**; and those who are dealing with the challenge will recognize different intensities associated with different situations or triggers. This means that overcoming the condition requires first that you recognize, and then minimize, the cause. Each person is different, and so each case of CA is personal and unique. Trait-anxiety can be one contributing factor to CA, but is often part of a much larger condition. It is important to understand that, while the techniques discussed here would help in improving an individual's approach to public speaking opportunities, we do not claim that these techniques would work with more significant personality disorders. However, both the presence of state- anxiety, and the appearance of scrutiny fear, can be effectively addressed through the application of cognitive restructuring (CR) and careful, deliberate experience.

> *How little do they see what is, who frame their hasty judgments upon that which seems. ~ Robert Southey*

2.2.3: Frames of Reference

Many popular movies are now based on multiple-book series like the “Harry Potter” or “Lord of the Rings” movies.

If you are a fan of these book series, you know about the anticipation you felt as the next film was ready to be released – you get swept away by the memories, you look forward to seeing the characters again. Before you even enter the theatre and take your seat, you are in a very positive mood and you are looking forward to being entertained. Perhaps you are even familiar with the details of the story you are about to watch on film; and this only adds to your feelings of anticipation. Because of your previous experiences, you have developed a frame of reference toward future events. One’s **frame of reference** is the context, viewpoint, or set of presuppositions or evaluative criteria within which a person's perception and thinking seem always to occur; and which constrains selectively the course and outcome of these activities. Once your anticipation is rewarded, this frame of reference becomes how you “approach” the release of each new film in the series – your frame of reference becomes “habitual.” Evidence for this can be seen in the consistent success of the serial movies – even if critics’ opinions are harsh, fans will go see the film.

habitual frame of reference

Developing the habitual frame of reference with regard to public speaking usually comes from a combination of personal experiences and what has been witnessed. Formal public speaking opportunities are most prevalent within the context of formal education – thus, public presentations are generally student-oriented experiences which are strongly associated with being evaluated or judged. Because there is such a focus upon the grade that results from the assignment, there is much less focus upon the integrity of the presentation itself. Studies have even shown that the possibility of a negative experience can lead to many students to skip assignments or drop a class – even when that class is required for graduation (Pelias, 1989). Students will often worry more about their grade rather than what is contained in their presentation. Thus, the act of public speaking takes on the pressure of taking a final exam with everyone watching. It’s no wonder so many students report that they are stressed out by public speaking!

personal frame of reference

We can all recall a time when we’ve met a group of friends for lunch. Try to recall an instance when the conversation centered on the latest popular movie – and you happen to be the person in the group who saw it the night before. Was it fun? Was it worth the money? Should we go see it too? Everyone else around the table would look at you and wait to hear what you had to say. And what happened when you were faced with all these questions? Well, *probably* you focused on your favorite parts; *probably* you told the story in some sort of organized manner; *probably* you asked your friends whether or not they wanted you to give away the ending; and *probably* you were fine with any of your friends interrupting while you were talking. In short, you presented to your audience. But, since the action of public presentation was not undertaken within the stressful context of a “graded assignment,” but rather within the positive context of “lunch with friends,” you did not feel the same level of CA as with other presentations. The action was essentially the same, but the way you approached the action was completely different – solely because you perceived of yourself engaging in a fun activity (lunch with friends), and not a stressful one (public speaking). Think about how many different experiences have prompted the formation of a habitual frame of reference in you: social events with friends, holidays with family, the weekly staff meeting at work.

Consider whether the way you approach the situation has anything at all to do with the sort of experience that follows. Is there a correlation between positive mood and positive outcome? Think of all the motivational aphorisms and advice you’ve heard: “Think Positive!” or “Expect Success!” all of which are based on the idea that approaching an activity with a positive attitude about your potential success is the best strategy. We need to build a positive attitude about doing something we are afraid to do.

> *I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear. ~ Nelson Mandela*

2.2.4: Cognitive Restructuring (CR)

Since the major difference between “presenting” to a public audience versus “presenting” to a small group of close friends involves one’s attitude about the situation. Overcoming CA is as much a matter of changing one’s attitude as it is developing one’s skills as a speaker. A change in attitude can be fostered through a self-reflective regimen called **cognitive restructuring** (CR), which is an internal process through which individuals can deliberately adjust how they perceive an action or experience (Mattick et al., 1989).

Cognitive Restructuring is a three- step, internal process:

1. Identify objectively what you think
2. Identify any inconsistencies between perception and reality
3. Replace destructive thinking with supportive thinking

These steps are easy to understand, but perhaps may be a bit difficult to execute! The first step is to identify objectively what you are thinking as you approach a public speaking opportunity. Recall your habitual frame of reference. The first step in CR is to shine a bright light directly on it. This will be different for each student undertaking the process.

sources of apprehension

After years of interviewing students from my classes, the two concerns most often described are the feeling of being the center of attention – as if you are under some collective microscope with everybody’s eyes on you; and the feeling that the audience is just waiting for you to make a mistake or slip up somehow – and that their disapproval will be swift, immediate, and embarrassing. Let’s discuss how CR might be applied to each of these widely-held perceptions.

impact of apprehension

Probably the most common concern people have is being the “center of attention.”When people describe this specific scrutiny fear, they use phrases like “everyone just stares at me,” or “I don’t like having all eyes on me.” Consider for a moment what your experiences have been like when you have been a member of the audience for another speaker. Where did you look while the person spoke? Did you look at the speaker? Direct eye contact can mean different things in different cultures, but in U.S. culture, eye contact is the primary means for an audience to demonstrate that they are listening to a speaker. Nobody likes to be ignored, and most members of an audience would not want to be perceived as ignoring the speaker – that would be rude! Compare: before CR, the frame of reference reflects the idea that “everyone is staring at me”; after CR, the perception is altered to “the audience is looking at me to be supportive and polite – after all, I’m the one doing the talking.”

Another common concern is the fear of being judged harshly or making an embarrassing mistake. Go back to that memory of you as a member of the audience, but this time reflect on what sort of expectations you had at the time. Did you expect the speaker to be flawless and riveting? Did you have in mind some super-high level of performance – below which the speaker would have disappointed you? Probably you did not (unless you had the chance to watch some prominent speaker). Think back to any experiences you may have had watching another speaker struggle – perhaps a classmate during one of their presentations. Witnessing something like that can be uncomfortable. Did you feel empathy for the person struggling? Isn’t it a much more pleasant experience when the speaker does well? Again, the vast majority of people empathize with the speaker when it comes to the quality of the presentation. They are willing to give the speaker a chance to say what they want to say. Thus: before CR, the

frame of reference reflects the idea that “everyone is judging me harshly”; and after CR, the perception is altered to “the audience is willing to listen to what I have to say because it’s a more pleasant experience for them if the speaker is successful.”

learning confidence

Consider what comes into your mind if you are to deliver a public presentation. Are your thoughts consumed with many uncertainties. What if I make a mistake? What if they don’t like what I’m talking about? What if? Try your own version of CR. Put yourself in the role of audience member and ask yourself whether your fears as a speaker are consistent with your expectations as an audience member. Remember that, just like you, the audience wants the speaker to succeed. Of course CR, unfortunately, is always easier said than done. It is a process that takes time, patience, and practice. The most important thing to remember is that you are trying CR as a means of breaking a habit, and habits are formed over periods of time, never instantaneously. The breaking of a habit, similarly, cannot be done instantaneously, but gradually, over time and with deliberate effort.

Changing your attitude is only one element in overcoming CA. The other involves improving your skills as a speaker. The presence of CA in any student brings with it the need to prepare more deliberately and more diligently. The other chapters in this book deal with the importance of preparation in all areas of public presentation. Readers should consider how the challenges involved with overcoming CA can impact the preparation process.

> *It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech. ~ Mark Twain*

Table 2.2.4.1: Impact of Cognitive Restructuring

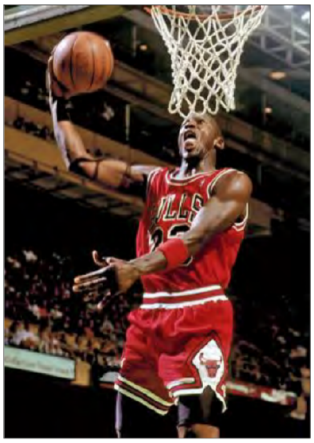
Before Cognitive Restructuring:	After Cognitive Restructuring:
One is worried about being under scrutiny.	One recognizes that audiences look at who is speaking.
One is worried about being judged harshly.	One recognizes that audiences want success.
One is worried about making an embarrassing mistake.	One recognizes that audiences will empathize.

2.2.5: Techniques for Building Confidence

prepare well

The correlation between preparation and nervousness is consistent. More practice results in less nervousness. The best, most consistent and direct way to minimize the level of nervousness you feel is through effective preparation. This is always true. Importantly, the best sort of practice is the kind that prepares you properly.

Michael Jordan was once asked the best way to learn how to shoot free throws. He said that you cannot learn to shoot free throws by walking into a gym with a ball, walking up to the line, and shooting. Instead, he described how the first step in learning to shoot free throws is to run sprints. Most importantly, his advice was to run until your body was under the same stress as it would be in a game when you needed to make those free throws – because only under those conditions would your practice become truly productive. *Only* then do you pick up the ball and shoot. And when you managed to catch your breath? All types of preparation and practice yield some benefits, but there is a significant difference between practice that is merely helpful and practice that is sufficient. There is a difference between "knowing what you are talking about," and "knowing what you are going to say." Thinking about your presentation can be helpful, but that sort of preparation will not give you a sense of what you are actually going to say. Athletes know that the best practices will re-create game conditions and test their abilities to perform in real-life scenarios. Studying a playbook? This is helpful, but not sufficient. Going over a speech in your mind? Again, it is helpful, but not sufficient.



Many students do not practice effectively, and this can result in the wrong idea that practice isn't helpful. Unfortunately, these same students usually have had little, if any, training in how one might prepare for a presentation, and so they employ the scholastic training they are most familiar with – how to write a paper. This is not the same activity as presenting, and so the lack of proper preparation only contributes to the lack of confidence. Let's look at a few elements of effective practice.

visualize success

Athletes and performers are often coached to visualize what they are trying to do as a way to perform correctly. Baseball players need to anticipate what they will do if the ball is hit their way so that they are ready to perform without having to make split-second choices. Football and basketball players must envision how each member of the team will move during a particular play because team success depends on speedy and flawless coordination between individuals. Dancers and divers are trained to visualize the form and positioning of their bodies as they execute their moves. Golfers are coached to visualize the flight and arc of the shot they are about to attempt. Engaging the imagination in this way can be beneficial to performance.

> *I visualize things in my mind before I have to do them. It's like having a mental workshop.*
> *~ Jack Youngblood*

Speakers too, should visualize success. As you practice, visualize yourself presenting with confidence to a receptive audience. "See" your relaxed facial expressions and "hear" your confident vocal tone. Imagine yourself moving gracefully, complementing what you say with expressive gestures. Imagine the audience reacting appropriately – nodding appreciatively and giving thoughtful consideration to your points. Imagine the gratification of watching the audience really "get it." When you can honestly envision yourself performing at this level, you are taking an important step toward achieving that goal.

avoid gimmicks

Some acting coaches (and speech teachers) encourage their students to practice in front of mirrors, so that they can watch themselves perform and evaluate how they move. In acting, this can be very useful; but in speaking, it is less so. When you practice your presentation, the most important element is expressiveness. You want to become more familiar with the volume of material, the order in which you plan to present it, and the phrasing you think would be most effective to express it. Watching yourself perform in a mirror will focus your attention on your appearance first – and on what you express second. This makes using a mirror during practice a distraction from what the practice ought to achieve.

Plus, consider what you are seeing in the mirror as you practice. Obviously, it is you! But more to the point, what you see in the mirror (your reflection) will not resemble, in any way, the audience that you would see while delivering your presentation. Just as you want to visualize success in yourself as part of your preparation; you also want to visualize success in your audience – which means that you want to imagine the members of your audience reacting positively to your presentation, paying close attention and nodding their heads as you make your points.

For some reason, the myth persists that imagining your audience in their pajamas – or something similarly silly – is an effective way to make standing in front of them seem less scary. Many of my students have discussed hearing "tips" like imagining the audience wearing pink bunny-ears as a way to make them less intimidating. These sorts of gimmicks don't work! In fact, concentrating on anything other than what you are doing is distracting and not beneficial at all. Do your best to avoid such advice. Visualize success!

> *Breathe. Let go. And remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure. ~ Oprah Winfrey*

breathe and release

One type of pre-presentation exercise that might be helpful is based on a therapeutic idea called **systematic desensitization**, which is a multi-stage regimen to help patients deal with phobias through coping mechanisms. Going through both the cognitive and behavioral aspects of systematic desensitization often requires weeks of concerted effort to overcome the body's involuntary reactions to stress. That sort of psychological therapy involves gradual exposure to what produces the anxiety, long-term self-reflection, and mental discipline. Here, we will discuss a shortened version called "**breathe and release**." This is a short-cut relaxation technique that could be useful for nervous speakers – especially those who are concerned with the physical manifestations of nervousness, such as shaky hands or knees.

The key to "breathe and release" is to understand that when nervous tension results in minor trembling, the effort of trying to keep one's hands from shaking can contribute to the whole situation – that is, trying to stop literally can make it worse! Therefore, the best approach is through relaxation.

“Breathe and Release” involves three steps:

1. Imagine the nervousness within your body. Imagine that energy bubbling inside you, like liquid being cooked.
2. Draw that energy to a high point within your body with a deep, cleansing breath. Imagine this cleansing breath to be acting like a vacuum – drawing up all of the bubbling liquid.
3. Release the energy by deliberately relaxing the entirety of your upper extremities – not just your hands, or even your hands and arms – but all the way from your fingertips to the bottom edges of your shoulder blades. Imagine how keeping any part of your upper extremities tense would result in a “kink” in the release valve, and so complete relaxation is the key to success. Remember: Relaxeverything from the fingertips to the very bottom edges of your shoulder blades.

“Breathe and Release” is something that can be done even as one walks to the front of the classroom or boardroom to begin speaking. Many speakers, especially those who are concerned about the physical manifestations of nervousness, have used this relaxation technique effectively.

> *I've a grand memory for forgetting. ~ Robert Louis Stevenson*

minimize what you memorize

One important hint for speech preparation involves avoiding the writing of an entirely scripted version of the presentation. Many people have the impression that writing a script of the entire speech is the necessary first step in preparation; that practicing can only happen after you are done writing the entire speech. Unfortunately, this common impression is mistaken. Remember that lunch with your friends? When you were describing the movie plot, you were being ***conversant*** in a prepared way. This means that you knew what you were describing, but you were not concerned with the specific words you were using. Being *conversant* is the condition of being prepared to discuss an issue intelligently. Fans of sports are *conversant* about their favorite teams. Experts are conversant in their fields. A well-prepared speaker is conversant with regard to her topic. Consider how being conversant in this manner allows freer, more fluid communication, with no stress associated with your ability to remember what words you wanted to use. Being conversant also gives the speaker the best chance to recognize and react to audience feedback. If you are completely focused on the integrity of scripted comments, then you will be unable to read and react to your audience in any meaningful way. Imagine how frustrating it would be for your friends at that lunch if you would not respond to any of their questions until you were finished reading a few descriptive paragraphs about the movie. They would probably just wait until you were done reading and then try to engage you in a conversation!

> *If you wish to forget anything on the spot, make a note that this thing is to be remembered.*
> *~ Edgar Allan Poe*

Many people have had experience being in a stage play or some other type of performance that involved memorized recitation of a script. Many of us might recall moments during rehearsals when our minds would "freeze" and we might need just a quick reminder – the next word or phrase, the next few notes – to get back on track. This is because people do not memorize in units, but in phrases or chunks. The mind attaches to a rhythm – not to each individual unit, word, or note. This is why it is best to minimize what you memorize. Prepare your opening carefully so that you start smoothly. Prepare your closing comments so that you can end sharply and with style. But avoid preparing and then memorizing an entire script.

Preparing for a speech by memorizing a written script engages your mind at a different level from that of a conversant speaker. Concentrating on remembering words is different from paying attention to how one's audience is reacting. The pressure that arises from trying to remember the next word can be considerable, yet that pressure is entirely avoidable. The goal of public speaking should never be about loyal recreation of a script – it is about getting the appropriate response from your audience. Trying to remember an entirely scripted speech can result in the rather ironic situation of a person being able confidently and smoothly to discuss the topic in casual conversation, but still quite stressed about their ability to remember their scripted comments.

Many students forget their lines while discussing topics like their families and hometowns. Of course they knew what they were talking about, but their minds were focused on the task of remembering specific words – a task different from effective speaking. So, should you write any prepared comments at all? Yes, of course ,you should. Specifically, the feedback you should be most concerned with will happen during the body of the speech – when you are discussing the substance of your presentation. It is during the body of the speech when you need especially to retain the ability to adjust to how your audience reacts. Thus, memorizing your entire speech is ultimately detrimental to your ability to react to your audience. However, during the introduction and conclusion of your speech, the primary concerns are about connecting with your audience personally; which is something best assured through consistent eye contact. So, carefully preparing the introduction and the conclusion of your speech is a smart strategy – but don't make the mistake of scripting everything that you plan to say. The best rule here: Minimize what you memorize – familiarize instead!

> *If I don't train enough, of course I'm nervous. ~ Haile Gebrselassie*

practice out loud

Remember the very first time you tried to do anything – a game, a sport, an activity, anything at all. How good were you out of the gate? Perhaps you had talent or were gifted with a "feel" for what you were doing. But even then, didn't you get better with more experience? Nobody does anything the very best they can on their very first attempt, and everyone – even the most talented among us – will benefit from effective practice.

Speaking in public is no different from any other activity in this way. To maximize the chance that your presentation will come out smooth and polished, you will need to hear it all the way through. By practicing out loud, from the beginning to the ending, you will be able to listen to your whole speech and properly gauge the flow of your entire presentation. Additionally, without at least one complete out-loud practice, there will be no way to accurately estimate the length of your speech and your preparation will remain insufficient. When dealing with CA, the last thing you want is to leave some questions unanswered in your own mind! The out-loud "dress rehearsal" is the single, most important element to your preparation. Without it, you will be delivering your presentation in full for the first time when it counts the most. Putting yourself at that sort of disadvantage isn't wise, and is easily avoided.

Consider your current method of preparing a public presentation. At some point, you will have gathered notes and information together. That represents an opportune moment for your first out-loud practice. You might even consider trying that initial practice without the benefit of any notes. Stand up; start speaking; see what comes out! Such a practice can serve as an "oral first draft" in the same vein as any written first draft of a paper, and can answer a number of questions for you:

1. Where, during your presentation, are you most – and least – conversant?
2. Where, during your presentation, are you most in need of supportive notes?
3. What do your notes need to contain?

Prepare for your public presentation by speaking and listening to yourself, rather than by writing, editing, and rewriting. Remember that when you are having a conversation, you never use the same sort of language and syntax as you do when you are writing a formal paper. Practice with the goal of becoming conversant in your topic, not fluent with a script.

> *You can't hire someone to practice for you. ~ H. Jackson Brown, Jr.*

customize your practice

We've discussed a variety of techniques in this chapter; from the importance of out-loud practice to suggestions of when, during your preparation, you should start the out- loud practice. We've discussed Cognitive Restructuring as a means of changing your attitude about presenting in a positive way. Depending on your personal brand of CA, you may choose to implement these hints in different ways. Take a moment to reflect on what causes your CA. Do you dislike the feeling of being the center of attention? Are you more concerned with who is in the audience and what they might think of you? Or are you worried about "freezing" in front of the audience and forgetting what you wanted to say? Write some of these concerns down and put them into a priority order. If you are worried about a particular issue or problem, how might you prepare to minimize the chance of that issue arising?

Then consider your current method of preparation. Do you prepare more for a written paper than for an oral presentation? Do you have the goal of presenting a scripted message? Do you practice out loud? When, during your process, do you practice aloud? Do you practice at all before you begin to compose your speaking notes; or do you only practice after? Remember that dealing with CA often involves the breaking of a mental habit. It is a good idea to change what you have done previously. Be deliberate. Observe what works for your situation.

Recall what was discussed at the beginning of this chapter: CA is a condition unique to each person dealing with it. CA is the result of many varied causes – some internal and personal, some external and experiential.

Dealing with anxiety may be as much dealing with your attitude as with your skills, as much a struggle with perception as with ability. Because of this, you are in the best position to know how to deal with your particular brand of CA. As stated earlier in the chapter: Each individual deals with CA most effectively through increased self- awareness and a willingness to take each of the steps in the entire process. After you acknowledge your reality, then you take the steps necessary to overcome apprehension. When you've read about the ways to overcome the debilitating impact of CA, the next steps in your process involve seeing what works best for you. Do not continue to prepare in exactly the same way as before. Speak more; write and revise less. Be sure to practice out-loud at least once during your preparation, in order to prepare yourself sufficiently. Reflect on your personal concerns and try Cognitive Restructuring on those concerns. Take your time. Do the work. Have confidence that your preparation will yield positive results.

> *Nothing in the affairs of men is worthy of great anxiety. ~ Plato*

2.2.6: Conclusion

In this chapter, we've discussed *Communication Apprehension* or CA. This difficult condition can be the result of many, varied causes. Even professional researchers don't always agree on whether CA is inherent in the person, or the result of what the person experiences or perceives – with some calling it "trait-anxiety;" others "state- anxiety;" and still others classifying it as "scrutiny fear." The first step for any person to address this condition is self-reflection. Try to identify what has caused you to feel the way you do about public speaking. Careful introspection can result in a more productive level of self-awareness.

Whatever the root cause of CA might be for any particular individual, the first step in addressing CA is to objectively view the habitual frame of reference that has emerged in your mind regarding public speaking. Consider all those "what-if's" that keep cropping up in your mind and how you might begin to address them productively, rather than simply to ignore them and hope they go away. Go through the steps of Cognitive Restructuring or CR. Consider how many of those "what-if's" are nothing more than invented pressure that you place upon yourself.

Relaxation techniques, such as "Breathe and Release," have proven to be effective for many speakers, especially those concerned with the physical manifestations of nervousness like trembling hands or shaky knees. Remember that those sorts of tremors can often be exacerbated by efforts to hold still. Don't force yourself to hold still! Relax instead.

Lastly, we discussed the most effective means to prepare – which is toward the goal of becoming *conversant* in your topic, rather than being able to recite a memorized script. By familiarizing yourself with your topic, you become better able to consider the best way to talk to your audience, rather than becoming "married to your script" and ultimately consumed with saying the words in the right order. Practicing out-loud, without a mirror to distract you, is the best way to prepare yourself.

CA is a real issue, but it need not be an obstacle to success. Take the time to become more aware of your personal brand of CA. Take positive steps to minimize its impact. Your willingness to work and your positive attitude are the keys to your success.

> *Believe you can and you're halfway there. ~ Theodore Roosevelt*

2.2.7: Activities and Glossary

Review questions

1. What percentage of the general population is likely dealing with CA?
2. What are some of the potential issues or problems that can result from CA?
3. What are some of the different ways researchers classify CA? What are the differences between these ideas?
4. What are some of your sources of CA? Would you classify these as examples of trait-anxiety or state-anxiety?
5. How does Cognitive Restructuring work? Does it work the same for every person who tries it?
6. What does it mean to become conversant in your topic?
7. Why is memorizing a presentation a risky move? Is there any part of your presentation that should be memorized?

Activities

1. Prior to a speech, practice the following relaxation technique from Williams College (from wso.williams.edu/orgs/peerh/stress/relax.html):

a) Tighten the muscles in your toes. Hold for a count of 10. Relax and enjoy the sensation of release from tension.

b) Flex the muscles in your feet. Hold for a count of 10. Relax.

c) Move slowly up through your body- legs, abdomen, back, neck, face- contracting and relaxing muscles as you go.

d) Breathe deeply and slowly.

After your speech, evaluate the technique. Did you find that this exercise reduced your nervousness? If so, why do you think it was effective? If not, what technique do you think would have been more effective?

2. Together with a partner or in a small group, generate a list of relaxation techniques that you currently use to relieve stress. Once you have run out of ideas, review the list and eliminate the techniques that would not work for helping you cope with nervousness before a speech. Of the remaining ideas, select the top three that you believe would help you personally and that you would be willing to try.

3. The author of this chapter says that one of the keys to overcoming nervousness is preparation. Make a list of the barriers to your own preparation process (e.g. “I don’t know how to use the library,” or “I have young children at home who make demands on my time”). Having identified some of the things that make it difficult for you to prepare, now think of at least one way to overcome each obstacle you have listed. If you need to, speak with other people to get their ideas too.

“Breathe and Release”
This is a short-cut version of systematic de-sensitization appropriate for public speaking preparation.

Glossary

Cognitive Restructuring (CR)

CR is an internal process through which individuals can deliberately adjust how they perceive an action or experience.

Communication Apprehension

CA is the anxiety resulting from fear of public speaking.

Conversant

Being conversant is the condition of being able to discuss an issue intelligently with others.

Frame of Reference

A frame of reference refers to the context, viewpoint, or set of presuppositions or of evaluative criteria within which a person's perception and thinking seem always to occur; and which constrains selectively the course and outcome of these activities.

Scrutiny Fear

Anxiety resulting from being in a situation where one is being watched or observed, or where one perceives themselves as being watched, is known as scrutiny fear. This sort of anxiety does not necessarily involve interacting with other people.

State-Anxiety

State-anxiety is derived from the external situation within which individuals find themselves.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Knowing your Audience

3.1: The Importance of Audience Analysis

One of the advantages of studying public speaking and improving your own skills is that you become much more aware of what other speakers do. In one respect, we are able to look for ways to emulate what they do—for example, how they might seamlessly incorporate stories or examples into their speaking, or how they might use transitions to help audiences follow the speech's logic. In another respect, we become aware of how a speaker might use dramatic delivery or emotional appeals to hide a lack of facts or logic. A course in public speaking should include ways to improve one's listening to public speaking.

This chapter will look at the audience from both sides of the lectern, so to speak. First it will examine how a presenter can fully understand the audience, which will aid the speaker in constructing the approach and content of the speech. Secondly, this chapter will examine the public speaker as audience member and how to get the most out of a speech, even if the topic does not seem immediately interesting.

As discussed in Chapter 1, we have Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson (1967) to thank for pointing out to us that communication always involves a content dimension and a relationship dimension. Nowhere does that become more important than when we look into what is commonly known as audience analysis. Their concept about content and relationship dimension will guide this chapter. You are not using the speech to dump a large amount of content on the audience; you are making that content important, meaningful, and applicable to them. Additionally, the way the audience perceives you and your connection to them—such as whether there is mutual trust and respect—will largely determine your success with the audience. The speaker must respect the audience as well as the audience trusting the speaker.

3.2: Demographic Characteristics

When we use the term **audience analysis**, we mean looking at the audience first by its demographic characteristics and then by their internal psychological traits. “Demo-” comes the Greek root word demos meaning “people,” and “-graphic” means description or drawing. **Demographic characteristics** describe the outward characteristics of the audience. This textbook will discuss eleven of them below, although you might see longer or shorter lists in other sources. Some of them are obvious and some not as much. But before we get into the specific demographic characteristics, let’s look at three principles.

First, be careful not to stereotype on the basis of a demographic characteristic. **Stereotyping** is generalizing about a group of people and assuming that because a few persons in that group have a characteristic, all of them do. If someone were sitting near campus and saw two students drive by in pickup trucks and said, “All students at that college drive pickup trucks,” that would be both stereotyping and the logical fallacy of hasty generalization (see Chapter 14). At the same time, one should not totalize about a person or group of persons. Totalizing is taking one characteristic of a group or person and making that the “totality” or sum total of what that person or group is. **Totalizing** often happens to persons with disabilities, for example; the disability is seen as the totality of that person, or all that person is about. This can be both harmful to the relationship and ineffective as a means of communicating. If a speaker before a group of professional women totalizes and concludes that some perception of “women’s issues” are all they care about, the speaker will be less effective and possibly unethical.

Avoiding stereotyping and totalizing are important because you cannot assume everything about an audience based on just one demographic characteristic. Two or three might be important. The age of a group will be important in how they think about investing their money, but so will the socio-economic level, career or profession, and even where they live. Even their religious beliefs may come into it. A good speaker will be aware of more than one or two characteristics of the audience.

Second, in terms of thinking about demographic characteristics, not all of them are created equal, and not all of them are important in every situation. When parents come to a PTA meeting, they are concerned about their children and playing the important role of “parent,” rather than being concerned about their profession. When senior citizens are thinking about how they will pay for their homes in retirement years, their ethnicity probably has less to do with it as much as their age and socio-economic level.

Third, there are two ways to think about demographic characteristics: positively and negatively. In a positive sense, the demographic characteristics tell you what might motivate or interest the audience or even bind it together. In a negative sense, the demographic characteristic might tell you what subjects or approaches to avoid. Understanding your audience is not a game of defensive tic-tac-toe, but a means of relating to them.

For example, a common example is given about audiences of the Roman Catholic faith. Speakers are warned not to “offend” them by talking about abortion, since official Roman Catholic teaching is against abortion. However, this analysis misses three points. First, even if most Roman Catholics take a pro-life position, they are aware of the issues and are adults who can listen and think about topics. Additionally, not all Roman Catholics agree with the official church stance, and it is a complex issue. Second, Roman Catholics are not the only people who hold views against abortion. Third, and most important, if all the speaker thinks about Roman Catholics is that they are against something, he or she might miss all the things the audience is for and what motivates them. In short, think about how the demographic characteristics inform what to talk about and how, not just what to avoid talking about. There is one more point to be made about demographic characteristics before they are listed and explained. In a country of increasing diversity, demographic characteristics are dynamic. People change as the country changes. What was true about demographic characteristics—and even what was considered a demographic characteristic—has changed in the last fifty years. For example, the number of Internet users in 1980 was miniscule (mostly military personnel). Another change is that the percentage of the population living in the Great Lakes areas has dropped as the population has either aged or moved southward.

What follows is a listing of ten of the more common demographic characteristics that you might use in understanding your audience and shaping your speech to adapt to your audience.

Age

The first demographic characteristic is age. In American culture, we have traditionally ascribed certain roles, behaviors, motivations, interests, and concerns to people of certain ages. Young people are concerned about career choices; people over 60 are concerned about retirement. People go to college from the age of 18 to about 24. Persons of 50 years old have raised their children and are “empty nesters. These neat categories still exist for many, but in some respects they seem outdated.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), 38% of college students are over 25 years old. Some women and men wait until their late thirties to have children, and thus at 50 have preteens in the house. More and more grandparents—middle and lower incomes—are raising grandchildren. Combining the longer lives Americans are living with the economic recession of 2008 and following, 62 is not a reasonable age for retirement for many.

Therefore, knowing that your audience is 18, 30, 55, or 70 is important, but it is just one of many factors. In your classroom audience, for example, you may find 30-year-old returning, nontraditional college students, young entrepreneurs, 17-year-old dual enrollment students, and veterans who have done three or four tours in the Middle East as well as 18-year-old traditional college students.

Gender

The second demographic characteristic commonly listed is gender. This area is open to misunderstanding as much as any other. Despite stereotypes, not all women have fifty pairs of shoes with stiletto heels in their closets, and not all men love football. In almost all cases you will be speak ing to a "mixed" audience of men and women, so you will have to keep both groups in mind. If you are speaking to a group of all men or all women and you are of the same gender as the audience, you might be able to use some appropriate common experiences to connect with the audience. However, if you are a woman speaking to an all-male audience or a man speaking to an all-female audience, those are situations in which to be aware of overall gender differences in communication.

According to Deborah Tannen (2007), a scholar of linguistics and a wellknown author, men and women in the United States have divergent communication styles. She is quick to point out neither is all good or all bad, nor do they apply to every single person. The two communication styles are just different, and not recognizing the differences can cause problems, or "noise," in communication. Although she normally applies these principles to family, marital, and work relationships, they can be applied to public speaking.

According to Tannen, women tend to communicate more inductively; they prefer to give lots of details and then move toward a conclusion. Other research on differences in gender communication indicate that women listen better, interrupt less, and collaborate more, although there is research to indicate this is not the case. (Keep in mind these are generalized tendencies, not necessarily true of every single woman or man.) Women tend to be less direct, to ask more questions, to use "hedges" and qualifiers ("it seems to me," "I may be wrong, but . . .") and to apologize more, often unnecessarily. Other research indicates women praise more, consequently expect more praise, and interpret lack of praise differently from how men do.

This lack of direct communication does not sound the same to men as it does to women. To men it may seem that a female speaker is unsure or lacks confidence, whereas the female speaker is either doing it out of habit or because she thinks she sounds open-minded and diplomatic. Tannen calls women's style of communication "rapport" style, whereas she labels male communication as more of a "report" style.

Male speakers, on the other hand, are more deductive and direct; they state their point, give limited details to back it up, and then move on. Men may be less inclined to ask questions and qualify what they say; they might not see any reason to add unnecessary fillers. Men also may tend toward basic facts, giving some the impression they are less emotional in their communication, which is a stereotype. Finally, men are socialized to "fix" things and may give advice to women when it is not really needed or wanted.

In some ways, these differences are traditional and some writers, especially women, are trying to help others avoid these patterns without losing the positive side of female or male communication differences. For example, books such as Lean In (Sandberg, 2013) are meant to teach women to negotiate for better salaries and conditions and avoid common communication behaviors that hurt their ability to negotiate. Also, many differences are situational and have to do with relative levels of power and other factors. However, it is unlikely these general tendencies are going to disappear any time soon.

Therefore, if you are a woman speaking to an all-male audience, be direct without mimicking "male talk." Avoid excessive detail and description; it will be seen as getting off topic. Do not follow the habit of starting sentences with "I don't know if this is 100% correct, but…" or even worse, the habitual "I'm sorry, but. . . " If on the other hand you are a male speaking to a primarily female audience, realize that women want knowledge but not to have their problems fixed. Men also seem abrupt when talking to women, and much research supports the conclusion that men talk more than women in groups and interrupt more. So, male speakers should allow time for questions and work hard at listening.

This section on gender has taken a typical, traditional "binary" approach. Today, more people openly identify as a gender other than traditionally male or female. Even those of us who identify as strictly male or female do not fully follow traditional gender roles. This is an area for growing sensitivity. At the same time, the purpose, subject, and context of the speech will probably define how and whether you address the demographic characteristic of gender.

Age and gender are the two main ways we categorize people: a teenaged boy, an elderly lady, a middle-aged man; a young mother. There are several other demographic characteristics, however.

Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

Race, ethnicity, and culture are often lumped together; at the same time, these categorizations can be controversial. We will consider race, ethnicity, and culture in one section because of their interrelationship although they are distinct categories

We might think in terms of a few racial groups in the world: Caucasian, African, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American. Each one of these has many ethnicities. Caucasian has ethnicities of Northern European, Arab, Indian (from India), Mediterranean, etc. Then each ethnicity has cultures. Mediterranean ethnicities include Greek, Italian, Spanish, etc., and then each of these has subcultures, and so on. It should be noted that many social scientists today reject the idea of race as a biological reality altogether and see it as a social construct. This means it is a view of humanity that has arisen over time and affects our thinking about others.

Unfortunately, dividing these categories and groups is not that easy, and these categories are almost always clouded by complicated political and personal concerns, which we do not have time or space to address here. Most audiences will be **heterogeneous**, or a mixture of different types of people and demographic characteristics, as opposed to **homogeneous**, very similar in many characteristics (a group of single, 20-year-old, white female nursing students at your college). Therefore, be sensitive to your audience members' identification with a culture. Anglos are often guilty of confusing Hispanic (a language category) with cultures (a more regional or historical category), and overlooking that Mexican is not Puerto Rican is not Cuban is not Colombian. In the same way for Caucasians, a Canadian is not an Australian is not an American is not a Scot, just because their last names, basic looks, and language seem almost the same (well, sort of!). "American" itself is a problematic term since "American" can refer to every country in the Western Hemisphere.

As mentioned in a previous example, focus as much on the positives—what that culture values—rather than what the culture does not like or value. Now we turn to an even more complicated category, religion.

Religion

Religion, casually defined as beliefs and practices about the transcendent, deity, and the meaning of life, can be thought of as an affiliation and a commitment. According to polls, due to either family or choice, a majority of Americans (although the percentage is shrinking) have some kind of religious affiliation, identity, or connection. It may simply be where they were christened as an infant, but it is a connection—"I'm in that group." About 23% of Americans are being called "nones" because they do not claim a formal religious affiliation (Pew Research, 2015).

On the other hand, a person may have an affiliation with a religious group but have no real commitment to it. The teaching and practices of the group, such as a denomination, may not affect the personal daily life of the member. Likewise, someone who has an affiliation may develop his or her own variations of beliefs that do not match the established organization's doctrines. Unless the audience is brought together because of common faith concerns or the group shares the same affiliation or commitment, religious faith may not be relevant to your topic and not a central factor in the audience analysis.

Religion, like ethnicity and culture, is an area where you should be conscious of the diversity of your audience. Not everyone worships in a "church," and not everyone attends a house of worship on Sunday. Not everyone celebrates Christmas the way your family does, and some do not celebrate it at all. Inclusive language, which will be discussed in Chapter 10, will be helpful in these situations.

Group Affiliation

Without getting into a sociological discussion, we can note that one demographic characteristic and source of identity for some is group affiliation. To what groups do the audience members' predominantly belong? Sometimes it will be useful to know if the group is mostly Republican, Democrat, members of a union, members of a professional organization, and so on. In many cases, your reason for being the speaker is connected to the group identity. Again, be mindful of what the group values and what binds the audience together.

Region

Region, another demographic characteristic, relates to where the audience members live. We can think of this in two ways. We live in regions of the country: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Rocky Mountain region, and West Coast. These regions can be broken down even more, such as coastal Southeastern states. Americans, especially in the East, are very conscious of their state or region and identify with it a great deal.

The second way to think about region is as "residence" or whether the audience lives in an urban area, the suburbs, or a rural area. If you live in the city, you probably do not think about being without cell phone or Internet service, but many people in rural areas do not take those for granted. The clubs that students in rural high schools belong to might be very different from what a student in a city would join.

Occupation

Occupation may be a demographic characteristic that is central to your presentation. For the most part in the U.S., we choose our occupations because they reflect our values, interests, and abilities, and as we associate with colleagues in that occupation, those values, interests, and abilities are strengthened. You are probably in college to enter a specific career that you believe will be economically beneficial and personally fulfilling. We sometimes spend more time at work than any other activity, except sleeping. Messages that acknowledge the importance, diversity, and reasons for occupations will be more effective. At the same time, if you are speaking to an audience with different occupations, do not use jargon from one specific occupation. This idea is addressed more in Chapter 11.

Education

The next demographic characteristic is education, which is closely tied to occupation and is often, though not always, a matter of choice. In the United States, education usually reflects what kind of information and training a person has been exposed to, but it does not necessarily reflect intelligence. An individual with a bachelor's degree in physics or computer science may know a great deal more about that field than someone with a Ph.D. in English. Having a certain credential is supposed to be a guarantee of having learned a set of knowledge or attained certain skills. Some persons, especially employers, tend to see achieving a credential such as a college degree as the person's having the "grit" to finish an academic program. We are also generally proud of our educational achievements, so they should not be disregarded.

Socio-economic Level

Socio-economic level, another demographic characteristic, is also tied to occupation and education in many cases. We expect certain levels of education or certain occupations to make more money. While you cannot know the exact pay of your audience members, you should be careful about references that would portray your own socio-economic level as superior to their own. Saying, "When I bought my BMW 7 Series" (a car that retails at over $80,000) would not make a good impression on someone in the audience who is struggling to make a car payment on her used KIA. One time a lawyer for a state agency was talking to a group of college professors about how she negotiated her salary. She mentioned that she was able to get her salary raised by an amount that was more than the annual salary of the audience members. Her message, which was a good one, was lost in this case because of insensitivity to the audience.

Sexual Orientation

The next few demographic characteristics are more personal and may not seem important to your speech topic, but then again, they may be the most important for your audience. Sexual orientation, usually referred to by the letters LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-gendered, Queer), is a characteristic not listed in speech textbooks forty years ago. As acceptance of people of various sexual orientations and lifestyles becomes more common, we can expect that these differences will lead to people feeling free to express

who they are and not be confined to traditional gender roles or stereotypes. For this reason, it is useful to employ inclusive language, such as “partner” or “spouse.”

Family Status

Family status, such as whether the audience members are married, single, divorced, or have children or grandchildren may be very important to the concerns and values of your audience and even the reason the audience is brought together. For example, young parents could be gathered to listen to a speaker because they are concerned about health and safety of children in the community. Getting married and/or having a child often creates a seismic shift in how a person views the world, his responsibilities, and his priorities. A speaker should be aware if she is talking to single, married, divorced, or widowed persons and if the audience members are parents, especially with children at home.

Does this section on demographic characteristics leave you wondering, “With all this diversity, how can we even think about an audience?” If so, do not feel alone in that thought. As diversity increases, audience understanding and adaptation becomes more difficult. To address this concern, you should keep in mind the primary reason the audience is together and the demographic characteristics they have in common—their common bonds. For example, your classmates may be diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, or religion, but they have in common profession (all students) and region (living near or on the campus), as well as, possibly, other characteristics.

Perhaps your instructor will do an exercise in class that helps you explore the demographic characteristics displayed in your class audience. You might find that most live with their parents, or that 60% of them are planning to enter a health profession, or that one-third of them have children at home. Knowing these facts will help you find ways to choose topics, select approaches and sources for those topics, know when you should explain an idea in more detail, avoid strategies that would become barriers to communicating with the audience, and/or include personal examples to which the audience members can relate. In Chapter 4, we include case study exercises to bring together audience analysis in composing the foundational approach of the speech.

3.3: Psychographic Characteristics

Whereas demographic characteristics describe the "facts" about the people in your audience and are focused on the external, **psychographic characteristics** explain the inner qualities. Although there are many ways to think about this topic, here the ones relevant to a speech will be explored: beliefs, attitudes, needs, and values.

Beliefs

Daryl Bem (1970) defined **beliefs** as "statements we hold to be true." Notice this definition does not say the beliefs are true, only that we hold them to be true and as such they determine how we respond to the world around us. Stereotypes are a kind of belief: we believe all the people in a certain group are "like that" or share a trait. Beliefs are not confined to the religious realm, either. We have beliefs about many aspects of the world.

oBeliefs, according to Bem, come essentially from our experience and from sources we trust. Therefore, beliefs are hard to change —not impossible, just difficult. Beliefs are hard to change because of:

- stability—the longer we hold them, the more stable or entrenched they are;
- centrality—they are in the middle of our identity, self-concept, or "who we are";
- saliency—we think about them a great deal; and
- strength—we have a great deal of intellectual or experiential support for the belief or we engage in activities that strengthen the beliefs.

Beliefs can have varying levels of stability, centrality, salience, and strength. An educator's beliefs about the educational process and importance of education would be strong (support from everyday experience and reading sources of information), central (how he makes his living and defines his work), salient (he spends every day thinking about it), and stable (especially if he has been an educator a long time). Beliefs can be changed, and we will examine how in Chapter 13 under persuasion, but it is not a quick process.

Attitudes

The next psychographic characteristic, attitude, is sometimes a direct effect of belief. **Attitude** is defined as a stable positive or negative response to a person, idea, object, or policy. How do you respond when you hear the name of a certain singer, movie star, political leader, sports team, or law in your state? Your response will be either positive or negative, or maybe neutral if you are not familiar with the object of the attitude. Where did that attitude come from? Psychologists and communication scholars study attitude formation and change probably as much as any other subject, and have found that attitude comes from experiences, peer groups, beliefs, rewards, and punishments.

Do not confuse attitude with "mood." Attitudes are stable; if you respond negatively to Brussels sprouts today, you probably will a week from now. That does not mean they are unchangeable, only that, like beliefs, they change slowly and in response to certain experiences, information, or strategies. As with beliefs, we will examine how to change attitudes in the chapter on persuasion. Changing attitudes is a primary task of public speakers because attitudes are the most determining factor in what people actually do. In other words, attitudes lead to actions, and interestingly, actions leads to and strengthen attitudes. Think back to the TedTalk video by Dr. Amy Cuddy that you watched in Chapter 1.

We may hold a belief that regular daily exercise is a healthy activity, but that does not mean we will have a positive attitude toward it. There may be other attitudes that compete with the belief, such as "I do not like to sweat," or "I don't like exercising alone." Also, we may not act upon a belief because we do not feel there is a direct, immediate benefit from it or we may not believe we

have time right now in college. If we have a positive attitude toward exercise, we will more likely engage in it than if we only believe it is generally healthy.

Values

As you can see, attitude and belief are somewhat complex "constructs," but fortunately the next two are more straightforward. (A construct is "a tool used in psychology to facilitate understanding of human behavior; a label for a cluster of related but co-varying behaviors" [Rogelberg, 2007].) **Values** are goals we strive for and what we consider important and desirable. However, values are not just basic wants. A person may want a vintage sports car from the 1960s, and may value it because of the amount of money it costs, but the vintage sports car is not a value; it represents a value of either

- nostalgia (the person's parents owned one in the 1960s and it reminds him of good times),
- display (the person wants to show it off and get "oohs" and "ahs"),
- materialism (the person believes the adage that the one who dies with the most toys wins),
- aesthetics and beauty (the person admires the look of the car and enjoys maintaining the sleek appearance),
- prestige (the person has earned enough money to enjoy and show off this kind of vehicle), or
- physical pleasure (the driver likes the feel of driving a sports car on the open road).

Therefore we can engage in the same behavior but for different values; one person may participate in a river cleanup because she values the future of the planet; another may value the appearance of the community in which she lives; another just because friends are involved and she values relationships. A few years ago political pundits coined the term "values voters," usually referring to social conservatives, but this is a misnomer because almost everyone votes and otherwise acts upon his or her values—what is important to the individual.

Needs

The fourth psychographic characteristic is **needs**, which are important deficiencies that we are motivated to fulfill. You may already be familiar with the well-known diagram known as Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. It is commonly discussed in the fields of management, psychology, and health professions. A version of it is shown in Figure 2.1. (More recent versions show it with 8 levels.) It is one way to think about needs. In trying to understand human motivation, Maslow theorized that as our needs represented at the base of the pyramid are fulfilled, we move up the hierarchy to fulfill other types of need (McLeod, 2014).

According to Maslow's theory, our most basic physiological or survival needs must be met before we move to the second level, which is safety and security. When our needs for safety and security are met, we move up to relationship or connection needs, often called "love and belongingness." The fourth level up is esteem needs, which could be thought of as achievement, accomplishment, or self-confidence. The highest level, self-actualization, is achieved by those who are satisfied and secure enough in the lower four that they can make sacrifices for others. Self-actualized persons are usually thought of as altruistic or charitable. Maslow also believed that studying motivation was best done by understanding psychologically healthy individuals.

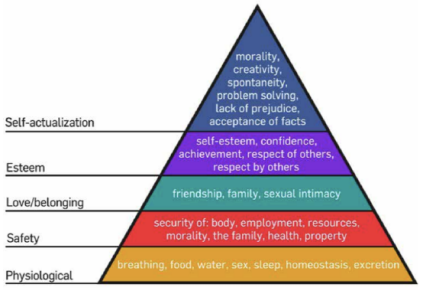


Figure 2.1 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In another course you might go into more depth about Maslow's philosophy and theory, but the key point to remember here is that your audience members are experiencing both "felt" and "real" needs. They may not even be aware of their needs; in a persuasive speech one of your tasks is to show the audience that needs exist that they might not know about. For example, gasoline sold in most of the U.S. has ethanol, a plant-based product, added to it, usually about 10%. Is this beneficial or detrimental for the planet, the engine of the car, or consumers' wallets? Your audience may not even be aware of the ethanol, its benefits, and the problems it can cause.

A “felt” need is another way to think about strong “wants” that the person believes will fulfill or satisfy them even if the item is not necessary for survival. For example, one humorous depiction of the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (seen on Facebook) has the words “wifi” scribbled at the bottom of the pyramid. Another meme has “coffee” scribbled at the bottom of the hierarchy. As great as wifi and coffee are, they are not crucial to human survival, either individually or collectively, but we do want them so strongly that they operate like needs.

So, how do these psychographic characteristics operate in preparing a speech? They are most applicable to a persuasive speech, but they do apply to other types of speeches as well. What are your audience’s informational needs? What beliefs or attitudes do they have that could influence your choice of topic, sources, or examples? How can you make them interested in the speech by appealing to their values? The classroom speeches you give will allow you a place to practice audience analysis based on demographic and psychographic characteristics, and that practice will aid you in future presentations in the work place and community.

3.4: Contextual Factors of Audience Analysis

The “facts about” and “inner qualities” (demographic and psychographic characteristics) of the audience influence your approach to any presentation. The context (place and time) of the speech does also. What follows are some questions to consider when planning your presentation.

1. How much time do I have for the presentation? As mentioned in Chapter 1, we must respect the time limits of a speech. In most cases you will have little control over the time limits. In class the instructor assigns a five- to six-minute speech; at work, there may be an understood twenty-minute presentation rule in the organization, since attention can diminish after a certain length. You might be asked to speak to a community group for your company and be told that you have thirty minutes —that seems like a long time, but if you are really passionate about the subject, that time can go quickly.

Knowing the time limit for a speech does three things for the speaker. First, it lets her know how much of a given topic can realistically be covered. Secondly, the speaker must practice to be sure that his/ her content actually fits in the time given, so the practice leads to a better speech. Third, time limits impose a discipline and focus on the speaker.

In reference to practice, this might be a good place to dispel the “practice makes perfect” myth. It is possible to practice incorrectly, so in that case, **practice will make permanent, not perfect**. There is a right way and a wrong way to practice a speech, musical instrument, or sport.

2. What time of the day is the presentation? An audience at 8:00 in the morning is not the same as at 2:00 p.m. An audience at Monday at 10:00 a.m. is not the same as at 3:00 Friday afternoon. The time of your presentation may tell you a great deal about how to prepare. For example, if the audience is likely to be tired, you might want to get them physically active or talking to each other in a part of the speech, especially if it is a long presentation.

3. Why is the audience gathered? In the case of your speech class, everyone is there, of course, because they want a grade and because they are students at the college. However, they also have career and educational goals and probably are at a certain stage in their education. (Some people wait until the last semester of senior year to take this course, but most are going to be first-year students.) In other contexts, the audience is there because of a common interest, commitment, or responsibility. What is it? Everything you do in the speech should be relevant to that reason for their being there.

4. What is the physical space like? Straightforward, with the audience in rows and hard seats, as in a classroom? A typical boardroom with a long table and a dozen or more chairs around it? Big sofas and armchairs, where the audience might get too comfortable and drowsy? Can the speaker walk around and get closer to the audience? Does the speaker have to stay behind a lectern or on a platform? Is there audiovisual equipment? Is the room well-lit? Sometimes you will have no control over the physical space, especially in the speech classroom, but you should try to exert all the control you possibly can in other situations. Even the temperature of the room or outside noise can affect your speech’s effectiveness. Just closing the door can make a world of difference in the physical space and its effect on the audience.

5. Related to number 4 is “How large will the audience be?” Ten people or one hundred? This factor will probably affect your delivery the most. You may need to increase your volume in a venue with a large audience, or you might have to use a microphone, which could limit your walking around and getting close to the group. On the other hand, you might want to directly interact with the audience if it is a smaller, more intimate number of people. The size of the audience will also affect your choice of visual aids.

6. What does the audience expect? Why were you asked to speak to them? Again, in the class you will have certain specifications for the presentations, such as type of speech, length, kinds of sources used, visual aids or lack of them. In other contexts, you will need to ask many questions to know the context fully.

Knowing these details about the audience can greatly impact how successful you are as a speaker, and not knowing them can potentially have adverse effects. One of the textbook authors was asked to speak to the faculty of another college about 120 miles away on the subject of research about teaching college students. Because the campus she was visiting was a branch campus, she assumed (always dangerous) that only the faculty on that small branch campus would be present. Actually, the faculty of the whole college—over 400 instructors in a college of over 21,000 students—showed up. Although the speaker was very conscious of time limits (30 minutes), subject matter, needs of the audience, and expectations, the change in the size of the expected audience was a shock.

It all went well because she was an experienced speaker, but she was a little embarrassed to realize she had not asked the actual size of the audience. Of course, the auditorium was much larger than she expected, the slides she planned to use were inappropriate, and she could not walk around. Instead, she was “stuck” behind a lectern. This is all to say that the importance of knowing your audience and taking the time to prepare based on that knowledge can make your speech go much more smoothly, and not doing so can lead to unexpected complications.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Listening Effectively

SECTION OVERVIEW

4.1: Listening Effectively

4.1.1: Introduction

Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. explain the difference between listening and hearing
2. understand the value of listening
3. identify the three attributes of active listeners
4. recognize barriers to effective listening
5. employ strategies to engage listeners
6. provide constructive feedback as a listener

“You’re not listening!” An unhappy teen shouts this at a concerned parent. A frustrated parent yells this as a toddler runs through a parking lot. A teacher says it while flicking the overheard lights on and off, trying to get her unruly students to heed her. A woman offers these three words as a parting shot before hanging up on her significant other. A man complains of this to his spouse during a couple’s counseling session. We can imagine all these scenarios and more; all of them rooted in a speaker wondering if his or her audience is truly listening.

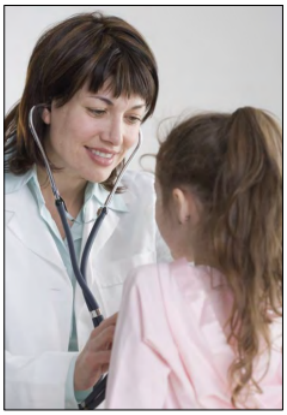
Public speaking requires an audience to hear. Otherwise it’s private speaking, and anyone overhearing you might wonder if you’ve lost your wits. What makes public speaking truly effective is when the audience hears and listens. You might think the two are synonymous. But they aren’t, as you will soon understand. In a classic listening text, Adler (1983) notes, “How utterly amazing is the general assumption that the ability to listen well is a natural gift for which no training is required” (p. 5). Since listening requires great effort, this chapter offers the skills needed to listen effectively.

Developing your listening skills can have applications throughout your educational, personal, and professional lives. You will begin by examining the difference between hearing and listening. This module will also help you understand your role as a listener, not only in a public speaking class, but also in the world. You’ll read about attributes of an active listener, barriers to listening, and strategies to listen better. Finally, building on valuable lessons regarding listening, this chapter concludes with suggestions public speakers can use to encourage audiences to listen more attentively.

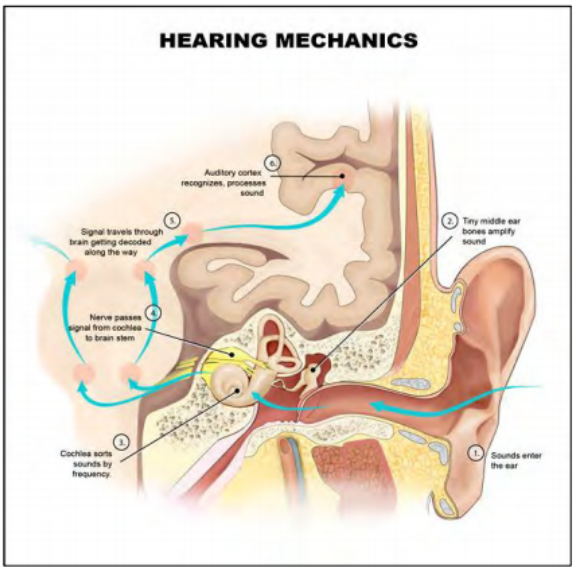
We have two ears and one tongue so that we would listen more and talk less. ~ Diogenes

4.1.2: Hearing versus Listening

A mother takes her four-year-old to the pediatrician reporting she's worried about the girl's hearing. The doctor runs through a battery of tests, checks in the girl's ears to be sure everything looks good, and makes notes in the child's folder. Then, she takes the mother by the arm. They move together to the far end of the room, behind the girl. The doctor whispers in a low voice to the concerned parent: "Everything looks fine. But, she's been through a lot of tests today. You might want to take her for ice cream after this as a reward." The daughter jerks her head around, a huge grin on her face, "Oh, please, Mommy! I love ice cream!" The doctor, speaking now at a regular volume, reports, "As I said, I don't think there's any problem with her hearing, but she may not always be choosing to listen."



Hearing is something most everyone does without even trying. It is a physiological response to sound waves moving through the air at up to 760 miles per hour. First, we receive the sound in our ears. The wave of sound causes our eardrums to vibrate, which engages our brain to begin processing. The sound is then transformed into nerve impulses so that we can perceive the sound in our brains. Our auditory cortex recognizes a sound has been heard and begins to process the sound by matching it to previously encountered sounds in a process known as **auditory association** (Brownell, 1996). Hearing has kept our species alive for centuries. When you are asleep but wake in a panic having heard a noise downstairs, an age-old selfpreservation response is kicking in. You were asleep. You weren't listening for the noise – unless perhaps you are a parent of a teenager out past curfew – but you hear it. Hearing is unintentional, whereas listening (by contrast) requires you to pay conscious attention. Our bodies hear, but we need to employ intentional effort to actually listen.



We regularly engage in several different types of listening. When we are tuning our attention to a song we like, or a poetry reading, or actors in a play, or sitcom antics on television, we are listening for pleasure, also known as **appreciative listening**. When we are

listening to a friend or family member, building our relationship with another through offering support and showing empathy for her feelings in the situation she is discussing, we are engaged in **relational listening**. Therapists, counselors, and conflict mediators are trained in another level known as **empathetic or therapeutic listening**. When we are at a political event, attending a debate, or enduring a salesperson touting the benefits of various brands of a product, we engage in critical listening. This requires us to be attentive to key points that influence or confirm our judgments. When we are focused on gaining information whether from a teacher in a classroom setting, or a pastor at church, we are engaging in **informational listening** (Ireland, 2011).

Yet, despite all these variations, Nichols (1995) called listening a "lost art." The ease of sitting passively without really listening is well known to anyone who has sat in a boring class with a professor droning on about the Napoleonic wars or proper pain medication regimens for patients allergic to painkillers. You hear the words the professor is saying, while you check Facebook on your phone under the desk. Yet, when the exam question features an analysis of Napoleon's downfall or a screaming patient fatally allergic to codeine you realize you didn't actually listen. Trying to recall what you heard is a challenge, because without your attention and intention to remember, the information is lost in the caverns of your cranium.

Listening is one of the first skills infants gain, using it to acquire language and learn to communicate with their parents. Bommelje (2011) suggests listening is the activity we do most in life, second only to breathing. Nevertheless, the skill is seldom taught.

4.1.3: The Value of Listening

Listening is a critical skill. The strategies endorsed in this chapter can help you to be a more attentive listener in any situation.

Academic Benefit

Bommelje, Houston, and Smither (2003) studied effective listening among 125 college students and found a strong link between effective listening and school success, supporting previous research in the field linking listening skills to grade point average. This finding is unsurprising as the better you listen while in class, the better prepared you will be for your assignments and exams. It is quite simple really. When students listen, they catch the instructions, pointers, feedback, and hints they can use to make the assignment better or get a better score on the test.

> *Learning is a result of listening, which in turn leads to even better listening and attentiveness to the other person. ~ Alice Miller*

Professional Benefits

Connecting listening skills to better leadership, Hoppe (2006) lists many professional advantages of active listening, indicating that it helps us: better understand and make connections between ideas and information; change perspectives and challenge assumptions; empathize and show respect or appreciation, which can enhance our relationships; and build self-esteem. When people aren't listening, it becomes much more difficult to get things done effectively and trust is broken while fostering resentments. Bell and Mejer (2011), identifying poor listening as a "silent killer of productivity and profit," state change becomes extremely difficult to implement in a work environment when people are not listening.

Effective listening can also help you to make a better impression on employers. This can begin at the interview. You really want the job, but you are really nervous. As a result, you are having trouble paying attention to what the CEO of the company is saying in your final interview. She asks you if you have any questions, and you ask something you were wondering about in the elevator on the way up to this penthouse office. You're unlikely to get the job if you ask something she's just talked about. Even if you, somehow, convince her to hire you, you will make little progress at the firm if your supervisors often have to tell you things again, or you make decisions that cost the company in lost profits because you weren't listening effectively in a team meeting.

Ferrari (2012) identifies listening as the "most critical business skill of all." He notes, "listening can well be the difference between profit and loss, between success and failure, between a long career and a short one" (p. 2).

Personal Benefits

If listening is done well, the **communication loop** is effectively completed between speaker and receiver. The speaker shares a message with the receiver, having selected a particular method to communicate that message. The receiver aims to interpret the message and share understanding of the message with the speaker. Communication effectiveness is determined by the level of shared interpretation of the message reached through listener response and feedback. When done successfully, the loop is complete,

and both sender and receiver feel connected. The active listener who employs the positive attributes detailed in this chapter is more likely to be better liked, in turn increasing her selfesteem. She is also likely to be better able to reduce tension in situations and resolve conflict (Wobser, 2004). After all, the symbols for ears, eyes, undivided attention, and heart comprise the Chinese character for “to listen” (McFerran, 2009, p. G1). Truly listening to the words of a speaker is sure to make a positive difference in your interactions whether they are academic, professional, or personal.

4.1.4: The Three A's of Active Listening

Effective listening is about selfawareness. You must pay attention to whether or not you are only hearing, passively listening, or actively engaging. Effective listening requires concentration and a focused effort that is known as active listening. Active listening can be broken down into three main elements.

> *Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly. ~ Plutarch*

Attention

We know now that attention is the fundamental difference between hearing and listening. Paying attention to what a speaker is saying requires intentional effort on your part. Nichols (1957), credited with first researching the field of listening, observed, "listening is hard work. It is characterized by faster heart action, quicker circulation of the blood, a small rise in bodily temperature" (p. 9). Consider that we can process information four times faster than a person speaks. Yet, tests of listening comprehension show the average person listening at only 25% efficiency. A typical person can speak 125 wordsper-minute, yet we can process up to three times faster, reaching as much as 500 words-per-minute. The poor listener grows impatient, while the effective listener uses the extra processing time to process the speaker's words, distinguish key points, and mentally summarize them (Nichols, 1957).

Hoppe (2006) advises active listening is really a state of mind requiring us to choose to focus on the moment, being present and attentive while disregarding any of our anxieties of the day. He suggests listeners prepare themselves for active attention by creating a **listening reminder**. This might be to write "Listen" at the top of a page in front of you in a meeting.

While reading a book, or having a discussion with an individual, you can go back and re-read or ask a question to clarify a point. This is not always true when listening. Listening is of the moment, and we often only get to hear the speaker's words once. The key then is for the listener to quickly ascertain the speaker's central premise or controlling idea. Once this is done, it becomes easier for the listener to discern what is most important. Of course, distinguishing the speaker's primary goal, his main points, and the structure of the speech are all easier when the listener is able to listen with an open mind.

Attitude

Even if you are paying attention, you could be doing so with the wrong attitude, the second A. Telling yourself this is all a waste of time is not going to help you to listen effectively. You'll be better off determining an internal motivation to be attentive to the person speaking. Approaching the task of listening with a positive attitude and an open-mind will make the act of listening much easier. Bad listeners make snap judgments that justify the decision to be inattentive. Yet, since you're already there, why not listen to see what you can learn? Kaponya (1991) warns against psychological **deaf spots** which impair our ability to perceive and understand things counter to our convictions. It can be as little as a word or phrase that might cause "an emotional eruption" causing communication efficiency to drop rapidly (p. 194). For instance, someone who resolutely supports military action as the

best response to a terrorist action may be unable to listen objectively to a speaker endorsing negotiation as a better tool. Even if the speaker is effectively employing logic, drawing on credible sources, and appealing to emotion with a heartrending tale of the civilian casualties caused by bombings, this listener would be unable to keep an open mind. Failing to acknowledge your deaf spots will leave you at a deficit when listening.

You will always need to make up your own mind about where you stand – whether you agree or disagree with the speaker – but it is critical to do so *after* listening. Adler (1983) proposes having four questions in mind while listening: "What is the whole speech about?" "What are the main or pivotal ideas, conclusions, and arguments?" "Are the speaker's conclusions sound or mistaken?" and "What of it?" Once you have an overall idea of the speech, determine the key points, and gauge your agreement, you can decide why it matters, how it affects you, or what you might do as a result of what you have heard. Yet, he notes it is "impossible" to answer all these questions at the same time as you are listening (p. 96). Instead, you have to be ready and willing to pay attention to the speaker's point of view and changes in direction, patiently waiting to see where she is leading you.

> *There are things I can't force. I must adjust. There are times when the greatest change needed is a change of my viewpoint. ~ Denis Diderot*

Adjustment

To do this well, you need the final of the three A's: adjustment. Often when we hear someone speak, we don't know in advance what he is going to be saying. So, we need to be flexible, willing to follow a speaker along what seems like a verbal detour down a rabbit hole, until we are rewarded by the speaker reaching his final destination while his audience marvels at the creative means by which he reached his important point. If the audience members are more intent on reacting to or anticipating what is said, they will be poor listeners indeed.

Take time now to think about your own listening habits by completing the listening profile, adapted from Brownell (1996) (see Appendix A). The next section will consider ways to address the challenges of listening effectively.

4.1.5: Barriers to Effective Listening

We get in our own way when it comes to effective listening. While listening may be the communication skill we use foremost in formal education environments, it is taught the least (behind, in order, writing, reading, and speaking) (Brownell, 1996). To better learn to listen it is first important to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses as listeners. We routinely ignore the barriers to our effective listening; yet anticipating, judging, or reacting emotionally can all hinder our ability to listen attentively.

Anticipating

Anticipating, or thinking about what the listener is likely to say, can detract from listening in several ways. On one hand, the listener might find the speaker is taking too long to make a point and try to anticipate what the final conclusion is going to be. While doing this, the listener has stopped actively listening to the speaker. A listener who knows too much, or thinks they do, listens poorly. The only answer is humility, and recognizing there is always something new to be learned.

Anticipating what we will say in response to the speaker is another detractor to effective listening. Imagine your roommate comes to discuss your demand for quiet from noon to 4 p.m. every day so that you can nap in complete silence and utter darkness. She begins by saying, “I wonder if we could try to find a way that you could nap with the lights on, so that I could use our room in the afternoon, too.” She might go on to offer some perfectly good ideas as to how this might be accomplished, but you’re no longer listening because you are too busy anticipating what you will say in response to her complaint. Once she’s done speaking, you are ready to enumerate all of the things she’s done wrong since you moved in together. Enter the Resident Assistant to mediate a conflict that gets out of hand quickly. This communication would have gone differently if you had actually listened instead of jumping ahead to plan a response.

> *An expert is someone who has succeeded in making decisions and judgments simpler through knowing what to pay attention to and what to ignore. ~ Edward de Bono*

Judging

Jumping to conclusions about the speaker is another barrier to effective listening. Perhaps you’ve been in the audience when a speaker makes a small mistake; maybe it’s mispronouncing a word or misstating the hometown of your favorite athlete. An effective listener will overlook this minor gaffe and continue to give the speaker the benefit of the doubt. A listener looking for an excuse not to give their full attention to the speaker will instead take this momentary lapse as proof of flaws in all the person has said and will go on to say.

This same listener might also judge the speaker based on superficialities. Focusing on delivery or personal appearance – a squeaky voice, a ketchup stain on a white shirt, mismatched socks, a bad haircut, or a proclaimed love for a band that no one of any worth could ever profess to like – might help the ineffective listener justify a choice to stop listening. Still, this is always a choice. The

effective listener will instead accept that people may have their own individual foibles, but they can still be good speakers and valuable sources of insight or information.

Reacting Emotionally

When the speaker says an **emotional trigger**, it can be even more difficult to listen effectively. A guest speaker on campus begins with a personal story about the loss of a parent, and instead of listening you become caught up grieving a family member of your own. Or, a presenter takes a stance on drug use, abortion, euthanasia, religion, or even the best topping for a pizza that you simply can't agree with. You begin formulating a heated response to the speaker's perspective, or searing questions you might ask to show the holes in the speaker's argument. Yet, you've allowed your emotional response to the speaker interfere with your ability to listen effectively. Once emotion is involved, effective listening stops.

Bore, n. A person who talks when you wish him to listen. ~ Ambrose Bierce

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4.1.6: Strategies to Enhance Listening

Keep An Open Mind

Thinking about listening might make you feel tense in the moment. The effective listener is instead calm with a focused and alert mind. You are not waiting to hear what you want to hear, but listening to "what is said as it is said" (Ramsland, 1992, p. 171). Effective listeners keep an open mind. Remember that listening to a point of view is not the same as accepting that point of view. Recognizing this can help you to cultivate a more open perspective, helping you to better adjust as you listen actively to a speaker. Also, it might help you to curtail your emotions. If you do encounter a point that incenses you, write it down to return to later. For now, you should keep on listening.

Identify Distractions

In any setting where you are expected to listen, you encounter numerous distractions. For instance, the father sitting in the living room watching television, might want to turn off the television to better enable him to listen to his son when he comes into the room saying, "Dad, I have a problem." In the classroom setting, you might be distracted sitting beside friends who make sarcastic comments throughout the class. In a new product meeting with the sales team, you could be unnerved by the constant beep of your phone identifying another text, email, or phone message has arrived. Identifying the things that will interrupt your attention, and making a conscious choice to move to a different seat or turn off your phone, can help position you to listen more effectively.

Come Prepared

Another useful strategy is to come prepared when you can. Any time you enter a listening situation with some advance working knowledge of the speaker and what might be expected of you as a listener, you will be better able to adjust and engage more deeply in what is being said. For instance, you might: read the assigned readings for class, do the lab work before the lecture writing up the results, read a biography of a guest speaker before you go to an event, review the agenda from the previous staff meeting, or consult with a colleague about a client before going on-site to make a sale.

Take Notes

Taking notes can also advance your ability to be actively engaged in the speaker's words. You need not write down everything the speaker is saying. First, this is quite likely to be impossible. Second, once you are caught up in recording a speaker's every word, you are no longer listening. Use a tape recorder instead – having asked the speaker's permission first – if you feel you really must capture every word the speaker utters. You want to focus your efforts on really listening with an active mind. Learning to focus your attention on main points, key concepts, and gaining the overall gist of the speaker's talk is another skill to develop. You might endeavor to do this by jotting down a few notes or even drawing visuals that help you to recall the main ideas. The manner in which you take the notes is up to you; what is important is the fact that you are listening and working to process what is being said. Writing down questions that come to mind and asking questions of the speaker when it is possible, are two more ways to guarantee effective listening as you have found an internal motivation to listen attentively.

> *Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. ~ Robert Frost*

4.1.7: Providing Feedback to Speakers

There are many ways in which a listener can offer feedback to a speaker, sometimes even wordlessly. Keeping an openmind is something you do internally, but you can also demonstrate openness to a speaker through your **nonverbal communication**.

Nonverbal Feedback

Boothman (2008) recommends listening with your whole body, not just your ears. Consider how confident you would feel speaking to a room full of people with their eyes closed, arms and legs crossed, and bodies bent in slouches. These listeners are presenting nonverbal cues that they are uninterested and unimpressed. Meanwhile, a listener sitting up straight, facing you with an intent look on his face is more likely to offer reassurance that your words are being understood.

Eye contact is another nonverbal cue to the speaker that you are paying attention. You don't want to be bugeyed and unblinking; the speaker might assume there is a tiger behind her and begin to panic as you seem to be doing. However, attentive eye contact can indicate you are listening, and help you to stay focused too. There are some cultures where maintaining eye contact would cause discomfort, so keep that in mind. Also, you may be someone who listens better with eyes closed to visualize what is being said. This can be difficult for a speaker to recognize, so if this is you consider incorporating one of the following nonverbals while you listen with eyes closed.

Nodding your head affirmatively, making back-channel responses such as "Yes," "Umhum," or "OK" can help the speaker gauge your interest. Even the speed of your head nod can signal your level of patience or understanding (Pease and Pease, 2006). Leaning in as a listener is far more encouraging than slumping in your seat. Miller (1994) suggests the **"listener's lean"** demonstrates "ultimate interest. This joyous feedback is reflexive. It physically endorses our communiqué" (p. 184). Nevertheless, sending too many nonverbal responses to the speaker can go wrong too. After all, a conference room full of people shifting in their seats and nodding their heads may translate as a restless audience that the speaker needs to recapture.

> *The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them. ~ Kin Hubbard*

Verbal Feedback

While speakers sometimes want all questions held until the end of a presentation, asking questions when the opportunity presents itself can help you as a listener. For one, you have to listen in order to be able to ask a question. Your goal should be to ask open-ended questions ("What do you think about….?" rather than "We should do …., right?"). You can use questions to confirm your understanding of the speaker's message. If you're not entirely sure of a significant point, you might ask a clarifying question. These are questions such as "What did you mean?" "Can you be more specific?" or "What is a concrete example of your point?" These can help your comprehension, while also offering the speaker feedback. When asking questions, approach the speaker in a positive, non-threatening way. A good listener doesn't seek to put the speaker on the defensive. You want to demonstrate your objectivity and willingness to listen to the speaker's response.

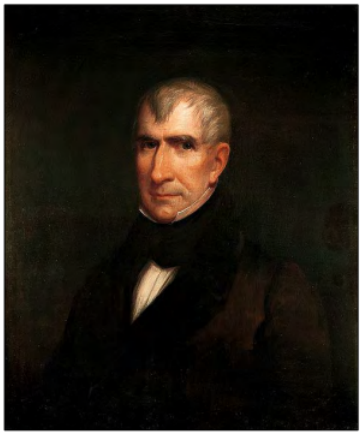
Finally, paraphrasing what has been said in your interactions with the speaker can be another useful tool for a good listener. Imagine the difference if, before you respond to an upset colleague, you take a moment to say, “I understand you are disappointed we didn’t consult you before moving forward with the product release…” before you say, “we didn’t have time to get everyone’s input.” Reflecting back the speaker’s point of view before you respond allows the speaker to know you were listening ands helps foster trust that everyone’s voice is being heard.

4.1.8: Encouraging Effective Listening

William Henry Harrison was the ninth President of the United States. He's also recognized for giving the worst State of the Union address – ever. His two-hour speech delivered in a snowstorm in 1841 proves that a long speech can kill (and not in the colloquial "it was so good" sense). Perhaps it was karma, but after the President gave his meandering speech discussing ancient Roman history more than campaign issues, he died from a cold caught while blathering on standing outside without a hat or coat ("William Henry Harrison," 1989).

Now, when asked what you know about Abraham Lincoln, you're likely to have more answers to offer. Let's focus on his Gettysburg Address. The speech is a model of brevity. His "of the people, by the people, for the people" is always employed as an example of parallelism, and he kept his words simple. In short, Lincoln considered his listening audience when writing his speech.

The habit of common and continuous speech is a symptom of mental deficiency. It proceeds from not knowing what is going on in other people's minds. ~ Walter Bagehot



When you sit down to compose a speech, keep in mind that you are **writing for the ear** rather than the eye. Listeners cannot go back and re-read what you have just said. They need to grasp your message in the amount of time it takes you to speak the words. To help them accomplish this, you need to give listeners a clear idea of your overarching aim, reasons to care, and cues about what is important. You need to inspire them to want to not just hear but engage in what you are saying.

Make your listeners care

Humans are motivated by ego; they always want to know "what's in it for me?" So, when you want to want to get an audience's attention, it is imperative to establish a reason for your listeners to care about what you are saying.

Some might say Oprah did this by giving away cars at the end of an episode. But, that only explains why people waited in line for hours to get a chance to sit in the audience as her shows were taped. As long as they were in the stands, they didn't need to listen to get the car at the end of the show. Yet Oprah had audiences listening to her for 25 years before she launched her own network. She made listeners care about what she was saying. She told them what was in that episode for them. She made her audience members feel like she was talking to them about their problems, and offering solutions that they could use – even if they weren't multibillionaires known worldwide by first name alone.

Audiences are also more responsive when you find a means to tap their **intrinsic motivation**, by appealing to curiosity, challenging them, or providing contextualization (VanDeVelde Luskin, 2003). You might appeal to the audience's curiosity if you are giving an informative speech about a topic they might not be familiar with already. Even in a narrative speech, you can touch on curiosity by cueing the audience to the significant thing they will learn about you or your topic from the story. A speech can present a challenge too. Persuasive speeches challenge the audience to think in a new way. Special Occasion speeches might challenge the listeners to reflect or prompt action. Providing a listener with contextualization comes back to the what's in it for me motivation. A student giving an informative speech about the steps in creating a mosaic could simply offer a step-by-step outline of the process, or she can frame it by saying to her listener, "by the end of my speech, you'll have all the tools you need to make a mosaic on your own." This promise prompts the audience to sit further forward in their seats for what might otherwise be a dry how-to recitation.

Cue your listeners

Audiences also lean in further when you employ active voice. We do this in speaking without hesitation. Imagine you were walking across campus and saw the contents of someone's room dumped out on the lawn in front of your dorm. You'd probably tell a friend: "The contents of Jane's room were thrown out the window by Julie." Wait, that doesn't sound right. You're more likely to say: "Julie threw Jane's stuff out the window!" The latter is an example of active voice. You put the actor (Julie) and the action (throwing Jane's stuff) at the beginning. When we try to speak formally, we can fall into passive voice. Yet, it sounds stuffy, and so unfamiliar to your listener's ear that he will struggle to process the point while you've already moved on to the next thing you wanted to say.

> *Twice and thrice over, as they say, good is it to repeat and review what is good. ~ Plato*

Knowing that your audience only hears what you are saying the one time you say it, invites you to employ repetition. Listeners are more likely to absorb a sound when it is repeated. We are often unconsciously waiting for a repetition to occur so we can confirm what we thought we heard (Brownell, 1996). As a result, employing repetition can emphasize an idea for the listener. Employing repetition of a word, words, or sentence can create a rhythm for the listener's ear. Employing repetition too often, though, can be tiresome.

If you don't want to repeat things so often you remind your listener of a sound clip on endless loop, you can also cue your listener through vocal emphasis. Volume is a tool speakers can employ to gain attention. Certainly parents use it all of the time. Yet, you probably don't want to spend your entire speech shouting at your audience. Instead, you can modulate your voice so that you say something important slightly louder. Or, you say something more softly, although still audible, before echoing it again with greater volume to emphasize the repetition. Changing your pitch or volume can help secure audience attention for a longer period of time, as we welcome the variety.

Pace is another speaker's friend. This is not to be confused with the moving back and forth throughout a speech that someone might do nervously (inadvertently inducing motion sickness in his audience). Instead it refers to planning to pause after an important point or question to allow your audience the opportunity to think about what you have just said. Or, you might speak more quickly (although still clearly) to emphasize your fear or build humor in a long list of concerns while sharing an anecdote. Alternately, you could slow down for more solemn topics or to emphasize the words in a critical statement. For instance, a persuasive speaker lobbying for an audience to stop cutting down trees in her neighborhood might say, "this can't continue. It's up to you to do something." But imagine her saying these words with attention paid to pacing and each period representing a pause. She could instead say, "This. Can't. Continue. It's up to you. Do something."

Convince them to engage

Listeners respond to people. Consider this introduction to a speech about a passion for college football:

It's college football season! Across the nation, the season begins in late summer. Teams play in several different divisions including the SEC, the ACC, and Big Ten. Schools make a lot of money playing in the different divisions, because people love to watch football on TV. College football is great for the fans, the players, and the schools.

Now, compare it to this introduction to another speech about the same passion:

When I was a little boy, starting as early as four, my father would wake me up on Fall Saturdays with the same three words: "It's Game Day!" My dad was a big Clemson Tigers fan, so we might drive to Death Valley to see a game. Everyone would come: my mom, my grandparents, and friends who went to Clemson too. We would all tailgate before the game – playing corn hole, tossing a foam football, and watching the satellite TV. Even though we loved Clemson football best, all college football was worth watching. You never knew when there would be an upset. You could count on seeing pre-professional athletes performing amazing feats. But, best of all, it was a way to bond with my family, and later my friends.

Both introductions set up the topic and even give an idea of how the speech will be organized. Yet, the second one is made more interesting by the human element. The speech is personalized.

The college football enthusiast speaker might continue to make the speech interesting to his listeners by appealing to commonalities. He might acknowledge that not everyone in his class is a Clemson fan, but all of them can agree that their school's football team is fun to watch. Connecting with the audience through referencing things the speaker has in common with the listeners can function as an appeal to **ethos**. The speaker is credible to the audience because he is like them. Or, it can work as an appeal to **pathos**. A speaker might employ this emotional appeal in a persuasive speech about Habitat for Humanity by asking her audience to think first about the comforts of home or dorm living that they all take for granted.

> *If you engage people on a vital, important level, they will respond. ~ Edward Bond*

In speaking to the audience about the comforts of dorm living, the speaker is unlikely to refer to the "dormitories where we each reside." More likely, she might say, "the dorms we live in." As with electing to use active voice, speakers can choose to be more conversational than they might be in writing an essay on the same topic. The speaker might use contractions, or colloquialisms, or make comparisons to popular television shows, music, or movies. This will help the listeners feel like the speaker is in conversation with them – admittedly a one-sided one – rather than talking at them. It can be off-putting to feel the speaker is simply reciting facts and figures and rushing to get through to the end of their speech, whereas listeners respond to someone talking to them calmly and confidently. Being conversational can help to convey this attitude even when on the inside the speaker is far from calm or confident. Nevertheless, employ this strategy with caution. Being too colloquial, for instance using "Dude" throughout the speech, could undermine your credibility. Or a popular culture example that you think is going to be widely recognized might not be the common knowledge you think it is, and could confuse audiences with non-native listeners.

> *Choice of attention - to pay attention to this and ignore that - is to the inner life what choice of action is to the outer. In both cases, a man is responsible for his choice and must accept the consequences, whatever they may be. ~ W. H. Auden*

4.1.9: Conclusion

Admittedly, this discussion of listening may add a layer of intimidation for public speakers. After all, it can be daunting to think of having to get an audience to not only hear, but also truly listen. Nevertheless, once we recognize the difference and become aware of active listening and its barriers, we can better tailor our spoken words to captivate and engage an audience. A broader awareness of the importance of effective listening is another weapon in your arsenal as a public speaker. At the same time, building up your own effective listening skills can enhance your academic, professional, and personal success. Being heard is one thing, but speakers need listeners to complete the communication loop. Reap the rewards: Instead of saying “I hear you,” try out “I’m listening.”

4.1.10: Activities and Glossary

Review Questions

1. What distinguishes listening from hearing?

2. What are some benefits for you personally from effective listening?

3. Name and give an example of each of the three A's of active listening.

4. Identify the three main barriers to listening. Which of these barriers is most problematic for you? What can you do about it?

5. What does an effective listener do with the extra thought process time while a speaker is speaking only 150 words-per-minute?

6. How can you communicate non-verbally that you are listening?

7. What are some considerations in offering constructive feedback?

8. What are strategies that help hold your listeners' attention during your speech?

Activities

1. Discuss the following in small groups. How do your listening behaviors change in the following situations:

A) At a concert,

B) In class,

C) At the dinner table with your parents,

D) In a doctor's office? What are the distractions and other barriers to listening you might encounter in each setting? What might you do to overcome the barriers to effective listening in each situation?

2. Listen to someone you disagree with (maybe a politician from the opposing party) and work to listen actively with an open mind. Try to pay attention to the person's argument and the reasons he offers in support of his point of view. Your goal is to identify why the speaker believes what he does and how he proves it. You need not be converted by this person's argument.

3. Reflect on a situation in your personal life where poor listening skills created a problem. Briefly describe the situation, then spend the bulk of your reflection analyzing what went wrong in terms of listening and how, specifically, effective listening would have made a difference. Share your observations in small group class discussion.

4. Spend a few minutes brainstorming your trigger words. What are the words that would provoke a strong emotional response in you? List three concrete strategies you might use to combat this while being an effective listener.

Glossary

Appreciative Listening Listening for entertainment or pleasure purposes. This is the type of listening we might employ listening to music, watching television, or viewing a movie.

Auditory Association The process by which the mind sorts the perceived sound into a category so that heard information is recognized. New stimuli is differentiated by comparing and contrasting with previously heard sounds.

Communication Loop A traditional communication model that has both sender and receiver sharing responsibility for communicating a message, listening, and offering feedback. The sender encodes a message for the receiver to decode. Effectiveness of the communication depends on the two sharing a similar interpretation of the message and feedback (which can be verbal or nonverbal).

Constructive Feedback Focuses on being specific, applicable, immediate, and intends to help the speaker to improve. The feedback should be phrased as "The story you told about you and your sister in Disneyland really helped me to understand your relationship…" rather than "that was great, Jane."

Critical Listening When we are listening, aiming to gain information with which we will evaluate a speaker, or the product or proposal the speaker is endorsing. This is often employed when we are looking to make choices, or find points of disagreement with a speaker.

“Deaf Spots” The preconceived notions or beliefs a listener might hold dear that can interfere with listening effectively. These are barriers to having an open mind to receive the sender’s message.

Emotional Trigger A word, concept, or idea that causes the listener to react emotionally. When listeners react to a speaker from an emotional perspective, their ability to listen effectively is compromised.

Empathetic (Therapeutic) Listening A level of relationship listening that aims to help the speaker feel heard and understand, also appreciated. This is also known as therapeutic listening as it is employed most often by counselors, conflict mediators, or religious representatives.

Ethos A speaker aims to establish credibility on the topic at hand with her audience by appealing to ethos. This reflects the speaker’s character, her ability to speak to the values of the listener, and her competence to discuss the topic.

Hearing Hearing is a three-step process. It involves receiving sound in the ear, perceiving sound in the brain, and processing the information offered by the sound to associate and distinguish it.

Informational Listening Listening to learn information. For instance, this is the kind of listening students employ in classroom settings to gain knowledge about a topic.

Intrinsic Motivation Effective listeners will find a reason within themselves to want to hear, understand, interpret, and remember the speaker’s message. Wanting to pass a possible quiz is an extrinsic motivation, while wanting to learn the material out of curiosity about the topic is intrinsic motivation.

“Listener’s Lean” Audience members who are intent on what is being said will lean forward. This is a nonverbal endorsement of the listener’s attention and the effect of the speaker’s message.

Listening This is the conscious act of focusing on the words or sounds to make meaning of a message. Listening requires more intentional effort than the physiological act of hearing.

Listening Reminder A note made by a listener acknowledging intent to focus on the speaker’s message and tune out distractions. A reminder might also encourage a listener to keep an open mind, or to provide open and encouraging body language.

Nonverbal Communication Physical behaviors that communicate the message or the feedback from the listener. These include leaning in, nodding one’s head, maintaining eye contact, crossing arms in front of the body, and offering sounds of agreement or dissent.

Pathos An appeal to the audience’s emotions, trying to trigger sympathy, pity, guilt, or sorrow. Pathos, along with ethos, and logos, make up the rhetorical triangle of appeals, according to Aristotle. An effective speaker will appeal to all three.

Relational Listening The active and involved listening we do with people we love and care about. This is listening where we acknowledge our sympathy for the speaker, encourage them to tell more, and build trust with friends or family members by showing interest in their concerns.

Writing for the Ear Keeping in mind, when writing a speech, that you must use language, pace, repetition, and other elements to help your audience to hear and see what you are speaking about. Remember, the listener must hear and understand your message as you speak it.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Preparing for Your First Speech

5.1: Speech Practice

Figure 5.1.1: Brenda – practice – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Once you've finished creating the physical structure of the speech, including all the sources you will use to support your main points, it's time to work on delivering your speech. The old maxim that "practice makes perfect" is as valid as ever in this case. We are not downplaying the importance of speech preparation at all. However, you could have the best speech outline in the world with the most amazing support, but if your delivery is bad, all your hard work will be lost on your audience members. In this section, we're going to briefly talk about the two fundamental aspects related to practicing your speech: verbal and nonverbal delivery.

Verbal Delivery

Verbal delivery is the way we actually deliver the words within the speech. You may, or may not, have noticed that up to this point in this chapter we have not used the phrases "writing your speech" or "speech writing." One of the biggest mistakes new public speakers make is writing out their entire speech and then trying to read the speech back to an audience. You may wonder to yourself, "Well, doesn't the president of the United States read his speeches?" And you're right; the president generally does read his speeches. But he also had years of speaking experience under his belt before he learned to use a TelePrompTer.

While reading a speech can be appropriate in some circumstances, in public speaking courses, the goal is usually to engage in what is called extemporaneous speaking. Extemporaneous speaking involves speaking in a natural, conversational tone and relying on notes rather than a prepared script. People who need to read speeches typically do so for one of two reasons: (1) the content of their speech is so specific and filled with technical terminology that misspeaking could cause problems, or (2) the slightest misspoken word could be held against the speaker politically or legally. Most of us will not be in either one of those two speaking contexts, so having the stuffiness and formalness of a written speech isn't necessary and can actually be detrimental.

So how does one develop an extemporaneous speaking style? Practice! You've already created your outline, now you have to become comfortable speaking from a set of notes. If you put too much information on your notes, you'll spend more time reading your notes and less time connecting with your audience. Notes should help you remember specific quotations, sources, and details, but they shouldn't contain the entire manuscript of your speech. Learning how to work with your notes and phrase your speech in a comfortable manner takes practice. It's important to realize that practice does not consist of running through your speech silently in your mind. Instead, you need to stand up and rehearse delivering your speech out loud. To get used to speaking in front of people and to get constructive feedback, and we recommend that you ask a few friends to serve as your practice audience.

Nonverbal Delivery

In addition to thinking about how we are going to deliver the content of the speech, we also need to think about how we're going to nonverbally deliver our speech. While there are many aspects of nonverbal delivery we could discuss here, we're going to focus on only three of them: eye contact, gestures, and movement.

Eye Contact

One of the most important nonverbal behaviors we can exhibit while speaking in public is gaining and maintaining eye contact. When we look at audience members directly, it helps them to focus their attention and listen more intently to what you are saying. On the flip side, when a speaker fails to look at audience members, it's easy for the audience to become distracted and stop listening. When practicing your speech, think about the moments in the speech when it will be most comfortable for you to look at people in your audience. If you have a long quotation, you'll probably need to read that quotation. However, when you then explain

how that quotation relates to your speech, that's a great point to look up from your notes and look someone straight in the eye and talk to them directly. When you're engaging in eye contact, just tell yourself that you're talking to that person specifically.

Gestures

A second major area of nonverbal communication for new public speakers involves gesturing. Gesturing is the physical manipulation of arms and hands to add emphasis to a speech. Gestures should be meaningful while speaking. You want to avoid being at either of the extremes: too much or too little. If you gesture too much, you may look like you're flailing your arms around for no purpose, which can become very distracting for an audience. At the same time, if you don't gesture at all, you'll look stiff and disengaged. One of our friends once watched a professor (who was obviously used to speaking from behind a lectern) give a short speech while standing on a stage nervously gripping the hems of his suit coat with both hands. Knowing how to use your hands effectively will enhance your delivery and increase the impact of your message.

If you're a new speaker, we cannot recommend highly enough the necessity of seeing how you look while practicing your speech, either by videotaping yourself or by practicing in front of a full-length mirror. People are often apprehensive about watching video tapes of themselves speaking, but the best way to really see how you look while speaking is—well, literally to see how you look while speaking. Think of it this way: If you have a distracting mannerism that you weren't conscious of, wouldn't you rather become aware of it *before* your speech so that you can practice making an effort to change that behavior?

Movement

The last major aspect of nonverbal communication we want to discuss here relates to how we move while speaking. As with gesturing, new speakers tend to go to one of two extremes while speaking: no movement or too much movement. On the one end of the spectrum, you have speakers who stand perfectly still and do not move at all. These speakers may also find comfort standing behind a lectern, which limits their ability to move in a comfortable manner. At the other end of the spectrum are speakers who never stop moving. Some even start to pace back and forth while speaking. One of our coauthors had a student who walked in a circle around the lectern while speaking, making the audience slightly dizzy—and concerned that the student would trip and hurt herself in the process.

When it comes to movement, standing still and incessant pacing are both inappropriate for public speaking. So how then should one move during a speech? Well, there are a range of different thoughts on this subject. We recommend that you plan out when you're going to move while speaking. One common way is to purposefully move when you are making the transition from one major point of your speech to the next. You might also take a step toward the audience at the moment when you are intensifying a point, or take a step back when saying something like, "Let's back up and think about this for a moment." However, we don't recommend moving when discussing important, complex ideas during your speech because the movement could be distracting and prevent audience members from fully understanding your message. Overall, you should practice movement so that it becomes comfortable for you and second nature.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Organizing your Speech (Introduction, Body, Conclusion)

6.1: Introductions Matter- How to Begin a Speech Effectively

Figure 6.1.1: Theunquietlibrarian – 21st Century Research Tool – CC BY-NC 2.0.

One of the most common complaints novice public speakers have is that they simply don't know how to start a speech. Many times speakers get ideas for how to begin their speeches as they go through the process of researching and organizing ideas. In this chapter, we will explore why introductions are important and various ways speakers can create memorable introductions. There may not be any one "best" way to start a speech, but we can provide some helpful guidelines that will make starting a speech much easier.

6.1.1: The Importance of an Introduction

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the general length of an introduction.
2. List and explain the five basic functions of an introduction.
3. Understand how to use three factors of credibility in an introduction.

Figure 6.1.1.1: Brian Indrelunas – enter at your own risk – CC BY-NC 2.0.

The introduction for a speech is generally only 10 to 15 percent of the entire time the speaker will spend speaking. This means that if your speech is to be five minutes long, your introduction should be no more than forty-five seconds. If your speech is to be ten minutes long, then your introduction should be no more than a minute and a half. Unfortunately, that 10 to 15 percent of your speech can either make your audience interested in what you have to say or cause them to tune out before you've really gotten started. Overall, a good introduction should serve five functions. Let's examine each of these.

Gain Audience Attention and Interest

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. One of the biggest mistakes that novice speakers make is to assume that people will naturally listen because the speaker is speaking. While many audiences may be polite and not talk while you're speaking, actually getting them to listen to what you are saying is a completely different challenge. Let's face it—we've all tuned someone out at some point because we weren't interested in what they had to say. If you do not get the audience's attention at the outset, it will only become more difficult to do so as you continue speaking. We'll talk about some strategies for grabbing an audience's attention later on in this chapter.

State the Purpose of Your Speech

The second major function of an introduction is to reveal the purpose of your speech to your audience. Have you ever sat through a speech wondering what the basic point was? Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speaker was talking about? An introduction is important because it forces the speaker to be mindfully aware of explaining the topic of the speech to the audience. If the speaker doesn't know what her or his topic is and cannot convey that topic to the audience, then we've got really big problems! Robert Cavett, the founder of the National Speaker's Association, used the analogy of a preacher giving a sermon when he noted, "When it's foggy in the pulpit, it's cloudy in the pews."

As we discussed in "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic", the specific purpose is the one idea you want your audience to remember when you are finished with your speech. Your specific purpose is the rudder that guides your research, organization, and development of main points. The more clearly focused your purpose is, the easier your task will be in developing your speech. In addition, a clear purpose provides the audience with a single, simple idea to remember even if they daydream during the body of your speech. To develop a specific purpose, you should complete the following sentence: "I want my audience to understand that…" Notice that your specific speech purpose is phrased in terms of expected audience responses, not in terms of your own perspective.

Establish Credibility

One of the most researched areas within the field of communication has been Aristotle's concept of *ethos* or credibility. First, and foremost, the concept of credibility must be understood as a perception of receivers. You may be the most competent, caring, and trustworthy speaker in the world on a given topic, but if your audience does not perceive you as credible, then your expertise and

passion will not matter. As public speakers, we need to make sure that we explain to our audiences why we are credible speakers on a given topic.

James C. McCroskey and Jason J. Teven have conducted extensive research on credibility and have determined that an individual's credibility is composed of three factors: competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). **Competence** is the degree to which a speaker is perceived to be knowledgeable or expert in a given subject by an audience member. Some individuals are given expert status because of positions they hold in society. For example, Dr. Regina Benjamin, the US Surgeon General, is expected to be competent in matters related to health and wellness as a result of being the United States' top physician.

Figure 6.1.1.2: Regina Benjamin

Source: Photo by Lawrence Jackson, White House photographer, http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/images/surgeon_general-0075.jpg.

But what if you do not possess a fancy title that lends itself to established competence? You need to explain to the audience why you are competent to speak on your topic. Keep in mind that even well-known speakers are not perceived as universally credible. US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin may be seen as competent on health and wellness issues, but may not be seen as a competent speaker on trends in Latin American music or different ways to cook summer squash. Like well-known speakers, you will need to establish your credibility on each topic you address, so establishing your competence about the energy efficiency of furnace systems during your informative speech does not automatically mean you will be seen as competent on the topic of organ donation for your persuasive speech.

The second factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven is **trustworthiness**, or the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as honest. Nothing will turn an audience against a speaker faster than if the audience believes the speaker is lying. When an audience does not perceive a speaker as trustworthy, the information coming out of the speaker's mouth is automatically perceived as deceitful. The speaker could be 100 percent honest, but the audience will still find the information suspect. For example, in the summer of 2009, many Democratic members of Congress attempted to hold public town-hall meetings about health care. For a range of reasons, many of the people who attended these town-hall meetings refused to let their elected officials actually speak because the audiences were convinced that the Congressmen and Congresswomen were lying.

In these situations, where a speaker is in front of a very hostile audience, there is little a speaker can do to reestablish that sense of trustworthiness. These public town-hall meetings became screaming matches between the riled-up audiences and the congressional representatives. Some police departments actually ended up having to escort the representatives from the buildings because they feared for their safety. Check out this video from CNN.com to see what some of these events actually looked like: http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2009/08/07/ldt.sylvester.town.hall.cnn?iref=videosearch. We hope that you will not be in physical danger when you speak to your classmates or in other settings, but these incidents serve to underscore how important speaker trustworthiness is across speaking contexts.

Caring/goodwill is the final factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven. **Caring/goodwill** refers to the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as caring about the audience member. As noted by Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond, "If a receiver does not believe that a source has the best intentions in mind for the receiver, the receiver will not see the source as credible. Simply put, we are going to listen to people who we think truly care for us and are looking out for our welfare" (Wrench, McCroskey & Richmond, 2008). As a speaker, then, you need to establish that your information is being presented because you

care about your audience and are not just trying to manipulate them. We should note that research has indicated that caring/goodwill is the most important factor of credibility. This means that if an audience believes that a speaker truly cares about the audience's best interests, the audience may overlook some competence and trust issues.

Provide Reasons to Listen

The fourth major function of an introduction is to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience, and one of the most effective means of establishing a connection with your audience is to provide them with reasons why they should listen to your speech. The idea of establishing a connection is an extension of the notion of caring/goodwill. In the chapters on Language and Speech Delivery, we'll spend a lot more time talking about how you can establish a good relationship with your audience. However, this relationship starts the moment you step to the front of the room to start speaking.

Instead of assuming the audience will make their own connections to your material, you should explicitly state how your information might be useful to your audience. Tell them directly how they might use your information themselves. It is not enough for you alone to be interested in your topic. You need to build a bridge to the audience by explicitly connecting your topic to their possible needs.

Preview Main Ideas

The last major function of an introduction is to preview the main ideas that your speech will discuss. A preview establishes the direction your speech will take. We sometimes call this process signposting because you're establishing signs for audience members to look for while you're speaking. In the most basic speech format, speakers generally have three to five major points they plan on making. During the preview, a speaker outlines what these points will be, which demonstrates to the audience that the speaker is organized.

A study by Baker found that individuals who were unorganized while speaking were perceived as less credible than those individuals who were organized (Baker, 1965). Having a solid preview of the information contained within one's speech and then following that preview will definitely help a speaker's credibility. It also helps your audience keep track of where you are if they momentarily daydream or get distracted.

Key Takeaways

- Introductions are only 10–15 percent of one's speech, so speakers need to make sure they think through the entire introduction to ensure that they will capture an audience. During an introduction, speakers attempt to impart the general and specific purpose of a speech while making their audience members interested in the speech topic, establishing their own credibility, and providing the audience with a preview of the speech structure.
- A speaker's perceived credibility is a combination of competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill. Research has shown that caring/goodwill is probably the most important factor of credibility because audiences want to know that a speaker has their best interests at heart. At the same time, speakers should strive to be both competent and honest while speaking.

Exercises

1. What are the five basic functions of an introduction? Discuss with your classmates which purpose you think is the most important. Why?
2. Why is establishing a relationship with one's audience important? How do you plan on establishing a relationship with your audience during your next speech?
3. Of the three factors of credibility, which do you think is going to be hardest to establish with your peers during your next speech? Why? What can you do to enhance your peers' perception of your credibility?

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6.1.2: The Attention-Getter- The First Step of an Introduction

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the different tools speakers can use to gain their audience's attention.
2. Name some common mistakes speakers make in trying to gain attention.

Figure 6.1.2.1: Stephen Velasco – IMG_1422 – CC BY-NC 2.0.

As you know by now, a good introduction will capture an audience's attention, while a bad introduction can turn an audience against a speaker. An **attention-getter** is the device a speaker uses at the beginning of a speech to capture an audience's interest and make them interested in the speech's topic. Typically, there are four things to consider in choosing a specific attention-getting device:

1. Appropriateness or relevance to audience
2. Purpose of speech
3. Topic
4. Occasion

First, when selecting an attention-getting device, you want to make sure that the option you choose is actually appropriate and relevant to your specific audience. Different audiences will have different backgrounds and knowledge, so you should use your audience analysis to determine whether specific information you plan on using would be appropriate for a specific audience. For example, if you're giving a speech on family units to a group of individuals over the age of sixty-five, starting your speech with a reference to the television show *Gossip Girl* may not be the best idea because the television show may not be relevant to that audience.

Second, you need to consider the basic purpose of your speech. As discussed earlier in this text, there are three basic purposes you can have for giving a speech: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. When selecting an attention-getter, you want to make sure that you select one that corresponds with your basic purpose. If your goal is to entertain an audience, then starting a speech with a quotation about how many people are dying in Africa each day from malnutrition may not be the best way to get your audience's attention. Remember, one of the basic goals of an introduction is to prepare your audience for your speech. If your attention-getter differs drastically in tone from the rest of your speech (e.g., dying in Africa when you want your audience to laugh), the disjointedness may cause your audience to become confused or tune you out completely.

Your third basic consideration when picking an attention-getting device is your speech topic. Ideally, your attention-getting device should have a relevant connection to your speech. Imagine if a speaker pulled condoms out of his pocket, yelled "Free sex!" and threw the condoms at the audience in the beginning of a speech about the economy. While this may clearly get the audience's attention, this isn't really a good way to prepare an audience for a speech about bull and bear markets. Not every attention-getter is appropriate for a given topic. Instead, a speaker could start this speech by explaining that "according to a 2004 episode of 60 Minutes, adults in the United States spend approximately $10 billion annually on adult entertainment, which is roughly the equivalent to the amounts they spend attending professional sporting events, buying music, or going out to the movies" (Leung, 2004). Notice how effective the shocking statistic is in clearly introducing the monetary value of the adult entertainment industry.

The last consideration when picking an attention-getting device involves the speech occasion. Different occasions will necessitate different tones, or particular styles or manners of speaking. For example, a persuasive speech about death and dying shouldn't be happy and hilarious. An informative speech on the benefits of laughing shouldn't be dull, dreary, and depressing. When selecting an attention-getter, you want to make sure that the attention-getter sets the tone for the speech.

Now that we've explored the four major considerations you must think of when selecting an attention-getter, let's look at a range of different attention-getters you may employ. Miller (1946) discovered that speakers tend to use one of eleven attention-getting devices when starting a speech. The rest of this section is going to examine these eleven attention-getting devices.

Reference to Subject

The first attention-getting method to consider is to tell your audience the subject of your speech. This device is probably the most direct, but it may also be the least interesting of the possible attention-getters. Here's an example:

> *We are surrounded by statistical information in today's world, so understanding statistics is becoming paramount to citizenship in the twenty-first century.*

This sentence explicitly tells an audience that the speech they are about to hear is about the importance of understanding statistics. While this isn't the most entertaining or interesting attention-getter, it is very clear and direct.

Figure 6.1.2.2: Dave Dugdale – Attentive Audience – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Reference to Audience

The second attention-getting device to consider is a direct reference to the audience. In this case, the speaker has a clear understanding of the audience and points out that there is something unique about the audience that should make them interested in the speech's content. Here's an example:

> *As human resource professionals, you and I know the importance of talent management. In today's competitive world, we need to invest in getting and keeping the best talent for our organizations to succeed.*

In this example, the speaker reminds the audience of their shared status as human resource professionals and uses the common ground to acknowledge the importance of talent management in human resources.

Quotation

Another way to capture your listeners' attention is to use the words of another person that relate directly to your topic. Maybe you've found a really great quotation in one of the articles or books you read while researching your speech. If not, you can also use a number of sources that compile useful quotations from noted individuals. Probably the most famous quotation book of all time is *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (http://www.bartleby.com/100), now in its seventeenth edition. Here are some other websites that contain useful databases of quotations for almost any topic:

- http://www.quotationspage.com
- http://www.bartleby.com/quotations
- http://www.moviequotes.com
- http://www.quotesandsayings.com
- http://www.quoteland.com

Quotations are a great way to start a speech, so let's look at an example that could be used for a speech on deception:

> *Oliver Goldsmith, a sixteenth-century writer, poet, and physician, once noted that "the true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them."*

Reference to Current Events

Referring to a current news event that relates to your topic is often an effective way to capture attention, as it immediately makes the audience aware of how relevant the topic is in today's world. For example, consider this attention-getter for a persuasive speech on frivolous lawsuits:

> *On January 10, 2007, Scott Anthony Gomez Jr. and a fellow inmate escaped from a Pueblo, Colorado, jail. During their escape the duo attempted to rappel from the roof of the jail using a makeshift ladder of bed sheets. During Gomez's attempt to scale the building, he slipped, fell forty feet, and injured his back. After being quickly apprehended, Gomez filed a lawsuit against the jail for making it too easy for him to escape.*

In this case, the speaker is highlighting a news event that illustrates what a frivolous lawsuit is, setting up the speech topic of a need for change in how such lawsuits are handled.

Historical Reference

You may also capture your listeners' attention by referring to a historical event related to your topic. Obviously, this strategy is closely related to the previous one, except that instead of a recent news event you are reaching further back in history to find a relevant reference. For example, if you are giving a speech on the Iraq War that began in 2003, you could refer back to the Vietnam War as way of making a comparison:

> *During the 1960s and '70s, the United States intervened in the civil strife between North and South Vietnam. The result was a long-running war of attrition in which many American lives were lost and the country of Vietnam suffered tremendous damage and destruction. Today, we see a similar war being waged in Iraq. American lives are being lost, and stability has not yet returned to the region.*

In this example, the speaker is evoking the audience's memories of the Vietnam War to raise awareness of similarities to the war in Iraq.

Anecdote

Another device you can use to start a speech is to tell an anecdote related to the speech's topic. An **anecdote** is a brief account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." A common mistake speakers make when telling an anecdote is to make the anecdote too long. Remember, your entire introduction should only be 10 to 15 percent of your speech, so your attention-getter must be very short.

One type of anecdote is a real story that emphasizes a speech's basic message. For example, here is an anecdote a speaker could use to begin a speech on how disconnected people are from the real world because of technology:

> *In July 2009, a high school girl named Alexa Longueira was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open manhole (Whitney, 2009).*

A second type of anecdote is a parable or fable. A **parable or fable** is an allegorical anecdote designed to teach general life lessons. The most widely known parables for most Americans are those given in the Bible and the best-known fables are Aesop's Fables (http://www.aesopfables.com). For the same speech on how disconnected people are with the real world because of technology, the speaker could have used the Fable of The Boy and the Filberts:

> *The ancient Greek writer Aesop told a fable about a boy who put his hand into a pitcher of filberts. The boy grabbed as many of the delicious nuts as he possibly could. But when he tried to pull them out, his hand wouldn't fit through the neck of the pitcher because he was grasping so many filberts. Instead of dropping some of them so that his hand would fit, he burst into tears and cried about his predicament. The moral of the story? "Don't try to do too much at once" (Aesop, 1881).*

After recounting this anecdote, the speaker could easily relate the fable to the notion that the technology in our society leads us to try to do too many things at once.

While parables and fables are short and entertaining, their application to your speech topic should be clear. We'll talk about this idea in more detail later in this chapter when we discuss how to link your attention-getter explicitly to your topic.

Startling Statement

The eighth device you can use to start a speech is to surprise your audience with startling information about your topic. Often, startling statements come in the form of statistics and strange facts. The goal of a good startling statistic is that it surprises the audience and gets them engaged in your topic. For example, if you're giving a speech about oil conservation, you could start by saying, "A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel." You could start a speech on the psychology of dreams by noting, "The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year." A strange fact, on the other hand, is a statement that does not involve numbers but is equally surprising to most audiences. For example, you could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any casinos in Las Vegas." You could start a speech on the Harlem Globetrotters by saying, "In 2000, Pope John Paul II became the most famous honorary member of the Harlem Globetrotters." All four of these examples came from a great website for strange facts (http://www.strangefacts.com).

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, make sure that your startling statement is factual. The Internet is full of startling statements and claims that are simply not factual, so when you find a statement you'd like to use, you have an ethical duty to ascertain its truth before you use it. Second, make sure that your startling statement is relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value. We've all heard startling claims made in the media that are clearly made for purposes of shock or fear mongering. As speakers, we have an ethical obligation to avoid playing on people's emotions in this way.

Question

Another strategy for getting your audience's attention is to ask them a question. There are two types of questions commonly used as attention-getters: response questions and rhetorical questions. A **response question** is a question that the audience is expected to answer in some manner. For example, you could ask your audience, "Please raise your hand if you have ever thought about backpacking in Europe" or "Have you ever voted for the Electoral College? If so, stand up." In both of these cases, the speaker wants her or his audience to respond. A **rhetorical question**, on the other hand, is a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the importance of HIV testing could start by asking the audience, "I have two questions that I'd like you to think about. How many students on this campus have had sexual intercourse? Of those who have had sex, how many have been tested for HIV?" In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to give an estimate of the numbers of students that fit into each category but rather to think about the questions as the speech goes on.

Humor

Humor is another effective method for gaining an audience's attention. Humor is an amazing tool when used properly. We cannot begin to explain all the amazing facets of humor within this text, but we can say that humor is a great way of focusing an audience on what you are saying. However, humor is a double-edged sword. If you do not wield the sword carefully, you can turn your audience against you very quickly. When using humor, you really need to know your audience and understand what they will find humorous. One of the biggest mistakes a speaker can make is to use some form of humor that the audience either doesn't find funny or finds offensive. Think about how incompetent the character of Michael Scott seems on the television program *The Office*, in large part because of his ineffective use of humor. We always recommend that you test out humor of any kind on a sample of potential audience members prior to actually using it during a speech.

Figure 6.1.2.3: Thinkmedialabs – Audience laughing – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Now that we've warned you about the perils of using humor, let's talk about how to use humor as an attention-getter. Humor can be incorporated into several of the attention-getting devices mentioned. You could use a humorous anecdote, quotation, or current event. As with other attention-getting devices, you need to make sure your humor is relevant to your topic, as one of the biggest mistakes some novices make when using humor is to add humor that really doesn't support the overall goal of the speech. So when looking for humorous attention-getters you want to make sure that the humor is nonoffensive to your audiences and relevant to your speech. For example, here's a humorous quotation from Nicolas Chamfort, a French author during the sixteenth century, "The only thing that stops God from sending another flood is that the first one was useless." While this quotation could be great for some audiences, other audiences may find this humorous quotation offensive (e.g., religious audiences). The Chamfort quotation could be great for a speech on the ills of modern society, but probably not for a speech on the state of modern religious conflict. You want to make sure that the leap from your attention-getter to your topic isn't too complicated for your audience, or the attention-getter will backfire.

Personal Reference

The tenth device you may consider to start a speech is to refer to a story about yourself that is relevant for your topic. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience. If you are an expert or have firsthand experience related to your topic, sharing this information with the audience is a great way to show that you are credible during your attention-getter. For example, if you had a gastric bypass surgery and you wanted to give an informative speech about the procedure, you could introduce your speech in this way:

> *In the fall of 2008, I decided that it was time that I took my life into my own hands. After suffering for years with the disease of obesity, I decided to take a leap of faith and get a gastric bypass in an attempt to finally beat the disease.*

If you use a personal example, don't get carried away with the focus on yourself and your own life. Your speech topic is the purpose of the attention-getter, not the other way around. Another pitfall in using a personal example is that it may be too personal for you to maintain your composure. For example, a student once started a speech about her grandmother by stating, "My grandmother died of cancer at 3:30 this morning." The student then proceeded to cry nonstop for ten minutes. While this is an extreme example, we strongly recommend that you avoid any material that could get you overly choked up while speaking. When speakers have an emotional breakdown during their speech, audience members stop listening to the message and become very uncomfortable.

Reference to Occasion

The last device we mention for starting a speech is to refer directly to the speaking occasion. This attention-getter is only useful if the speech is being delivered for a specific occasion. Many toasts, for example, start with the following statement: "Today we are here to honor X." In this case, the "X" could be a retirement, a marriage, a graduation, or any number of other special occasions. Because of its specific nature, this attention-getter is the least likely to be used for speeches being delivered for college courses.

Learning Objectives

- In developing the introduction to your speech, begin by deciding upon a statement to capture the audience's attention.
- Attention-getters can include references to the audience, quotations, references to current events, historical references, anecdotes, startling statements, questions, humor, personal references, and references to the occasion.

Exercises

1. Make a list of the attention-getting devices you might use to give a speech on the importance of recycling. Which do you think would be most effective? Why?
2. You've been asked to deliver a speech on the use of advertising in children's media. Out of the list of ten different possible attention-getting devices discussed in the chapter, how could you use four of them to start your speech?

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6.1.3: Putting It Together- Steps to Complete Your Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Clearly identify why an audience should listen to a speaker.
- Discuss how you can build your credibility during a speech.
- Understand how to write a clear thesis statement.
- Design an effective preview of your speech's content for your audience.

Figure 6.1.3.1: Erin Brown-John – puzzle – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Once you have captured your audience's attention, it's important to make the rest of your introduction interesting, and use it to lay out the rest of the speech. In this section, we are going to explore the five remaining parts of an effective introduction: linking to your topic, reasons to listen, stating credibility, thesis statement, and preview.

Link to Topic

After the attention-getter, the second major part of an introduction is called the link to topic. The link to topic is the shortest part of an introduction and occurs when a speaker demonstrates how an attention-getting device relates to the topic of a speech. Often the attention-getter and the link to topic are very clear. For example, if you look at the attention-getting device example under historical reference above, you'll see that the first sentence brings up the history of the Vietnam War and then shows us how that war can help us understand the Iraq War. In this case, the attention-getter clearly flows directly to the topic. However, some attention-getters need further explanation to get to the topic of the speech. For example, both of the anecdote examples (the girl falling into the manhole while texting and the boy and the filberts) need further explanation to connect clearly to the speech topic (i.e., problems of multitasking in today's society).

Let's look at the first anecdote example to demonstrate how we could go from the attention-getter to the topic.

> *In July 2009, a high school girl named Alexa Longueira was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open manhole. This anecdote illustrates the problem that many people are facing in today's world. We are so wired into our technology that we forget to see what's going on around us—like a big hole in front of us.*

In this example, the third sentence here explains that the attention-getter was an anecdote that illustrates a real issue. The fourth sentence then introduces the actual topic of the speech.

Let's now examine how we can make the transition from the parable or fable attention-getter to the topic:

> *The ancient Greek writer Aesop told a fable about a boy who put his hand into a pitcher of filberts. The boy grabbed as many of the delicious nuts as he possibly could. But when he tried to pull them out, his hand wouldn't fit through the neck of the pitcher because he was grasping so many filberts. Instead of dropping some of them so that his hand would*

> *fit, he burst into tears and cried about his predicament. The moral of the story? "Don't try to do too much at once." In today's world, many of us are us are just like the boy putting his hand into the pitcher. We are constantly trying to grab so much or do so much that it prevents us from accomplishing our goals. I would like to show you three simple techniques to manage your time so that you don't try to pull too many filberts from your pitcher.*

In this example, we added three new sentences to the attention-getter to connect it to the speech topic.

Reasons to Listen

Once you have linked an attention-getter to the topic of your speech, you need to explain to your audience why your topic is important. We call this the "why should I care?" part of your speech because it tells your audience why the topic is directly important to them. Sometimes you can include the significance of your topic in the same sentence as your link to the topic, but other times you may need to spell out in one or two sentences why your specific topic is important.

People in today's world are very busy, and they do not like their time wasted. Nothing is worse than having to sit through a speech that has nothing to do with you. Imagine sitting through a speech about a new software package you don't own and you will never hear of again. How would you react to the speaker? Most of us would be pretty annoyed at having had our time wasted in this way. Obviously, this particular speaker didn't do a great job of analyzing her or his audience if the audience isn't going to use the software package—but even when speaking on a topic that is highly relevant to the audience, speakers often totally forget to explain how and why it is important.

Appearing Credible

The next part of a speech is not so much a specific "part" as an important characteristic that needs to be pervasive throughout your introduction and your entire speech. As a speaker, you want to be seen as credible (competent, trustworthy, and caring/having goodwill). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, credibility is ultimately a perception that is made by your audience. While your audience determines whether they perceive you as competent, trustworthy, and caring/having goodwill, there are some strategies you can employ to make yourself appear more credible.

First, to make yourself appear competent, you can either clearly explain to your audience why you are competent about a given subject or demonstrate your competence by showing that you have thoroughly researched a topic by including relevant references within your introduction. The first method of demonstrating competence—saying it directly—is only effective if you are actually a competent person on a given subject. If you are an undergraduate student and you are delivering a speech about the importance of string theory in physics, unless you are a prodigy of some kind, you are probably not a recognized expert on the subject. Conversely, if your number one hobby in life is collecting memorabilia about the Three Stooges, then you may be an expert about the Three Stooges. However, you would need to explain to your audience your passion for collecting Three Stooges memorabilia and how this has made you an expert on the topic.

If, on the other hand, you are not actually a recognized expert on a topic, you need to demonstrate that you have done your homework to become more knowledgeable than your audience about your topic. The easiest way to demonstrate your competence is through the use of appropriate references from leading thinkers and researchers on your topic. When you demonstrate to your audience that you have done your homework, they are more likely to view you as competent.

The second characteristic of credibility, trustworthiness, is a little more complicated than competence, for it ultimately relies on audience perceptions. One way to increase the likelihood that a speaker will be perceived as trustworthy is to use reputable sources. If you're quoting Dr. John Smith, you need to explain who Dr. John Smith is so your audience will see the quotation as being more trustworthy. As speakers we can easily manipulate our sources into appearing more credible than they actually are, which would be unethical. When you are honest about your sources with your audience, they will trust you and your information more so than when you are ambiguous. The worst thing you can do is to out-and-out lie about information during your speech. Not only is lying highly unethical, but if you are caught lying, your audience will deem you untrustworthy and perceive everything you are saying as untrustworthy. Many speakers have attempted to lie to an audience because it will serve their own purposes or even because they believe their message is in their audience's best interest, but lying is one of the fastest ways to turn off an audience and get them to distrust both the speaker and the message.

The third characteristic of credibility to establish during the introduction is the sense of caring/goodwill. While some unethical speakers can attempt to manipulate an audience's perception that the speaker cares, ethical speakers truly do care about their audiences and have their audience's best interests in mind while speaking. Often speakers must speak in front of audiences that may be hostile toward the speaker's message. In these cases, it is very important for the speaker to explain that he or she really does believe her or his message is in the audience's best interest. One way to show that you have your audience's best interests in mind is to acknowledge disagreement from the start:

> *Today I'm going to talk about why I believe we should enforce stricter immigration laws in the United States. I realize that many of you will disagree with me on this topic. I used to believe that open immigration was a necessity for the United States to survive and thrive, but after researching this topic, I've changed my mind. While I may not change all of your minds today, I do ask that you listen with an open mind, set your personal feelings on this topic aside, and judge my arguments on their merits.*

While clearly not all audience members will be open or receptive to opening their minds and listening to your arguments, by establishing that there is known disagreement, you are telling the audience that you understand their possible views and are not trying to attack their intellect or their opinions.

Thesis Statement

A **thesis statement** is a short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech. A strong, clear thesis statement is very valuable within an introduction because it lays out the basic goal of the entire speech. We strongly believe that it is worthwhile to invest some time in framing and writing a good thesis statement. You may even want to write your thesis statement before you even begin conducting research for your speech. While you may end up rewriting your thesis statement later, having a clear idea of your purpose, intent, or main idea before you start searching for research will help you focus on the most appropriate material. To help us understand thesis statements, we will first explore their basic functions and then discuss how to write a thesis statement.

Basic Functions of a Thesis Statement

A thesis statement helps your audience by letting them know "in a nutshell" what you are going to talk about. With a good thesis statement you will fulfill four basic functions: you express your specific purpose, provide a way to organize your main points, make your research more effective, and enhance your delivery.

Express Your Specific Purpose

To orient your audience, you need to be as clear as possible about your meaning. A strong thesis will prepare your audience effectively for the points that will follow. Here are two examples:

1. "Today, I want to discuss academic cheating." (weak example)
2. "Today, I will clarify exactly what plagiarism is and give examples of its different types so that you can see how it leads to a loss of creative learning interaction." (strong example)

The weak statement will probably give the impression that you have no clear position about your topic because you haven't said what that position is. Additionally, the term "academic cheating" can refer to many behaviors—acquiring test questions ahead of time, copying answers, changing grades, or allowing others to do your coursework—so the specific topic of the speech is still not clear to the audience.

The strong statement not only specifies plagiarism but also states your specific concern (loss of creative learning interaction).

Provide a Way to Organize Your Main Points

A thesis statement should appear, almost verbatim, toward the end of the introduction to a speech. A thesis statement helps the audience get ready to listen to the arrangement of points that follow. Many speakers say that if they can create a strong thesis sentence, the rest of the speech tends to develop with relative ease. On the other hand, when the thesis statement is not very clear, creating a speech is an uphill battle.

When your thesis statement is sufficiently clear and decisive, you will know where you stand about your topic and where you intend to go with your speech. Having a clear thesis statement is especially important if you know a great deal about your topic or you have strong feelings about it. If this is the case for you, you need to know exactly what you are planning on talking about in order to fit within specified time limitations. Knowing where you are and where you are going is the entire point in establishing a thesis statement; it makes your speech much easier to prepare and to present.

Let's say you have a fairly strong thesis statement, and that you've already brainstormed a list of information that you know about the topic. Chances are your list is too long and has no focus. Using your thesis statement, you can select only the information that (1) is directly related to the thesis and (2) can be arranged in a sequence that will make sense to the audience and will support the thesis. In essence, a strong thesis statement helps you keep useful information and weed out less useful information.

Make Your Research More Effective

If you begin your research with only a general topic in mind, you run the risk of spending hours reading mountains of excellent literature about your topic. However, mountains of literature do not always make coherent speeches. You may have little or no idea of how to tie your research all together, or even whether you should tie it together. If, on the other hand, you conduct your research with a clear thesis statement in mind, you will be better able to zero in only on material that directly relates to your chosen thesis statement. Let's look at an example that illustrates this point:

> *Many traffic accidents involve drivers older than fifty-five.*

While this statement may be true, you could find industrial, medical, insurance literature that can drone on *ad infinitum* about the details of all such accidents in just one year. Instead, focusing your thesis statement will help you narrow the scope of information you will be searching for while gathering information. Here's an example of a more focused thesis statement:

> *Three factors contribute to most accidents involving drivers over fifty-five years of age: failing eyesight, slower reflexes, and rapidly changing traffic conditions.*

This framing is somewhat better. This thesis statement at least provides three possible main points and some keywords for your electronic catalog search. However, if you want your audience to understand the context of older people at the wheel, consider something like:

> *Mature drivers over fifty-five years of age must cope with more challenging driving conditions than existed only one generation ago: more traffic moving at higher speeds, the increased imperative for quick driving decisions, and rapidly changing ramp and cloverleaf systems. Because of these challenges, I want my audience to believe that drivers over the age of sixty-five should be required to pass a driving test every five years.*

This framing of the thesis provides some interesting choices. First, several terms need to be defined, and these definitions might function surprisingly well in setting the tone of the speech. Your definitions of words like "generation," "quick driving decisions," and "cloverleaf systems" could jolt your audience out of assumptions they have taken for granted as truth.

Second, the framing of the thesis provides you with a way to describe the specific changes as they have occurred between, say, 1970 and 2010. How much, and in what ways, have the volume and speed of traffic changed? Why are quick decisions more critical now? What is a "cloverleaf," and how does any driver deal cognitively with exiting in the direction seemingly opposite to the desired one? Questions like this, suggested by your own thesis statement, can lead to a strong, memorable speech.

Enhance Your Delivery

When your thesis is not clear to you, your listeners will be even more clueless than you are—but if you have a good clear thesis statement, your speech becomes clear to your listeners. When you stand in front of your audience presenting your introduction, you can vocally emphasize the essence of your speech, expressed as your thesis statement. Many speakers pause for a half second, lower their vocal pitch slightly, slow down a little, and deliberately present the thesis statement, the one sentence that encapsulates its purpose. When this is done effectively, the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech is driven home for an audience.

How to Write a Thesis Statement

Now that we've looked at why a thesis statement is crucial in a speech, let's switch gears and talk about how we go about writing a solid thesis statement. A thesis statement is related to the general and specific purposes of a speech as we discussed them in "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic".

Choose Your Topic

The first step in writing a good thesis statement was originally discussed in "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic" when we discussed how to find topics. Once you have a general topic, you are ready to go to the second step of creating a thesis statement.

Narrow Your Topic

One of the hardest parts of writing a thesis statement is narrowing a speech from a broad topic to one that can be easily covered during a five- to ten-minute speech. While five to ten minutes may sound like a long time to new public speakers, the time flies by very quickly when you are speaking. You can easily run out of time if your topic is too broad. To ascertain if your topic is narrow enough for a specific time frame, ask yourself three questions.

First, is your thesis statement narrow or is it a broad overgeneralization of a topic? An overgeneralization occurs when we classify everyone in a specific group as having a specific characteristic. For example, a speaker's thesis statement that "all members of the National Council of La Raza are militant" is an overgeneralization of all members of the organization. Furthermore, a speaker would have to correctly demonstrate that all members of the organization are militant for the thesis statement to be proven, which is a very difficult task since the National Council of La Raza consists of millions of Hispanic Americans. A more appropriate thesis related to this topic could be, "Since the creation of the National Council of La Raza [NCLR] in 1968, the NCLR has become increasingly militant in addressing the causes of Hispanics in the United States."

The second question to ask yourself when narrowing a topic is whether your speech's topic is one clear topic or multiple topics. A strong thesis statement consists of only a single topic. The following is an example of a thesis statement that contains too many topics: "Medical marijuana, prostitution, and gay marriage should all be legalized in the United States." Not only are all three fairly broad, but you also have three completely unrelated topics thrown into a single thesis statement. Instead of a thesis statement that has multiple topics, limit yourself to only one topic. Here's an example of a thesis statement examining only one topic: "Today we're going to examine the legalization and regulation of the oldest profession in the state of Nevada." In this case, we're focusing our topic to how one state has handled the legalization and regulation of prostitution.

The last question a speaker should ask when making sure a topic is sufficiently narrow is whether the topic has direction. If your basic topic is too broad, you will never have a solid thesis statement or a coherent speech. For example, if you start off with the topic "Barack Obama is a role model for everyone," what do you mean by this statement? Do you think President Obama is a role model because of his dedication to civic service? Do you think he's a role model because he's a good basketball player? Do you think he's a good role model because he's an excellent public speaker? When your topic is too broad, almost anything can become part of the topic. This ultimately leads to a lack of direction and coherence within the speech itself. To make a cleaner topic, a speaker needs to narrow her or his topic to one specific area. For example, you may want to examine why President Obama is a good speaker.

Put Your Topic into a Sentence

Once you've narrowed your topic to something that is reasonably manageable given the constraints placed on your speech, you can then formalize that topic as a complete sentence. For example, you could turn the topic of President Obama's public speaking skills into the following sentence: "Because of his unique sense of lyricism and his well-developed presentational skills, President Barack Obama is a modern symbol of the power of public speaking." Once you have a clear topic sentence, you can start tweaking the thesis statement to help set up the purpose of your speech.

Add Your Argument, Viewpoint, or Opinion

This function only applies if you are giving a speech to persuade. If your topic is informative, your job is to make sure that the thesis statement is nonargumentative and focuses on facts. For example, in the preceding thesis statement we have a couple of opinion-oriented terms that should be avoided for informative speeches: "unique sense," "well-developed," and "power." All three of these terms are laced with an individual's opinion, which is fine for a persuasive speech but not for an informative speech. For informative speeches, the goal of a thesis statement is to explain what the speech will be informing the audience about, not

attempting to add the speaker's opinion about the speech's topic. For an informative speech, you could rewrite the thesis statement to read, "This speech is going to analyze Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his speech, 'A World That Stands as One,' delivered July 2008 in Berlin."

On the other hand, if your topic is persuasive, you want to make sure that your argument, viewpoint, or opinion is clearly indicated within the thesis statement. If you are going to argue that Barack Obama is a great speaker, then you should set up this argument within your thesis statement.

Use the Thesis Checklist

Once you have written a first draft of your thesis statement, you're probably going to end up revising your thesis statement a number of times prior to delivering your actual speech. A thesis statement is something that is constantly tweaked until the speech is given. As your speech develops, often your thesis will need to be rewritten to whatever direction the speech itself has taken. We often start with a speech going in one direction, and find out through our research that we should have gone in a different direction. When you think you finally have a thesis statement that is good to go for your speech, take a second and make sure it adheres to the criteria shown in Table 6.1.3.1 "Thesis Checklist"

Table 6.1.3.1 Thesis Checklist

Instructions: For each of the following questions, check either "yes" or "no."	Yes	No
1. Does your thesis clearly reflect the topic of your speech?		
2. Can you adequately cover the topic indicated in your thesis within the time you have for your speech?		
3. Is your thesis statement simple?		
4. Is your thesis statement direct?		
5. Does your thesis statement gain an audience's interest?		
6. Is your thesis statement easy to understand?		
Persuasive Speeches		
7. Does your thesis statement introduce a clear argument?		
8. Does your thesis statement clearly indicate what your audience should do, how your audience should think, or how your audience should feel?		
Scoring: For a strong thesis statement, all your answers should have been "yes."		

Preview of Speech

The final part of an introduction contains a preview of the major points to be covered within your speech. I'm sure we've all seen signs that have three cities listed on them with the mileage to reach each city. This mileage sign is an indication of what is to come. A preview works the same way. A preview foreshadows what the main body points will be in the speech. For example, to preview a speech on bullying in the workplace, one could say, "To understand the nature of bullying in the modern workplace, I will first define what workplace bullying is and the types of bullying, I will then discuss the common characteristics of both workplace bullies and their targets, and lastly, I will explore some possible solutions to workplace bullying." In this case, each of the phrases mentioned in the preview would be a single distinct point made in the speech itself. In other words, the first major body point in this speech would examine what workplace bullying is and the types of bullying; the second major body point in this speech would discuss the common characteristics of both workplace bullies and their targets; and lastly, the third body point in this speech would explore some possible solutions to workplace bullying.

Key Takeaways

- Linking the attention-getter to the speech topic is essential so that you maintain audience attention and so that the relevance of the attention-getter is clear to your audience.
- Establishing how your speech topic is relevant and important shows the audience why they should listen to your speech.
- To be an effective speaker, you should convey all three components of credibility, competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill, by the content and delivery of your introduction.
- A clear thesis statement is essential to provide structure for a speaker and clarity for an audience.
- An effective preview identifies the specific main points that will be present in the speech body.

Exercises

1. Make a list of the attention-getting devices you might use to give a speech on the importance of recycling. Which do you think would be most effective? Why?
2. Create a thesis statement for a speech related to the topic of collegiate athletics. Make sure that your thesis statement is narrow enough to be adequately covered in a five- to six-minute speech.
3. Discuss with a partner three possible body points you could utilize for the speech on the topic of volunteerism.
4. Fill out the introduction worksheet to help work through your introduction for your next speech. Please make sure that you answer all the questions clearly and concisely.

6.1.4: Analyzing an Introduction

Learning Objectives

1. See what a full introduction section looks like.
2. Distinguish among the six parts of an introduction.

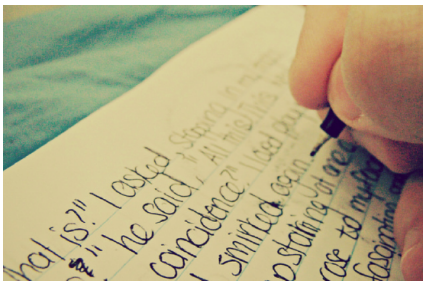

Figure 6.1.4.1: Nilufer Godgieva – Writing Forever – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Thus far, this chapter has focused on how to create a clear introduction. We discussed why introductions are important and the six important functions of effective introductions. In this section we're going to examine an actual introduction to a speech. Before we start analyzing the introduction, please read the introduction paragraph that follows.

> ***Smart Dust Introduction***
> *In 2002, the famed science fiction writer Michael Crichton released his book Prey, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar-powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it overtook and killed its prey in its need for new resources. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the Journal of Communications and Networks that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS: sensors, robots, or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, Fortune Magazine listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On." Thus far researchers have hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism. Today I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works, we will then examine some military applications of smart dust, and we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.*

Now that you've had a chance to read the introduction to the speech on smart dust, read it over a second time and look for the six parts of the speech introduction as discussed earlier in this chapter. Once you're done analyzing this introduction, Table 6.1.4.1 "Smart Dust Introduction" shows you how the speech was broken down into the various parts of an introduction.

Table 6.1.4.1 Smart Dust Introduction

Part of Introduction	Analysis
In 2002, famed science fiction writer, Michael Crichton, released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar-powered,	**Attention-Getter**

Part of Introduction	Analysis
self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it over took and killed its prey in its need for new resources.	This attention-getter is using an anecdote derived from a best-selling novel.
The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS: sensors, robots, or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration.	**Link to Topic** This link to topic shows how the book *Prey* is actually very close to what scientists are attempting to accomplish.
By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On." Thus far researchers have hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.	**Reasons to Listen** In this section, the speaker indicates that business professionals have already recognized smart dust as a good economic investment with various applications.
"Professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks*" "By 2004 *Fortune Magazine* listed"	**Espousal of Credibility** Notice the inclusion of research from both the *Journal of Communications and Networks* and *Fortune Magazine*. This is an attempt to indicate that the speaker has conducted research on the subject.
Today I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future.	**Thesis Statement** This thesis statement clearly indicates that this is an informative speech because it does not attempt to build an argument or share a specific opinion.
To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works, we will then examine some military applications of smart dust, and we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.	**Preview** This preview clearly indicates three body points that will be discussed in the speech.

Need More Speech Examples?

The following YouTube videos will show you a wide range of different speeches. While watching these videos, ask yourself the following questions: How have they utilized various attention-getting devices? Have they clearly used all aspects of an introduction? Do they have a strong thesis and preview? How could you have made the introduction stronger?

Animal Experimentation

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4yYDt4di0o

Life after Having a Child

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7-DhSLsk1U

Pros and Cons of Cholesterol

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7VIOs6aiAc

On Being a Hero

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYtm8uEo5vU

LASIK Eye Surgery

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0YWy8CXoYk

6.1.5: Chapter Exercises

Speaking Ethically

Imagine that you are preparing a speech on the benefits of a new drug, and you find a direct quotation that clearly establishes your argument. Unfortunately, you soon realize that the source of your quotation is actually a lobbyist who works for the pharmaceutical company that manufactures the drug. You really want to use this quotation as your attention-getter, but you realize that the source is clearly biased. Which of the following options do you think is the most ethical? Why?

1. Disregard the quotation and find another way to start your speech.
2. Use the quotation, but acknowledge that the source comes from a paid lobbyist of the pharmaceutical company who manufactures the drug.
3. Use the quotation and just give the name of the source. If your audience is interested in your topic, they'll do their own research and make informed decisions for themselves.

End-of-chapter Assessment

1. During a keynote presentation, the speaker mentions that she is the head of neurology at a major medical center. The speaker then goes on to discuss why wearing helmets is important for bicyclists of all ages. What factor of credibility has the speaker attempted to establish?
    1. competence
    2. caring/goodwill
    3. extroversion
    4. trustworthiness
    5. character
2. A kid perched on the roof of his house one day notices a wolf walking by. The kid yells at the wolf, "Evil, vile creature! Why have you come near honest folks' homes?" The wolf quickly replied, "It is easy to be brave from a safe distance." What type of attention-getting device does this represent?
    1. personal reference
    2. fairy tale
    3. personal anecdote
    4. parable or fable
    5. humor
3. During an introduction, a speaker says, "I realize that many of us disagree on the use of corporal punishment in public schools. I just ask that you listen to my arguments with an open mind." Which aspect of credibility is the speaker attempting to enhance?
    1. competence
    2. caring/goodwill
    3. extroversion
    4. trustworthiness
    5. character
4. Which of the following is a function of a thesis statement?
    1. It provides a clear ending point for your speech.
    2. It helps to organize your introduction.
    3. It enhances your language usage.
    4. It expresses the body points in your speech.
    5. It clarifies your perspective about your topic.
5. What part of an introduction does the following sentence represent? "Today we're going to examine the video gaming industry by first discussing the history of video games, then by examining the current trends in video gaming, and lastly, by discussing the future of video games."
    1. attention-getter
    2. link to topic

3. preview
4. thesis
5. significance of topic

Answer Key

1. a
2. d
3. b
4. e
5. c

Introduction Worksheet

Directions: Use this worksheet to map out the introduction to your next speech.

1. What is your general purpose? (circle one)

   To inform To persuade To entertain

2. What is your specific purpose?

   _____

   _____

3. Which attention-getting device do you plan on using?

   _____

   _____

4. How will you link your attention-getting device to your actual topic?

   _____

   _____

5. Why should your audience listen to your speech?

   _____

   _____

6. How will you establish your credibility during speech?
   1. Competence

      _____

      _____

   2. Trustworthiness

      _____

      _____

   3. Caring/goodwill

      _____

      _____

   4. What is your thesis statement?

      _____

      _____

7. What are your three main body points?
    1. Body point 1

        _____

        _____
    2. Body point 2

        _____

        _____
    3. Body point 3

        _____

        _____
    4. Write a preview of your three main body points.

        _____

        _____

6.2: Creating the Body of a Speech

Figure 6.2.1: Siddie Nam – Thinking – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

In a series of important and ground-breaking studies conducted during the 1950s and 1960s, researchers started investigating how a speech's organization was related to audience perceptions of those speeches. The first study, conducted by Raymond Smith in 1951, randomly organized the parts of a speech to see how audiences would react. Not surprisingly, when speeches were randomly organized, the audience perceived the speech more negatively than when audiences were presented with a speech with clear, intentional organization. Smith also found that audiences who listened to unorganized speeches were less interested in those speeches than audiences who listened to organized speeches (Smith, 1951). Thompson furthered this investigation and found that unorganized speeches were also harder for audiences to recall after the speech. Basically, people remember information from speeches that are clearly organized—and forget information from speeches that are poorly organized (Thompson, 1960). A third study by Baker found that when audiences were presented with a disorganized speaker, they were less likely to be persuaded, and saw the disorganized speaker as lacking credibility (Baker, 1965).

These three very important studies make the importance of organization very clear. When speakers are not organized they are not perceived as credible and their audiences view the speeches negatively, are less likely to be persuaded, and don't remember specific information from the speeches after the fact.

We start this chapter discussing these studies because we want you to understand the importance of speech organization on real audiences. If you are not organized, your speech will never have its intended effect. In this chapter, we are going to discuss the basics of organizing the body of your speech.

References

Baker, E. E. (1965). The immediate effects of perceived speaker disorganization on speaker credibility and audience attitude change in persuasive speaking. *Western Speech, 29*, 148–161.

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Thompson, E. C. (1960). An experimental investigation of the relative effectiveness of organizational structure in oral communication. *Southern Speech Journal, 26*, 59–69.

6.2.1: Determining Your Main Ideas

Learning Objectives

- Revisit the function of a specific purpose.
- Understand how to make the transition from a specific purpose to a series of main points.
- Be able to narrow a speech from all the possible points to the main points.
- Explain how to prepare meaningful main points.

Figure 6.2.1.1: Matt Wynn – Lightbulb! – CC BY 2.0.

When creating a speech, it's important to remember that speeches have three clear parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The introduction establishes the topic and whets your audience's appetite, and the conclusion wraps everything up at the end of your speech. The real "meat" of your speech happens in the body. In this section, we're going to discuss how to think strategically about the body of your speech.

We like the word *strategic* because it refers to determining what is important or essential to the overall plan or purpose of your speech. Too often, new speakers just throw information together and stand up and start speaking. When that happens, audience members are left confused and the reason for the speech may get lost. To avoid being seen as disorganized, we want you to start thinking critically about the organization of your speech. In this section, we will discuss how to take your speech from a specific purpose to creating the main points of your speech.

What Is Your Specific Purpose?

Before we discuss how to determine the main points of your speech, we want to revisit your speech's specific purpose, which we discussed in detail in "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic". Recall that a speech can have one of three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. The general purpose refers to the broad goal for creating and delivering the speech. The specific purpose, on the other hand, starts with one of those broad goals (inform, persuade, or entertain) and then further informs the listener about the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of the speech.

The specific purpose is stated as a sentence incorporating the general purpose, the specific audience for the speech, and a prepositional phrase that summarizes the topic. Suppose you are going to give a speech about using open-source software. Here are three examples (each with a different general purpose and a different audience):

General Purpose	To inform
Specific Purpose	To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts
General Purpose	To persuade
Specific Purpose	To persuade a group of college students to make the switch from Microsoft Office to the open-source office suite OpenOffice

General Purpose	To entertain
Specific Purpose	To entertain members of a business organization with a mock eulogy of for-pay software giants as a result of the proliferation of open-source alternatives

In each of these three examples, you'll notice that the general topic is the same—open-source software—but the specific purpose is different because the speech has a different general purpose and a different audience. Before you can think strategically about organizing the body of your speech, you need to know what your specific purpose is. If you have not yet written a specific purpose for your current speech, please go ahead and write one now.

From Specific Purpose to Main Points

Once you've written down your specific purpose, you can now start thinking about the best way to turn that specific purpose into a series of main points. **Main points** are the key ideas you present to enable your speech to accomplish its specific purpose. In this section, we're going to discuss how to determine your main points and how to organize those main points into a coherent, strategic speech.

How Many Main Points Do I Need?

While there is no magic number for how many main points a speech should have, speech experts generally agree that the fewer the number of main points the better. First and foremost, experts on the subject of memory have consistently shown that people don't tend to remember very much after they listen to a message or leave a conversation (Bostrom & Waldhart, 1988). While many different factors can affect a listener's ability to retain information after a speech, how the speech is organized is an important part of that process (Dunham, 1964; Smith, 1951; Thompson, 1960). For the speeches you will be delivering in a typical public speaking class, you will usually have just two or three main points. If your speech is less than three minutes long, then two main points will probably work best. If your speech is between three and ten minutes in length, then it makes more sense to use three main points.

You may be wondering why we are recommending only two or three main points. The reason comes straight out of the research on listening. According to LeFrancois, people are more likely to remember information that is meaningful, useful, and of interest to them; different or unique; organized; visual; and simple (LeFrancois, 1999). Two or three main points are much easier for listeners to remember than ten or even five. In addition, if you have two or three main points, you'll be able to develop each one with examples, statistics, or other forms of support. Including support for each point will make your speech more interesting and more memorable for your audience.

Narrowing Down Your Main Points

When you write your specific purpose and review the research you have done on your topic, you will probably find yourself thinking of quite a few points that you'd like to make in your speech. Whether that's the case or not, we recommend taking a few minutes to brainstorm and develop a list of points. In brainstorming, your goal is simply to think of as many different points as you can, not to judge how valuable or important they are. What information does your audience need to know to understand your topic? What information does your speech need to convey to accomplish its specific purpose? Consider the following example:

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts
Brainstorming List of Points	Define open-source software.
	Define educational software.
	List and describe the software commonly used by school districts.
	Explain the advantages of using open-source software.

	Explain the disadvantages of using open-source software.
	Review the history of open-source software.
	Describe the value of open-source software.
	Describe some educational open-source software packages.
	Review the software needs of my specific audience.
	Describe some problems that have occurred with open-source software.

Now that you have brainstormed and developed a list of possible points, how do you go about narrowing them down to just two or three main ones? Remember, your main points are the key ideas that help build your speech. When you look over the preceding list, you can then start to see that many of the points are related to one another. Your goal in narrowing down your main points is to identify which individual, potentially minor points can be combined to make main points. This process is called **chunking** because it involves taking smaller chunks of information and putting them together with like chunks to create more fully developed chunks of information. Before reading our chunking of the preceding list, see if you can determine three large chunks out of the list (note that not all chunks are equal).

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts
Main Point 1	**School districts use software in their operations.**
	Define educational software.
	List and describe the software commonly used by school districts.
Main Point 2	**What is open-source software?**
	Define open-source software.
	Review the history of open-source software.
	Explain the advantages of using open-source software.
	Describe the value of open-source software.
	Explain the disadvantages of using open-source software.
	Describe some problems that have occurred with open-source software.
Main Point 3	**Name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider.**
	Review the software needs of my specific audience.
	Describe some educational open-source software packages.

You may notice that in the preceding list, the number of subpoints under each of the three main points is a little disjointed or the topics don't go together clearly. That's all right. Remember that these are just general ideas at this point. It's also important to remember that there is often more than one way to organize a speech. Some of these points could be left out and others developed more fully, depending on the purpose and audience. We'll develop the preceding main points more fully in a moment.

Helpful Hints for Preparing Your Main Points

Now that we've discussed how to take a specific purpose and turn it into a series of main points, here are some helpful hints for creating your main points.

Uniting Your Main Points

Once you've generated a possible list of main points, you want to ask yourself this question: "When you look at your main points, do they fit together?" For example, if you look at the three preceding main points (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider), ask yourself, "Do these main points help my audience understand my specific purpose?"

Suppose you added a fourth main point about open-source software for musicians—would this fourth main point go with the other three? Probably not. While you may have a strong passion for open-source music software, that main point is extraneous information for the speech you are giving. It does not help accomplish your specific purpose, so you'd need to toss it out.

Keeping Your Main Points Separate

The next question to ask yourself about your main points is whether they overlap too much. While some overlap may happen naturally because of the singular nature of a specific topic, the information covered within each main point should be clearly distinct from the other main points. Imagine you're giving a speech with the specific purpose "to inform my audience about the health reasons for eating apples and oranges." You could then have three main points: that eating fruits is healthy, that eating apples is healthy, and that eating oranges is healthy. While the two points related to apples and oranges are clearly distinct, both of those main points would probably overlap too much with the first point "that eating fruits is healthy," so you would probably decide to eliminate the first point and focus on the second and third. On the other hand, you could keep the first point and then develop two new points giving additional support to why people should eat fruit.

Balancing Main Points

One of the biggest mistakes some speakers make is to spend most of their time talking about one of their main points, completely neglecting their other main points. To avoid this mistake, organize your speech so as to spend roughly the same amount of time on each main point. If you find that one of your main points is simply too large, you may need to divide that main point into two main points and consolidate your other main points into a single main point.

Let's see if our preceding example is balanced (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider). What do you think? Obviously, the answer depends on how much time a speaker will have to talk about each of these main points. If you have an hour to talk, then you may find that these three main points are balanced. However, you may also find them wildly unbalanced if you only have five minutes to speak because five minutes is not enough time to even explain what open-source software is. If that's the case, then you probably need to rethink your specific purpose to ensure that you can cover the material in the allotted time.

Creating Parallel Structure for Main Points

Another major question to ask yourself about your main points is whether or not they have a parallel structure. By parallel structure, we mean that you should structure your main points so that they all sound similar. When all your main points sound similar, it's simply easier for your audiences to remember your main points and retain them for later. Let's look at our sample (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider). Notice that the first and third main points are statements, but the second one is a question. Basically, we have an example here of main points that are not parallel in structure. You could fix this in one of two ways. You could make them all questions: what are some common school district software programs; what is open-source software; and what are some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider. Or you could turn them all into statements: school districts use software in their operations; define and describe open-

source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider. Either of these changes will make the grammatical structure of the main points parallel.

Maintaining Logical Flow of Main Points

The last question you want to ask yourself about your main points is whether the main points make sense in the order you've placed them. The next section goes into more detail of common organizational patterns for speeches, but for now we want you to just think logically about the flow of your main points. When you look at your main points, can you see them as progressive, or does it make sense to talk about one first, another one second, and the final one last? If you look at your order, and it doesn't make sense to you, you probably need to think about the flow of your main points. Often, this process is an art and not a science. But let's look at a couple of examples.

School Dress Codes Example	
Main Point 1	History of school dress codes
Main Point 2	Problems with school dress codes
Main Point 3	Eliminating school dress codes

Rider Law Legislation	
Main Point 1	Why should states have rider laws?
Main Point 2	What are the effects of a lack of rider laws?
Main Point 3	What is rider law legislation?

When you look at these two examples, what are your immediate impressions of the two examples? In the first example, does it make sense to talk about history, and then the problems, and finally how to eliminate school dress codes? Would it make sense to put history as your last main point? Probably not. In this case, the main points are in a logical sequential order. What about the second example? Does it make sense to talk about your solution, then your problem, and then define the solution? Not really! What order do you think these main points should be placed in for a logical flow? Maybe you should explain the problem (lack of rider laws), then define your solution (what is rider law legislation), and then argue for your solution (why states should have rider laws). Notice that in this example you don't even need to know what "rider laws" are to see that the flow didn't make sense.

Key Takeaways

- All speeches start with a general purpose and then move to a specific purpose that gives the *who*, *what*, *where*, and *how* for the speech.
- Transitioning from the specific purpose to possible main points means developing a list of potential main points you could discuss. Then you can narrow your focus by looking for similarities among your potential main points and combining ones that are similar.
- Shorter speeches will have two main points while longer speeches will generally have three or more main points. When creating your main points, make sure that they are united, separate, balanced, parallel, and logical.

Exercises

1. Generate a specific purpose for your current speech. Conduct a brainstorming activity where you try to think of all the possible points you could possibly make related to your specific purpose. Once you've finished creating this list, see if you can find a meaningful pattern that helps you develop three main points.
2. Pair up with a partner. Take the three main points you developed in the previous exercise, exchange papers with your partner and ask him or her to see whether or not they are united, separate, balanced, parallel, and logical. You do the same for your partner's main points. If they are not, what can you or your partner do to fix your main points?

References

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6.2.2: Using Common Organizing Patterns

Learning Objectives

1. Differentiate among the common speech organizational patterns: categorical/topical, comparison/contrast, spatial, chronological, biographical, causal, problem-cause-solution, and psychological.
2. Understand how to choose the best organizational pattern, or combination of patterns, for a specific speech.

Figure 6.2.2.1: Twentyfour Students – Organization makes you flow – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Previously in this chapter we discussed how to make your main points flow logically. This section is going to provide you with a number of organization patterns to help you create a logically organized speech. The first organization pattern we'll discuss is categorical/topical.

Categorical/Topical

By far the most common pattern for organizing a speech is by categories or topics. The categories function as a way to help the speaker organize the message in a consistent fashion. The goal of a **categorical/topical speech pattern** is to create categories (or chunks) of information that go together to help support your original specific purpose. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To persuade a group of high school juniors to apply to attend Generic University
Main Points	I. Life in the dorms
	II. Life in the classroom
	III. Life on campus

In this case, we have a speaker trying to persuade a group of high school juniors to apply to attend Generic University. To persuade this group, the speaker has divided the information into three basic categories: what it's like to live in the dorms, what classes are like, and what life is like on campus. Almost anyone could take this basic speech and specifically tailor the speech to fit her or his own university or college. The main points in this example could be rearranged and the organizational pattern would still be effective because there is no inherent logic to the sequence of points. Let's look at a second example.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of college students about the uses and misuses of Internet dating
Main Points	I. Define and describe Internet dating.
	II. Explain some strategies to enhance your Internet dating experience.
	III. List some warning signs to look for in potential online dates.

In this speech, the speaker is talking about how to find others online and date them. Specifically, the speaker starts by explaining what Internet dating is; then the speaker talks about how to make Internet dating better for her or his audience members; and

finally, the speaker ends by discussing some negative aspects of Internet dating. Again, notice that the information is chunked into three categories or topics and that the second and third could be reversed and still provide a logical structure for your speech

Comparison/Contrast

Another method for organizing main points is the **comparison/contrast speech pattern**. While this pattern clearly lends itself easily to two main points, you can also create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. Let's look at two examples; the first one will be a two-point example and the second a three-point example.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y
Main Points	I. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar.
	II. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y
Main Points	I. Explain the basic purpose and use of both Drug X and Drug Y.
	II. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar.
	III. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

If you were using the comparison/contrast pattern for persuasive purposes, in the preceding examples, you'd want to make sure that when you show how Drug X and Drug Y differ, you clearly state why Drug X is clearly the better choice for physicians to adopt. In essence, you'd want to make sure that when you compare the two drugs, you show that Drug X has all the benefits of Drug Y, but when you contrast the two drugs, you show how Drug X is superior to Drug Y in some way.

Spatial

The **spatial speech pattern** organizes information according to how things fit together in physical space. This pattern is best used when your main points are oriented to different locations that can exist independently. The basic reason to choose this format is to show that the main points have clear locations. We'll look at two examples here, one involving physical geography and one involving a different spatial order.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of history students about the states that seceded from the United States during the Civil War
Main Points	I. Locate and describe the Confederate states just below the Mason-Dixon Line (Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee).
	II. Locate and describe the Confederate states in the deep South (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida).
	III. Locate and describe the western Confederate states (Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas).

If you look at a basic map of the United States, you'll notice that these groupings of states were created because of their geographic location to one another. In essence, the states create three spatial territories to explain.

Now let's look at a spatial speech unrelated to geography.

Specific Purpose	To explain to a group of college biology students how the urinary system works
Main Points	I. Locate and describe the kidneys and ureters.

	II. Locate and describe the bladder.
	III. Locate and describe the sphincter and urethra.

In this example, we still have three basic spatial areas. If you look at a model of the urinary system, the first step is the kidney, which then takes waste through the ureters to the bladder, which then relies on the sphincter muscle to excrete waste through the urethra. All we've done in this example is create a spatial speech order for discussing how waste is removed from the human body through the urinary system. It is spatial because the organization pattern is determined by the physical location of each body part in relation to the others discussed.

Chronological

The **chronological speech pattern** places the main idea in the time order in which items appear—whether backward or forward. Here's a simple example.

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the books written by Winston Churchill
Main Points	I. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings prior to World War II.
	II. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings during World War II.
	III. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings after World War II.

In this example, we're looking at the writings of Winston Churchill in relation to World War II (before, during, and after). By placing his writings into these three categories, we develop a system for understanding this material based on Churchill's own life. Note that you could also use reverse chronological order and start with Churchill's writings after World War II, progressing backward to his earliest writings.

Biographical

As you might guess, the **biographical speech pattern** is generally used when a speaker wants to describe a person's life—either a speaker's own life, the life of someone they know personally, or the life of a famous person. By the nature of this speech organizational pattern, these speeches tend to be informative or entertaining; they are usually not persuasive. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the early life of Marilyn Manson
Main Points	I. Describe Brian Hugh Warner's early life and the beginning of his feud with Christianity.
	II. Describe Warner's stint as a music journalist in Florida.
	III. Describe Warner's decision to create Marilyn Manson and the Spooky Kids.

In this example, we see how Brian Warner, through three major periods of his life, ultimately became the musician known as Marilyn Manson.

In this example, these three stages are presented in chronological order, but the biographical pattern does not have to be chronological. For example, it could compare and contrast different periods of the subject's life, or it could focus topically on the subject's different accomplishments.

Causal

The **causal speech pattern** is used to explain cause-and-effect relationships. When you use a causal speech pattern, your speech will have two basic main points: cause and effect. In the first main point, typically you will talk about the causes of a phenomenon,

and in the second main point you will then show how the causes lead to either a specific effect or a small set of effects. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the problems associated with drinking among members of Native American tribal groups
Main Points	I. Explain the history and prevalence of drinking alcohol among Native Americans.
	II. Explain the effects that abuse of alcohol has on Native Americans and how this differs from the experience of other populations.

In this case, the first main point is about the history and prevalence of drinking alcohol among Native Americans (the cause). The second point then examines the effects of Native American alcohol consumption and how it differs from other population groups.

However, a causal organizational pattern can also begin with an effect and then explore one or more causes. In the following example, the effect is the number of arrests for domestic violence.

Specific Purpose	To inform local voters about the problem of domestic violence in our city
Main Points	I. Explain that there are significantly more arrests for domestic violence in our city than in cities of comparable size in our state.
	II. List possible causes for the difference, which may be unrelated to the actual amount of domestic violence.

In this example, the possible causes for the difference might include stricter law enforcement, greater likelihood of neighbors reporting an incident, and police training that emphasizes arrests as opposed to other outcomes. Examining these possible causes may suggest that despite the arrest statistic, the actual number of domestic violence incidents in your city may not be greater than in other cities of similar size.

Problem-Cause-Solution

Another format for organizing distinct main points in a clear manner is the **problem-cause-solution speech pattern**. In this format you describe a problem, identify what you believe is causing the problem, and then recommend a solution to correct the problem.

Specific Purpose	To persuade a civic group to support a citywide curfew for individuals under the age of eighteen
Main Points	I. Demonstrate that vandalism and violence among youth is having a negative effect on our community.
	II. Show how vandalism and violence among youth go up after 10:00 p.m. in our community.
	III. Explain how instituting a mandatory curfew at 10:00 p.m. would reduce vandalism and violence within our community.

In this speech, the speaker wants to persuade people to pass a new curfew for people under eighteen. To help persuade the civic group members, the speaker first shows that vandalism and violence are problems in the community. Once the speaker has shown the problem, the speaker then explains to the audience that the cause of this problem is youth outside after 10:00 p.m. Lastly, the speaker provides the mandatory 10:00 p.m. curfew as a solution to the vandalism and violence problem within the community. The problem-cause-solution format for speeches generally lends itself to persuasive topics because the speaker is asking an audience to believe in and adopt a specific solution.

Psychological

A further way to organize your main ideas within a speech is through a **psychological speech pattern** in which "a" leads to "b" and "b" leads to "c." This speech format is designed to follow a logical argument, so this format lends itself to persuasive speeches very easily. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To persuade a group of nurses to use humor in healing the person
Main Points	I. How laughing affects the body
	II. How the bodily effects can help healing
	III. Strategies for using humor in healing

In this speech, the speaker starts by discussing how humor affects the body. If a patient is exposed to humor (a), then the patient's body actually physiologically responds in ways that help healing (b—e.g., reduces stress, decreases blood pressure, bolsters one's immune system, etc.). Because of these benefits, nurses should engage in humor use that helps with healing (c).

Selecting an Organizational Pattern

Each of the preceding organizational patterns is potentially useful for organizing the main points of your speech. However, not all organizational patterns work for all speeches. For example, as we mentioned earlier, the biographical pattern is useful when you are telling the story of someone's life. Some other patterns, particularly comparison/contrast, problem-cause-solution, and psychological, are well suited for persuasive speaking. Your challenge is to choose the best pattern for the particular speech you are giving.

You will want to be aware that it is also possible to combine two or more organizational patterns to meet the goals of a specific speech. For example, you might wish to discuss a problem and then compare/contrast several different possible solutions for the audience. Such a speech would thus be combining elements of the comparison/contrast and problem-cause-solution patterns. When considering which organizational pattern to use, you need to keep in mind your specific purpose as well as your audience and the actual speech material itself to decide which pattern you think will work best.

Key Takeaway

- Speakers can use a variety of different organizational patterns, including categorical/topical, comparison/contrast, spatial, chronological, biographical, causal, problem-cause-solution, and psychological. Ultimately, speakers must really think about which organizational pattern best suits a specific speech topic.

Exercises

1. Imagine that you are giving an informative speech about your favorite book. Which organizational pattern do you think would be most useful? Why? Would your answer be different if your speech goal were persuasive? Why or why not?
2. Working on your own or with a partner, develop three main points for a speech designed to persuade college students to attend your university. Work through the preceding organizational patterns and see which ones would be possible choices for your speech. Which organizational pattern seems to be the best choice? Why?
3. Use one of the common organizational patterns to create three main points for your next speech.

6.2.3: Keeping Your Speech Moving

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of transitions within a speech.
2. Identify and be able to use a variety of transition words to create effective transitions within a speech.
3. Understand how to use a variety of strategies to help audience members keep up with a speech's content: internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

Have you ever been listening to a speech or a lecture and found yourself thinking, "I am so lost!" or "Where the heck is this speaker going?" Chances are one of the reasons you weren't sure what the speaker was talking about was that the speaker didn't effectively keep the speech moving. When we are reading and encounter something we don't understand, we have the ability to reread the paragraph and try to make sense of what we're trying to read. Unfortunately, we are not that lucky when it comes to listening to a speaker. We cannot pick up our universal remote and rewind the person. For this reason, speakers need to really think about how they keep a speech moving so that audience members are easily able to keep up with the speech. In this section, we're going to look at four specific techniques speakers can use that make following a speech much easier for an audience: transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

Figure 6.2.3.1: Chris Marquardt – REWIND – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Transitions between Main Points

A **transition** is a phrase or sentence that indicates that a speaker is moving from one main point to another main point in a speech. Basically, a transition is a sentence where the speaker summarizes what was said in one point and previews what is going to be discussed in the next point. Let's look at some examples:

- Now that we've seen the problems caused by lack of adolescent curfew laws, let's examine how curfew laws could benefit our community.
- Thus far we've examined the history and prevalence of alcohol abuse among Native Americans, but it is the impact that this abuse has on the health of Native Americans that is of the greatest concern.
- Now that we've thoroughly examined how these two medications are similar to one another, we can consider the many clear differences between the two medications.
- Although he was one of the most prolific writers in Great Britain prior to World War II, Winston Churchill continued to publish during the war years as well.

You'll notice that in each of these transition examples, the beginning phrase of the sentence indicates the conclusion of a period of time (now that, thus far). Table 6.2.3 "Transition Words" contains a variety of transition words that will be useful when keeping your speech moving.

Table 6.2.3 Transition Words

Addition	also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, following this, further, furthermore, in addition, in the same way, additionally, likewise, moreover, similarly
Consequence	accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, wherefore
Generalizing	as a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually

Exemplifying	chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, markedly, namely, particularly, including, specifically, such as
Illustration	for example, for instance, for one thing, as an illustration, illustrated with, as an example, in this case
Emphasis	above all, chiefly, with attention to, especially, particularly, singularly
Similarity	comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar, moreover, together with
Exception	aside from, barring, besides, except, excepting, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of, save
Restatement	in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently
Contrast and Comparison	contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast
Sequence	at first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, in turn, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, the meantime, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion, with this in mind
Common Sequence Patterns	first, second, third…
	generally, furthermore, finally
	in the first place, also, lastly
	in the first place, pursuing this further, finally
	to be sure, additionally, lastly
	in the first place, just in the same way, finally
	basically, similarly, as well
Summarizing	after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, in the long run, on balance, to sum up, to summarize, finally
Diversion	by the way, incidentally
Direction	here, there, over there, beyond, nearly, opposite, under, above, to the left, to the right, in the distance
Location	above, behind, by, near, throughout, across, below, down, off, to the right, against, beneath, in back of, onto, under, along, beside, in front of, on top of, among, between, inside, outside, around, beyond, into, over

Beyond transitions, there are several other techniques that you can use to clarify your speech organization for your audience. The next sections address several of these techniques, including internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

Internal Previews

An **internal preview** is a phrase or sentence that gives an audience an idea of what is to come within a section of a speech. An internal preview works similarly to the preview that a speaker gives at the end of a speech introduction, quickly outlining what he or she is going to talk about (i.e., the speech's three main body points). In an internal preview, the speaker highlights what he or she is going to discuss within a specific main point during a speech.

Ausubel was the first person to examine the effect that internal previews had on retention of oral information (Ausubel, 1968). Basically, when a speaker clearly informs an audience what he or she is going to be talking about in a clear and organized manner, the audience listens for those main points, which leads to higher retention of the speaker's message. Let's look at a sample internal preview:

> *To help us further understand why recycling is important, we will first explain the positive benefits of recycling and then explore how recycling can help our community.*

When an audience hears that you will be exploring two different ideas within this main point, they are ready to listen for those main points as you talk about them. In essence, you're helping your audience keep up with your speech.

Rather than being given alone, internal previews often come after a speaker has transitioned to that main topic area. Using the previous internal preview, let's see it along with the transition to that main point.

> *Now that we've explored the effect that a lack of consistent recycling has on our community, let's explore the importance of recycling for our community (transition). To help us further understand why recycling is important, we will first explain the positive benefits of recycling and then explore how recycling can help our community (internal preview).*

While internal previews are definitely helpful, you do not need to include one for every main point of your speech. In fact, we recommend that you use internal previews sparingly to highlight only main points containing relatively complex information.

Internal Summaries

Whereas an internal preview helps an audience know what you are going to talk about within a main point at the beginning, an **internal summary** is delivered to remind an audience of what they just heard within the speech. In general, internal summaries are best used when the information within a specific main point of a speech was complicated. To write your own internal summaries, look at the summarizing transition words in Table 6.2.3 "Transition Words" Let's look at an example.

> *To sum up, school bullying is a definite problem. Bullying in schools has been shown to be detrimental to the victim's grades, the victim's scores on standardized tests, and the victim's future educational outlook.*

In this example, the speaker was probably talking about the impact that bullying has on an individual victim educationally. Of course, an internal summary can also be a great way to lead into a transition to the next point of a speech.

> *In this section, we have explored how bullying in schools has been shown to be detrimental to the victim's grades, the victim's scores on standardized tests, and the victim's future educational outlook (internal summary). Therefore, schools need to implement campus-wide, comprehensive antibullying programs (transition).*

While not sounding like the more traditional transition, this internal summary helps readers summarize the content of that main point. The sentence that follows then leads to the next major part of the speech, which is going to discuss the importance of antibullying programs.

Signposts

Have you ever been on a road trip and watched the green rectangular mile signs pass you by? Fifty miles to go. Twenty-five miles to go. One mile to go. Signposts within a speech function the same way. A **signpost** is a guide a speaker gives her or his audience to help the audience keep up with the content of a speech. If you look at Table 6.2.3 "Transition Words" and look at the "common sequence patterns," you'll see a series of possible signpost options. In essence, we use these short phrases at the beginning of a piece of information to help our audience members keep up with what we're discussing. For example, if you were giving a speech whose main point was about the three functions of credibility, you could use internal signposts like this:

- The first function of credibility is competence.

- The second function of credibility is trustworthiness.
- The final function of credibility is caring/goodwill.

Signposts are simply meant to help your audience keep up with your speech, so the more simplistic your signposts are, the easier it is for your audience to follow.

In addition to helping audience members keep up with a speech, signposts can also be used to highlight specific information the speaker thinks is important. Where the other signposts were designed to show the way (like highway markers), signposts that call attention to specific pieces of information are more like billboards. Words and phrases that are useful for highlighting information can be found in Table 6.2.3 “Transition Words” under the category “emphasis.” All these words are designed to help you call attention to what you are saying so that the audience will also recognize the importance of the information.

Key Takeaways

- Transitions are very important because they help an audience stay on top of the information that is being presented to them. Without transitions, audiences are often left lost and the ultimate goal of the speech is not accomplished.
- Specific transition words, like those found in Table 6.2.3 “Transition Words”, can be useful in constructing effective transitions.
- In addition to major transitions between the main points of a speech, speakers can utilize internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts to help focus audience members on the information contained within a speech.

Exercises

1. Using the main points you created earlier in this chapter, create clear transitions between each main point. Look at the possible transition words in Table 6.2.3 “Transition Words” See which words are best suited for your speech. Try your transitions out on a friend or classmate to see if the transition makes sense to other people.
2. Take your most complicated main point and create an internal preview for that main point and then end the point with an internal summary.
3. Think about your current speech. Where can you use signposts to help focus your audience’s attention? Try at least two different ways of phrasing your signposts and then decide which one is better to use.

References

Ausubel, D. P. (1968). *Educational psychology*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

6.2.4: Analyzing a Speech Body

Learning Objective

1. See what a full speech body looks like in order to identify major components of the speech body.

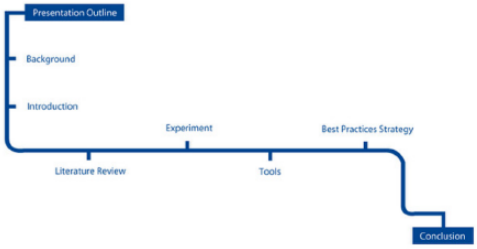

Figure 6.2.4.1: Sean MacEntee – presentation outline – CC BY 2.0.

Thus far this chapter has focused on how you go about creating main points and organizing the body of your speech. In this section we're going to examine the three main points of an actual speech. Before we start analyzing the introduction, please read the paragraphs that follow.

> ***Smart Dust Speech Body***
>
> *To help us understand smart dust, we will begin by first examining what smart dust is. Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). According to a 2001 article written by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in Computer, Pister's goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a cubic millimeter package. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled "Smart Dust" written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single grain of rice has a volume of five cubic millimeters. Each individual piece of dust, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the New York Times in an article titled "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There," smart dust could eventually consist of "tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."*
>
> *Now that we've examined what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some of the military applications for smart dust. Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined. According to the Smart Dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for "battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting" and other clear military applications. Probably the number one benefit of smart dust in the military environment is its surveillance abilities. Major Scott Dickson in a Blue Horizons Paper written for the Center for Strategy and Technology for the United States Air Force Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness,*

> *homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) identification. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military to not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones. On a much larger scale, smart dust could even help the US military and NASA protect the earth. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in New Scientist, one of the first benefits of smart dust could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.*
>
> *Now that we've explored some of the military benefits of smart dust, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to have an impact on our daily lives. According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a part of our daily lives. Everything from pasting smart dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard to inventory control to product quality control have been discussed as possible applications for smart dust. Steve Lohr in his 2010 New York Times article wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil." Medically, according to the smart dust project website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which relays information to our physicians and detects adverse changes to our body instantly. Smart dust could detect the microscopic formations of cancer cells or alert us when we've been infected by a bacteria or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all of our lives.*

Now that you've had a chance to read the body of the speech on smart dust, take a second and attempt to conduct your own analysis of the speech's body. What are the main points? Do you think the main points make sense? What organizational pattern is used? Are there clear transitions? What other techniques are used to keep the speech moving? Is evidence used to support the speech? Once you're done analyzing the speech body, look at Table 6.2.4 "Smart Dust Speech Body Analysis", which presents our basic analysis of the speech's body.

Table 6.2.4 Smart Dust Speech Body Analysis

First Main Point	Analysis
To help us understand smart dust, we will begin by first examining what smart dust is. Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). According to a 2001 article written by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in *Computer*, Pister's goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a cubic millimeter package. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled "Smart Dust" written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single grain of rice has a volume of five cubic millimeters. Each individual piece of dust, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There," smart dust could eventually consist of "tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."	Notice this transition from the introduction to the first main point.

Second Main Point	Analysis
Now that we've examined what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some of the military applications for smart dust. Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined. According to the Smart Dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for "battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting" and other clear military applications. Probably the number one benefit of smart dust in the military environment is its surveillance abilities. Major Scott Dickson in a Blue Horizons Paper written for the Center for Strategy and Technology for the United States Air Force Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) identification. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones. On a much larger scale, smart dust could even help the US military and NASA protect the earth. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in *New Scientist*, one of the first benefits of smart dust could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.	This transition is designed to move from the first main point to the second main point. Also notice that this speech is designed with a categorical/topic speech pattern.

Third Main Point	Analysis
Now that we've explored some of the military benefits of smart dust, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to have an impact on our daily lives. According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a part of our daily lives. Everything from pasting smart dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard to inventory control to product quality control have been discussed as possible applications for smart dust. Steve Lohr in his 2010 *New York Times* article wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil." Medically, according to the smart dust project website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which relays information to our physicians and detects adverse changes to our body instantly. Smart dust could detect the microscopic formations of cancer cells or alert us when we've been infected by a bacteria or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all of our lives.	This is a third transition sentence.

6.2.5: Chapter Exercises

Speaking Ethically

Johanna was in the midst of preparing her speech. She'd done the research and found a number of great sources for her speech. The specific purpose of her speech was to persuade a group of wildlife experts to step up their help for saving the water channel between the islands of Maui and Lanai, an area where humpback whales migrate during the winter to give birth.

Johanna had a very strong first point and a strong third point, but she just couldn't shake the fact that her middle point really was underdeveloped and not as strong as the other two. In fact, the middle point was originally going to be her last point, but when her research went bust she ultimately downgraded the point and sandwiched it in between the other two. Now that she looked at her second point, she realized that the sources weren't credible and the point should probably be dropped.

In the back of Johanna's head, she heard that small voice reminding her of the fact that most audiences don't remember the middle of the speech, so it really won't matter anyway.

1. Is it unethical to use a main point that you know is underdeveloped?
2. Should a speaker ever purposefully put less credible information in the middle of a speech, knowing that people are less likely to remember that information?
3. If you were Johanna, what would you do?

End-of-Chapter Assessment

1. Juan is finishing writing his specific purpose. He brainstorms about his specific purpose and finally settles on three topics he plans on talking about during his speech. What are these three topics called?
    1. specific topics
    2. main points
    3. generalized topics
    4. specific points
    5. main topics
2. Which speech format does the following outline represent?

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the life of Paris Hilton
Main Points	I. Describe Paris Hilton's life before she became famous.
	II. Describe Paris Hilton's first job as a model working for Donald Trump.
	III. Describe Paris Hilton's transition from model to media personality.

    1. atopical
    2. categorical/topical
    3. biographical
    4. spatial
    5. psychological
3. Which speech format does the following outline represent?

Specific Purpose	To persuade my audience to invest in VetoMax
Main Points	I. Tell the history of VetoMax.
	II. Explain the VetoMax advantage.

III. Describe the VetoMax pledge to investors.

1. atopical
2. categorical/topical
3. biographical
4. spatial
5. psychological

4. Bobby is creating a speech related to the Hawaiian islands. He plans on talking about each of the islands in order from southeast to northwest. Which speech format is probably the most effective for Bobby's speech?
    1. atopical
    2. categorical/topical
    3. biographical
    4. spatial
    5. psychological
5. What is a phrase or sentence that indicates that a speaker is moving from one main point in a speech to another main point in a speech?
    1. transition
    2. guidepost
    3. internal preview
    4. internal summary
    5. thesis statement

Answer Key

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. d
5. a

6.3: Concluding with Power

Almost to the Finish Line

Figure 6.3.1: Components of Information Systems. Image by Ly-Huong Pham is licensed under CC BY NC

When reading a great novel, many people just can't wait to get to the end of the book. Some people will actually jump ahead hundreds of pages and read the last chapter just to see what happens. Humans have an innate desire to "get to the end." Imagine reading a novel and finding that the author just stopped writing five or six chapters from the end—how satisfied would you be with that author? In the same way, when a speaker doesn't think through her or his conclusion properly, audience members are often left just as dissatisfied. In other words, conclusions are really important!

6.3.1: Why Conclusions Matter

Learning Objectives

- Understand the basic benefits of a strong conclusion.
- Explain the serial position effect and its importance on public speaking.

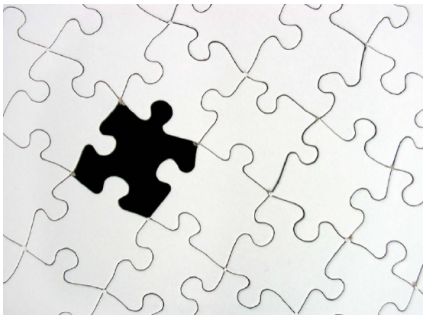

Figure 6.3.1.1: Willi Heidelbach – Puzzle2 – CC BY 2.0.

As public speaking professors and authors, we have seen many students give otherwise good speeches that seem to fall apart at the end. We've seen students end their three main points by saying things such as "OK, I'm done"; "Thank God that's over!"; or "Thanks. Now what? Do I just sit down?" It's understandable to feel relief at the end of a speech, but remember that as a speaker, your conclusion is the last chance you have to drive home your ideas. When a speaker opts to end the speech with an ineffective conclusion—or no conclusion at all—the speech loses the energy that's been created, and the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead of falling prey to emotional exhaustion, remind yourself to keep your energy up as you approach the end of your speech, and plan ahead so that your conclusion will be an effective one.

Of course, a good conclusion will not rescue a poorly prepared speech. Thinking again of the chapters in a novel, if one bypasses all the content in the middle, the ending often isn't very meaningful or helpful. So to take advantage of the advice in this chapter, you need to keep in mind the importance of developing a speech with an effective introduction and an effective body; if you have these elements, you will have the foundation you need to be able to conclude effectively. Just as a good introduction helps bring an audience member into the world of your speech, and a good speech body holds the audience in that world, a good conclusion helps bring that audience member back to the reality outside of your speech.

In this section, we're going to examine the functions fulfilled by the conclusion of a speech. A strong conclusion serves to signal the end of the speech and to help your listeners remember your speech.

Signals the End

The first thing a good conclusion can do is to signal the end of a speech. You may be thinking that showing an audience that you're about to stop speaking is a "no brainer," but many speakers really don't prepare their audience for the end. When a speaker just suddenly stops speaking, the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead, we want to make sure that audiences are left knowledgeable and satisfied with our speeches. In "Steps of a Conclusion", we'll explain in great detail about how to ensure that you signal the end of your speech in a manner that is both effective and powerful.

Aids Audience's Memory of Your Speech

The second reason for a good conclusion stems out of some very interesting research reported by the German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus back in 1885 in his book *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology* (Ebbinghaus, 1885). Ebbinghaus proposed that humans remember information in a linear fashion, which he called the **serial position effect**. He found an individual's ability to remember information in a list (e.g., a grocery list, a chores list, or a to-do list) depends on the location of an item on the list. Specifically, he found that items toward the top of the list and items toward the bottom of the list tended to have the highest recall rates. The serial position effect basically finds that information at the beginning of a list (**primacy**) and information at the end of the list (**recency**) are easier to recall than information in the middle of the list.

So what does this have to do with conclusions? A lot! Ray Ehrensberger wanted to test Ebbinghaus' serial position effect in public speaking. Ehrensberger created an experiment that rearranged the ordering of a speech to determine the recall of information

(Ehrensberger, 1945). Ehrensberger's study reaffirmed the importance of primacy and recency when listening to speeches. In fact, Ehrensberger found that the information delivered during the conclusion (recency) had the highest level of recall overall.

Key Takeaways

- A strong conclusion is very important because it's a speaker's final chance to really explain the importance of her or his message and allows the speaker to both signal the end of the speech and help the audience to remember the main ideas. As such, speakers need to thoroughly examine how they will conclude their speeches with power.
- The serial position effect is the idea that people remember ideas that are stated either first (primacy) or last (recency) in a list the most. It is important to speech conclusions because restating your main ideas helps you to take advantage of the recency effect and helps your audience remember your ideas.

Exercises

1. Think about a recent speech you heard either in class or elsewhere. Did the speaker have a strong conclusion? List the elements of the conclusion that were particularly effective and ineffective. Identify two ways you could have made the speaker's conclusion stronger.
2. After listening to a speech or class lecture, close your eyes and say aloud the main points you remember from the presentation. Does your memory follow what you would expect according to the serial position effect?

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6.3.2: Steps of a Conclusion

Learning Objectives

1. Examine the three steps of an effective conclusion: restatement of the thesis, review of the main points, and concluding device.
2. Differentiate among Miller's (1946) ten concluding devices.

Figure 6.3.2.1: Matthew Culnane – Steps – CC BY-SA 2.0.

In Section 6.3.1 "Why Conclusions Matter", we discussed the importance a conclusion has on a speech. In this section, we're going to examine the three steps in building an effective conclusion.

Restatement of the Thesis

Restating a thesis statement is the first step in a powerful conclusion. As we explained in Chapter 6.1 "Introductions Matter: How to Begin a Speech Effectively", a thesis statement is a short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech. When we restate the thesis statement at the conclusion of our speech, we're attempting to reemphasize what the overarching main idea of the speech has been. Suppose your thesis statement was, "I will analyze Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" You could restate the thesis in this fashion at the conclusion of your speech: "In the past few minutes, I have analyzed Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" Notice the shift in tense: the statement has gone from the future tense (this is what I will speak about) to the past tense (this is what I have spoken about). Restating the thesis in your conclusion reminds the audience of the major purpose or goal of your speech, helping them remember it better.

Review of Main Points

After restating the speech's thesis, the second step in a powerful conclusion is to review the main points from your speech. One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication. When we preview our main points in the introduction, effectively discuss and make transitions to our main points during the body of the speech, and finally, review the main points in the conclusion, we increase the likelihood that the audience will retain our main points after the speech is over.

In the introduction of a speech, we deliver a *preview* of our main body points, and in the conclusion we deliver a *review*. Let's look at a sample preview:

> *In order to understand the field of gender and communication, I will first differentiate between the terms biological sex and gender. I will then explain the history of gender research in communication. Lastly, I will examine a series of important findings related to gender and communication.*

In this preview, we have three clear main points. Let's see how we can review them at the conclusion of our speech:

> *Today, we have differentiated between the terms biological sex and gender, examined the history of gender research in communication, and analyzed a series of research findings on the topic.*

> *In the past few minutes, I have explained the difference between the terms "biological sex" and "gender," discussed the rise of gender research in the field of communication, and examined a series of groundbreaking studies in the field.*

Notice that both of these conclusions review the main points originally set forth. Both variations are equally effective reviews of the main points, but you might like the linguistic turn of one over the other. Remember, while there is a lot of science to help us understand public speaking, there's also a lot of art as well, so you are always encouraged to choose the wording that you think will be most effective for your audience.

Concluding Device

The final part of a powerful conclusion is the concluding device. A **concluding device** is essentially the final thought you want your audience members to have when you stop speaking. It also provides a definitive sense of closure to your speech. One of the authors of this text often makes an analogy between a gymnastics dismount and the concluding device in a speech. Just as a gymnast dismounting the parallel bars or balance beam wants to stick the landing and avoid taking two or three steps, a speaker wants to "stick" the ending of the presentation by ending with a concluding device instead of with, "Well, umm, I guess I'm done." Miller observed that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices when ending a speech (Miller, 1946). The rest of this section is going to examine these ten concluding devices.

Conclude with a Challenge

The first way that Miller found that some speakers end their speeches is with a challenge. A **challenge** is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires a contest or special effort. In a speech on the necessity of fund-raising, a speaker could conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. In a speech on eating more vegetables, you could challenge your audience to increase their current intake of vegetables by two portions daily. In both of these challenges, audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves effort on their part.

Conclude with a Quotation

A second way you can conclude a speech is by reciting a quotation relevant to the speech topic. When using a quotation, you need to think about whether your goal is to end on a persuasive note or an informative note. Some quotations will have a clear call to action, while other quotations summarize or provoke thought. For example, let's say you are delivering an informative speech about dissident writers in the former Soviet Union. You could end by citing this quotation from Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "A great writer is, so to speak, a second government in his country. And for that reason no regime has ever loved great writers" (Solzhenitsyn, 1964). Notice that this quotation underscores the idea of writers as dissidents, but it doesn't ask listeners to put forth effort to engage in any specific thought process or behavior. If, on the other hand, you were delivering a persuasive speech urging your audience to participate in a very risky political demonstration, you might use this quotation from Martin Luther King Jr.: "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live" (King, 1963). In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with the message that great risks are worth taking, that they make our lives worthwhile, and that the right thing to do is to go ahead and take that great risk.

Conclude with a Summary

When a speaker ends with a summary, he or she is simply elongating the review of the main points. While this may not be the most exciting concluding device, it can be useful for information that was highly technical or complex or for speeches lasting longer than thirty minutes. Typically, for short speeches (like those in your class), this summary device should be avoided.

Conclude by Visualizing the Future

The purpose of a conclusion that refers to the future is to help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur. If you are giving a speech on the development of video games for learning, you could conclude by depicting the classroom of the future where video games are perceived as true learning tools and how those tools could be utilized. More often, speakers use

visualization of the future to depict how society would be, or how individual listeners' lives would be different, if the speaker's persuasive attempt worked. For example, if a speaker proposes that a solution to illiteracy is hiring more reading specialists in public schools, the speaker could ask her or his audience to imagine a world without illiteracy. In this use of visualization, the goal is to persuade people to adopt the speaker's point of view. By showing that the speaker's vision of the future is a positive one, the conclusion should help to persuade the audience to help create this future.

Conclude with an Appeal for Action

Probably the most common persuasive concluding device is the appeal for action or the call to action. In essence, the **appeal for action** occurs when a speaker asks her or his audience to engage in a specific behavior or change in thinking. When a speaker concludes by asking the audience "to do" or "to think" in a specific manner, the speaker wants to see an actual change. Whether the speaker appeals for people to eat more fruit, buy a car, vote for a candidate, oppose the death penalty, or sing more in the shower, the speaker is asking the audience to engage in action.

One specific type of appeal for action is the **immediate call to action**. Whereas some appeals ask for people to engage in behavior in the future, the immediate call to action asks people to engage in behavior right now. If a speaker wants to see a new traffic light placed at a dangerous intersection, he or she may conclude by asking all the audience members to sign a digital petition right then and there, using a computer the speaker has made available (http://www.petitiononline.com). Here are some more examples of immediate calls to action:

- In a speech on eating more vegetables, pass out raw veggies and dip at the conclusion of the speech.
- In a speech on petitioning a lawmaker for a new law, provide audience members with a prewritten e-mail they can send to the lawmaker.
- In a speech on the importance of using hand sanitizer, hand out little bottles of hand sanitizer and show audience members how to correctly apply the sanitizer.
- In a speech asking for donations for a charity, send a box around the room asking for donations.

These are just a handful of different examples we've actually seen students use in our classrooms to elicit an immediate change in behavior. These immediate calls to action may not lead to long-term change, but they can be very effective at increasing the likelihood that an audience will change behavior in the short term.

Conclude by Inspiration

By definition, the word **inspire** means to affect or arouse someone. Both affect and arouse have strong emotional connotations. The ultimate goal of an inspiration concluding device is similar to an "appeal for action" but the ultimate goal is more lofty or ambiguous; the goal is to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner. Maybe a speaker is giving an informative speech on the prevalence of domestic violence in our society today. That speaker could end the speech by reading Paulette Kelly's powerful poem "I Got Flowers Today." "I Got Flowers Today" is a poem that evokes strong emotions because it's about an abuse victim who received flowers from her abuser every time she was victimized. The poem ends by saying, "I got flowers today… / Today was a special day—it was the day of my funeral / Last night he killed me" (Kelly, 1994).

Conclude with Advice

The next concluding device is one that should be used primarily by speakers who are recognized as expert authorities on a given subject. **Advice** is essentially a speaker's opinion about what should or should not be done. The problem with opinions is that everyone has one, and one person's opinion is not necessarily any more correct than another's. There needs to be a really good reason your opinion—and therefore your advice—should matter to your audience. If, for example, you are an expert in nuclear physics, you might conclude a speech on energy by giving advice about the benefits of nuclear energy.

Conclude by Proposing a Solution

Another way a speaker can conclude a speech powerfully is to offer a solution to the problem discussed within a speech. For example, perhaps a speaker has been discussing the problems associated with the disappearance of art education in the United States. The speaker could then propose a solution of creating more community-based art experiences for school children as a way to fill this gap. Although this can be an effective conclusion, a speaker must ask herself or himself whether the solution should be discussed in more depth as a stand-alone main point within the body of the speech so that audience concerns about the proposed solution may be addressed.

Conclude with a Question

Another way you can end a speech is to ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea. Maybe you are giving a speech on the importance of the environment, so you end the speech by saying, “Think about your children’s future. What kind of world do you want them raised in? A world that is clean, vibrant, and beautiful—or one that is filled with smog, pollution, filth, and disease?” Notice that you aren’t actually asking the audience to verbally or nonverbally answer the question; the goal of this question is to force the audience into thinking about what kind of world they want for their children.

Conclude with a Reference to Audience

The last concluding device discussed by Miller (1946) was a reference to one’s audience. This concluding device is when a speaker attempts to answer the basic audience question, “What’s in it for me?” The goal of this concluding device is to spell out the direct benefits a behavior or thought change has for audience members. For example, a speaker talking about stress reduction techniques could conclude by clearly listing all the physical health benefits stress reduction offers (e.g., improved reflexes, improved immune system, improved hearing, reduction in blood pressure). In this case, the speaker is clearly spelling out why audience members should care—what’s in it for them!

Informative versus Persuasive Conclusions

As you read through the ten possible ways to conclude a speech, hopefully you noticed that some of the methods are more appropriate for persuasive speeches and others are more appropriate for informative speeches. To help you choose appropriate conclusions for informative, persuasive, or entertaining speeches, we’ve created a table (Table 6.3.2 “Your Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices”) to help you quickly identify appropriate concluding devices.

Table 6.3.2 Your Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices

Types of Concluding Devices	General Purposes of Speeches		
	Informative	*Persuasive*	
Challenge		x	x
Quotation	x	x	x
Summary	x	x	x
Visualizing the Future	x	x	x
Appeal		x	x
Inspirational	x	x	x
Advice		x	x
Proposal of Solution		x	x
Question	x	x	x
Reference to Audience		x	x

Key Takeaways

- An effective conclusion contains three basic parts: a restatement of the speech’s thesis; a review of the main points discussed within the speech; and a concluding device that helps create a lasting image in audiences’ minds.

- Miller (1946) found that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices. All of these devices are not appropriate for all speeches, so speakers need to determine which concluding device would have the strongest, most powerful effect for a given audience, purpose, and occasion.

Exercises

1. Take the last speech you gave in class and rework the speech's conclusion to reflect the three parts of a conclusion. Now do the same thing with the speech you are currently working on for class.
2. Think about the speech you are currently working on in class. Write out concluding statements using three of the devices discussed in this chapter. Which of the devices would be most useful for your speech? Why?

References

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6.3.3: Analyzing a Conclusion

Learning Objectives

- See what a full conclusion section looks like.
- Distinguish among the three parts of a conclusion.

Figure 6.3.3.1: Theilr – blank dossier – CC BY-SA 2.0.

So far this chapter has focused on how to go about creating a clear conclusion. We discussed why conclusions are important, the three steps of effective conclusions, and ten different ways to conclude a speech. In this section, we're going to examine an actual conclusion to a speech. Please read the sample conclusion paragraph for the smart dust speech.

Sample Conclusion: Smart Dust

> *Today, we've explored how smart dust may impact all of our lives in the near future by examining what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives sooner rather than later. While smart dust is quickly transforming from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. While smart dust is definitely coming, swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, Prey, aren't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries to consider. Even Dr. Kris Pister's Smart Dust Project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."*

Now that you've had a chance to read the conclusion to the speech on smart dust, read it a second time and try to find the three parts of an introduction as discussed earlier in this chapter. Once you're finished analyzing this conclusion, take a look at Table 6.3.3 "Smart Dust Conclusion", which shows you how the speech was broken down into the various parts of a conclusion.

Table 6.3.3 Smart Dust Conclusion

Parts of a Conclusion	Analysis
Today we've explored how smart dust may impact all of our lives in the near future by	*Restate Thesis*

Parts of a Conclusion	Analysis
	The first part of the conclusion is a restatement of the thesis statement.
examining what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.	*Review Main Points* Following the thesis statement, the speech briefly reiterates the three main points discussed in the speech.
While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. While smart dust is definitely in our near future, swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries to consider. Even Dr. Kris Pister's Smart Dust Project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."	*Concluding Device* In this concluding device, we see not only a referral to the attention getter (Michael Crichton's book *Prey*), we also see a visualizing of some future oriented factors people need to consider related to smart dust, which is then followed by a direct quotation. Notice that in an informative speech this type of conclusion is appropriate because we are trying to inform people about smart dust, but would you want to end a persuasive speech in this fashion? Definitely not! However, you could create an entire persuasive speech advocating for smart dust (its many applications are more important than the loss of privacy) or against smart dust (privacy is more important than its many applications).

Your Turn

Now that you have seen the above analysis of a speech conclusion, we encourage you to do a similar analysis of the conclusions of other speeches. Listen to a speech in your class or online. Does it end with a restatement of the thesis, a review of the main points, and a concluding device? Can you suggest ways to improve the conclusion?

Here is another exercise to try. Consider the specific purpose and three main points of a hypothetical speech. Based on those components, develop a conclusion for that speech.

6.3.4: Chapter Exercises

Specking Ethically

Tika's speech on death camps in Africa was a real flop, and she knew it. The speech was quickly prepared, inadequately researched, and not very logical. Thankfully, Tika knew she had an ace in her back pocket. She planned on ending her speech with a video showing mass graves that she knew would make people sick.

She thought, *Who cares if your speech sucks as long as you get them in the end!*

1. Would you say that Tika's approach to public speaking is ethical? Why or why not?
2. Which type of concluding device is Tika planning to use? Is this device appropriate to her speech? Why or why not? If you conclude it is not appropriate, which devices would be better approaches? Why?
3. Is it ever ethical to rely heavily on an emotional conclusion to persuade one's audience? Why?

End-of-Chapter Assessment

1. Karla knows that people tend to remember the information at the beginning of a speech and at the end of a speech. What is this process called?
    1. serial position effect
    2. central limit theorem
    3. law of position effect
    4. law of limits theorem
    5. serial limits theorem
2. Which of the following best explains why conclusions are important?
    1. primacy
    2. recency
    3. closing stages
    4. predominance
    5. speech finish
3. What is the device a speaker uses at the end of a speech to ensure that the audience is left with a mental picture predetermined by the speaker?
    1. recency device
    2. predominance device
    3. finishing device
    4. concluding device
    5. finalizing device
4. At the end of her speech, Daniel asks his audience to sign a petition helping a candidate get on the ballot in his state. By having the audience members sign the petition right after the speech, what is Daniel engaging in?
    1. a call to public service
    2. a call to civic duty
    3. a proclamational appeal
    4. an appeal to one's general sense of right and wrong
    5. an immediate call to action
5. Miller's (1946) concluding device "reference to audience" can best be summed up by which phrase?
    1. A good or a bad audience is still receptive.
    2. It's all about me.
    3. Don't forget to love your audience.
    4. What's in it for me?
    5. A suffering audience is a persuaded audience.

Answer Key

1. a
2. b
3. d
4. e
5. d

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Types of Outlines for Informative Speaking

7.1: Outlining

The Fun of Outlining

Figure 7.1.1: Sanberdoo – Skeleton – CC BY 2.0.

Think of an outline as a skeleton you must assemble bone by bone, gradually making it take form into a coherent whole. Or think of it as a puzzle in which you must put all the pieces in their correct places in order to see the full picture. Or think of it as a game of solitaire in which the right cards must follow a legitimate sequence in order for you to win. The more fully you can come to understand the outline as both rule-bound and creative, the more fully you will experience its usefulness and its power to deliver your message in a unified, coherent way.

This means, of course, that there are no shortcuts, but there are helpful strategies. If you leave a bone out of a skeleton, something will fall apart. By the same token, if you omit a step in reasoning, your speech will be vulnerable to lapses in logic, lapses in the evidence you need to make your case, and the risk of becoming a disjointed, disorienting message. When you are talking informally with friends, your conversation might follow a haphazard course, but a public speech must not do so. Even in conversations with your friends, you might believe they understand what you mean, but they might not. In a prepared speech, you must be attentive to reasoning in logical steps so that your audience understands the meaning you intend to convey. This is where your outline can help you.

7.1.1: Why Outline?

Learning Objectives

1. Outlines help maintain the speech's focus on the thesis by allowing the speaker to test the scope of content, assess logical relationships between ideas, and evaluate the relevance of supporting ideas.
2. Outlines help organize a message that the audience can understand by visually showing the balance and proportion of a speech.
3. Outlines can help you deliver clear meanings by serving as the foundation for speaking notes you will use during your presentation.

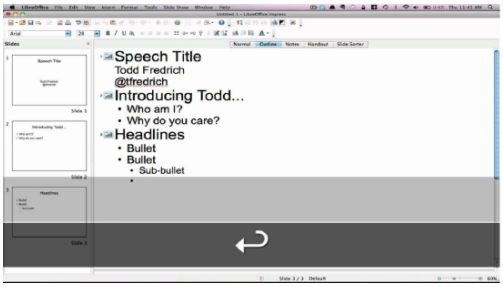

Figure 7.1.1.1: Screenshot from this youtube video..

In order for your speech to be as effective as possible, it needs to be organized into logical patterns. Information will need to be presented in a way your audience can understand. This is especially true if you already know a great deal about your topic. You will need to take careful steps to include pertinent information your audience might not know and to explain relationships that might not be evident to them. Using a standard outline format, you can make decisions about your main points, the specific information you will use to support those points, and the language you will use. Without an outline, your message is liable to lose **logical integrity**. It might even deteriorate into a list of bullet points with no apparent connection to each other except the topic, leaving your audience relieved when your speech is finally over.

A full-sentence outline lays a strong foundation for your message. It will call on you to have one clear and **specific purpose** for your message. As we have seen in other chapters of this book, writing your specific purpose in clear language serves you well. It helps you frame a clear, concrete thesis statement. It helps you exclude irrelevant information. It helps you focus only on information that directly bears on your thesis. It reduces the amount of research you must do. It suggests what kind of supporting evidence is needed, so less effort is expended in trying to figure out what to do next. It helps both you and your audience remember the central message of your speech.

Finally, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Remember that live audiences for oral communications lack the ability to "rewind" your message to figure out what you said, so it is critically important to help the audience follow your reasoning as it reaches their ears.

Your authors have noted among their past and present students a reluctance to write full-sentence outlines. It's a task too often perceived as busywork, unnecessary, time consuming, and restricted. On one hand, we understand that reluctance. But on the other hand, we find that students who carefully write a full-sentence outline show a stronger tendency to give powerful presentations of excellent messages.

Tests Scope of Content

When you begin with a clear, concrete thesis statement, it acts as kind of a compass for your outline. Each of the main points should directly **explicate**. The test of the scope will be a comparison of each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you've wandered outside the scope of the thesis.

Let's say the general purpose of your speech is to inform, and your broad topic area is wind-generated energy. Now you must narrow this to a specific purpose. You have many choices, but let's say your specific purpose is to inform a group of property owners about the economics of wind farms where electrical energy is generated.

Your first main point could be that modern windmills require a very small land base, making the cost of real estate low. This is directly related to economics. All you need is information to support your **claim** that only a small land base is needed.

In your second main point, you might be tempted to claim that windmills don't pollute in the ways other sources do. However, you will quickly note that this claim is unrelated to the thesis. You must resist the temptation to add it. Perhaps in another speech, your thesis will address environmental impact, but in this speech, you must stay within the economic scope. Perhaps you will say that once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the thesis. Now all you need is supporting information to support this second claim.

Your third point, the point some audience members will want to hear, is the cost for generating electrical energy with windmills compared with other sources. This is clearly within the scope of energy economics. You should have no difficulty finding **authoritative sources** of information to support that claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test the scope of your content because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

Tests Logical Relation of Parts

You have many choices for your topic, and therefore, there are many ways your content can be logically organized. In the example above, we simply listed three main points that were important economic considerations about wind farms. Often the main points of a speech can be arranged into a logical pattern; let's take a look at some such patterns.

A chronological pattern arranges main ideas in the order events occur. In some instances, reverse order might make sense. For instance, if your topic is archaeology, you might use the reverse order, describing the newest artifacts first.

A cause-and-effect pattern calls on you to describe a specific situation and explain what the effect is. However, most effects have more than one cause. Even dental cavities have multiple causes: genetics, poor nutrition, teeth too tightly spaced, sugar, ineffective brushing, and so on. If you choose a cause-and-effect pattern, make sure you have enough reliable support to do the topic justice.

A biographical pattern is usually chronological. In describing the events of an individual's life, you will want to choose the three most significant events. Otherwise, the speech will end up as a very lengthy and often pointless time line or bullet point list. For example, Mark Twain had several clear phases in his life. They include his life as a Mississippi riverboat captain, his success as a world-renowned writer and speaker, and his family life. A simple time line would present great difficulty in highlighting the relationships between important events. An outline, however, would help you emphasize the key events that contributed to Mark Twain's extraordinary life.

Although a comparison-contrast pattern appears to dictate just two main points, McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond explain how a comparison-and-contrast can be structured as a speech with three main points. They say that "you can easily create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. For example, if you are giving a speech about two different medications, you could start by discussing what the medications' basic purposes are. Then you could talk about the similarities, and then the differences, between the two medications" (McCroskey, Wrench, & Richmond, 2003).

Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at the three main points in your outline, you should easily be able to see the logical way in which they relate.

Tests Relevance of Supporting Ideas

When you create an outline, you can clearly see that you need supporting **evidence** for each of your main points. For instance, using the example above, your first main point claims that less land is needed for windmills than for other utilities. Your supporting evidence should be about the amount of acreage required for a windmill and the amount of acreage required for other energy generation sites, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Your sources should come from experts in economics, economic development, or engineering. The evidence might even be expert opinion but not the opinions of ordinary people. The expert opinion will provide stronger support for your point.

Similarly, your second point claims that once a wind turbine is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. Your supporting evidence should show how much annual maintenance for a windmill costs and what the costs are for other energy plants. If you used a comparison with nuclear plants to support your first main point, you should do so again for the sake of consistency. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about the amount of electricity and its profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to the profit from energy generated at a nuclear power plant. In this third main point, you should make use of just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to show the effectiveness of wind farms compared to the other energy sources you've cited.

Where do you find the kind of information you would need to support these main points? A reference librarian can quickly guide you to authoritative statistics manuals and help you make use of them.

An important step you will notice is that the full-sentence outline includes its authoritative sources within the text. This is a major departure from the way you've learned to write a research paper. In the research paper, you can add that information to the end of a sentence, leaving the reader to turn to the last page for a fuller citation. In a speech, however, your listeners can't do that. From the beginning of the supporting point, you need to fully cite your source so your audience can assess its importance.

Because this is such a profound change from the academic habits that you're probably used to, you will have to make a concerted effort to overcome the habits of the past and provide the information your listeners need when they need it.

Test the Balance and Proportion of the Speech

Part of the value of writing a full-sentence outline is the visual space you use for each of your main points. Is each main point of approximately the same importance? Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that one of your main points has eight supporting points while the others only have three each, you have two choices: either choose the best three from the eight supporting points or strengthen the authoritative support for your other two main points.

Remember that you should use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means investing more time in your search for knowledge.

Serves as Notes during the Speech

Although we recommend writing a full-sentence outline during the speech preparation phase, you should also create a shortened outline that you can use as notes allowing for a strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your speech, you would do a great deal of reading, which would limit your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, hurting your connection with your audience. For this reason, we recommend writing a short-phrase outline on 4 × 6 notecards to use when you deliver your speech. The good news is that your three main points suggest how you should prepare your notecards.

Your first 4 × 6 notecard can contain your thesis statement and other key words and phrases that will help you present your introduction. Your second card can contain your first main point, together with key words and phrases to act as a map to follow as you present. If your first main point has an exact quotation you plan to present, you can include that on your card. Your third notecard should be related to your second main point, your fourth card should be about your third main point, and your fifth card should be related to your conclusion. In this way, your five notecards follow the very same organizational pattern as your full outline. In the next section, we will explore more fully how to create a speaking outline.

Key Takeaways

- Your outline can help you stay focused on the thesis of your presentation as you prepare your presentation by testing the scope of your content, examining logical relationships between topics, and checking the relevance of supporting ideas.
- Your outline can help you organize your message by making sure that all of your main points are well developed.
- Your outline can help you stay focused during your presentation by forming the foundation for your speaking outline, which lets you connect to your audience and be clear in the message you're presenting.

Exercises

1. In one sentence, write a clear, compelling thesis statement about each of the following topics: the effects of schoolyard bullying, the impact of alcohol on brain development, and the impact of the most recent volcano eruption in Iceland. Fully cite the sources where you verify that your thesis statements are actually true.
2. Prepare a full-sentence outline for your next speech assignment. Trade outlines with a classmate and check through the outline for logical sequence of ideas, presence of credible support, proper citation, and clear organization. Give feedback to your partner on areas where he or she has done well and where the outline might be improved.
3. Transfer information from your speech outline to notecards using the guidelines described above. Practice delivering your speech for a small audience (e.g., family member, group of friends or classmates) using first the outline and then the notecards. Ask the audience for feedback comparing your delivery using the two formats.

7.1.2: Types of Outlines

Learning Objectives

- Define three types of outlines: working outline, full-sentence outline, and speaking outline.
- Identify the advantages of using notecards to present your speaking outline.

Figure 7.1.2.1: Dave Gray – Blank index card – CC BY 2.0.

When we discuss outlining, we are actually focusing on a series of outlines instead of a single one. Outlines are designed to evolve throughout your speech preparation process, so this section will discuss how you progress from a working outline to a full-sentence outline and, finally, a speaking outline. We will also discuss how using notecards for your speaking outline can be helpful to you as a speaker.

Working Outline

A working outline is an outline you use for developing your speech. It undergoes many changes on its way to completion. This is the outline where you lay out the basic structure of your speech. You must have a general and specific purpose; an introduction, including a grabber; and a concrete, specific thesis statement and preview. You also need three main points, a conclusion, and a list of references.

One strategy for beginning your working outline is to begin by typing in your labels for each of the elements. Later you can fill in the content.

When you look ahead to the full-sentence outline, you will notice that each of the three main points moves from the general to the particular. Specifically, each main point is a claim, followed by particular information that supports that claim so that the audience will perceive its validity. For example, for a speech about coal mining safety, your first main point might focus on the idea that coal mining is a hazardous occupation. You might begin by making a very general claim, such as “Coal mining is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States,” and then become more specific by providing statistics, authoritative quotations, or examples to support your primary claim.

A working outline allows you to work out the kinks in your message. For instance, let’s say you’ve made the claim that coal mining is a hazardous occupation but you cannot find authoritative evidence as support. Now you must reexamine that main point to assess its validity. You might have to change that main point in order to be able to support it. If you do so, however, you must make sure the new main point is a logical part of the thesis statement–three main points–conclusion sequence.

The working outline shouldn’t be thought of a “rough copy,” but as a careful step in the development of your message. It will take time to develop. Here is an example of a working outline:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.

2. Smart dust can be used by the military—no, no—smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations. (That's better because it is more clear and precise.)
3. Smart dust could also have applications to daily life.

Introduction: **(Grabber)** (fill in later)

(Thesis Statement) Thus far, researchers hypothesize that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and defending against bioterrorism.

(Preview) Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point III: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Conclusion: (Bring your message "full circle" and create a psychologically satisfying closure.)

This stage of preparation turns out to be a good place to go back and examine whether all the main points are directly related to the thesis statement and to each other. If so, your message has a strong potential for unity of focus. But if the relationship of one of the main points is weak, this is the time to strengthen it. It will be more difficult later for two reasons: first, the sheer amount of text on your pages will make the visual task more difficult, and second, it becomes increasingly difficult to change things in which you have a large investment in time and thought.

You can see that this working outline can lay a strong foundation for the rest of your message. Its organization is visually apparent. Once you are confident in the internal unity of your basic message, you can begin filling in the supporting points in descending detail—that is, from the general (main points) to the particular (supporting points) and then to greater detail. The outline makes it visually apparent where information fits. You only need to assess your supporting points to be sure they're authoritative and directly relevant to the main points they should support.

Sometimes transitions seem troublesome, and that's not surprising. We often omit them when we have informal conversations. Our conversation partners understand what we mean because of our gestures and vocal strategies. However, others might not understand what we mean, but think they do, and so we might never know whether they understood us. Even when we include transitions, we don't generally identify them as transitions. In a speech, however, we need to use effective transitions as a gateway from one main point to the next. The listener needs to know when a speaker is moving from one main point to the next.

In the next type of outline, the full-sentence outline, take a look at the transitions and see how they make the listener aware of the shifting focus to the next main point.

Full-Sentence Outline

Your full-sentence outline should contain full sentences only. There are several reasons why this kind of outline is important. First, you have a full plan of everything you intend to say to your audience, so that you will not have to struggle with wordings or examples. Second, you have a clear idea of how much time it will take to present your speech. Third, it contributes a fundamental ingredient of good preparation, part of your ethical responsibility to your audience. This is how a full-sentence outline looks:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations.
3. Smart dust could also have applications to daily life.

Introduction: **(Grabber)** In 2002, famed science fiction writer, Michael Crichton, released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it took over and killed its prey in its need for new resources. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of electrical engineering and computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS; robots; or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On."

(Thesis Statement) Thus far researchers hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.

(Preview) Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

(Transition) To help us understand smart dust, we will begin by first examining what smart dust is.

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. According to a 2001 article written by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in *Computer*, Pister's goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a cubic millimeter package.
2. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled "Smart Dust" written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single grain of rice has a volume of five cubic millimeters.
    1. Each individual piece of dust, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers.
    2. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled "Smart Dust? Not Quite, But We're Getting There," smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the glove, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

(Transition) Now that we've examined what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some of the military applications for smart dust.

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. According to the smart dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for “battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting” and other clear military applications.
    1. Probably the number one benefit of smart dust in the military environment is its surveillance abilities.
        1. Major Scott Dickson, in a Blue Horizons paper written for the US Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology’s Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) identification.
        2. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones.
2. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in new *Scientist*, one of the first benefits of smart dust could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.

(Transition) Now that we’ve explored some of the military benefits of smart dust, let’s switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to have an impact on our daily lives.

Main Point III: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. Everything from pasting smart dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard to inventory control to product quality control have been discussed as possible applications for smart dust.
    1. Steve Lohr, in his 2010 *New York Times* article, wrote, “The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil.”
2. Medically, according to the smart dust website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers.
    1. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which relays information to our physicians and detects adverse changes to our body instantly.
    2. Smart dust could detect the microscopic formations of center cells or alert us when we’ve been infected by a bacterium or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all of our lives.

(Transition) Today, we’ve explored what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.

Conclusion: While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. Smart dust is definitely in our near future, but swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton’s 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn’t reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries related to smart dust. Even Dr. Kris Pister’s smart dust project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, “As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were greater than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn’t be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy.”

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Warneke, B., Last, M., Liebowitz, B., & Pister, K. S. J. (2001). Smart dust: Communicating with a cubic millimeter computer. *Computer, 31*, 44–51.

When you prepare your full-sentence outline carefully, it may take as much as 1 ½ hours to complete the first part of the outline from your name at the top through the introduction. When you've completed that part, take a break and do something else. When you return to the outline, you should be able to complete your draft in another 1 ½ hours. After that, you only need to do a detailed check for completeness, accuracy, relevance, balance, omitted words, and consistency. If you find errors, instead of being frustrated, be glad you can catch these errors *before* you're standing up in front of your audience.

You will notice that the various parts of your speech, for instance, the transition and main points, are labeled. There are compelling reasons for these labels. First, as you develop your message, you will sometimes find it necessary to go back and look at your wording in another part of the outline. Your labels help you find particular passages easily. Second, the labels work as a checklist so that you can make sure you've included everything you intended to. Third, it helps you prepare your speaking outline.

You'll also notice the full references at the end of the outline. They match the citations within the outline. Sometimes while preparing a speech, a speaker finds it important to go back to an original source to be sure the message will be accurate. If you type in your references as you develop your speech rather than afterward, they will be a convenience to you if they are complete and accurate.

Don't think of the references as busywork or drudgery. Although they're more time consuming than text, they are good practice for the more advanced academic work you will do in the immediate future.

Speaking Outline

Your full-sentence outline prepares you to present a clear and well-organized message, but your speaking outline will include far less detail. Whenever possible, you will use key words and phrases, but in some instances, an extended quotation will need to be fully written on your speaking outline.

Resist the temptation to use your full-sentence outline as your speaking outline. The temptation is real for at least two reasons. First, once you feel that you've carefully crafted every sequence of words in your speech, you might not want to sacrifice quality when you shift to vocal presentation. Second, if you feel anxiety about how well you will do in front of an audience, you may want to use your full-sentence outline as a "safety net." In our experience, however, if you have your full-sentence outline with you, you will end up reading, rather than speaking, to your audience. The subject of reading to your audience will be taken up in "Delivering the Speech" on speech delivery. For now, it is enough to know you shouldn't read, but instead, use carefully prepared notecards.

Your speech has five main components: introduction, main point one, main point two, main point three, and the conclusion. Therefore we strongly recommend the use of five notecards: one for each of those five components. There are extenuating circumstances that might call for additional cards, but begin with five cards only.

How will five notecards suffice in helping you produce a complete, rich delivery? Why can't you use the full-sentence outline you labored so hard to write? First, the presence of your full-sentence outline will make it appear that you don't know the content of your speech. Second, the temptation to read the speech directly from the full-sentence outline is nearly overwhelming; even if you resist this temptation, you will find yourself struggling to remember the words on the page rather than speaking extemporaneously. Third, sheets of paper are noisier and more awkward than cards. Fourth, it's easier to lose your place using the full outline. Finally, cards just look better. Carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Plan to use five cards. Use 4 × 6 cards. The smaller 3 × 5 cards are too small to provide space for a visually organized set of notes. With five cards, you will have one card for the introduction, one card for each of the three main points, and one card for the conclusion. You should number your cards and write on one side only. Numbering is helpful if you happen to drop your cards, and writing on only one side means that the audience is not distracted by your handwritten notes and reminders to yourself while you are speaking. Each card should contain key words and key phrases but not full sentences.

Some speeches will include direct or extended quotations from expert sources. Some of these quotations might be highly technical or difficult to memorize for other reasons, but they must be presented correctly. This is a circumstance in which you could include an extra card in the sequence of notecards. This is the one time you may read fully from a card. If your quotation is important and the exact wording is crucial, your audience will understand that.

How will notecards be sufficient? When they are carefully written, your practice will reveal that they will work. If, during practice, you find that one of your cards doesn't work well enough, you can rewrite that card.

Using a set of carefully prepared, sparingly worded cards will help you resist the temptation to rely on overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides to get you through the presentation. Although they will never provide the exact word sequence of your full-sentence outline, they should keep you organized during the speech.

The "trick" to selecting the phrases and quotations for your cards is to identify the labels that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the phrase "more science fact" brings to mind the connection to science fiction and the differences between the real developments and the fictive events of Crichton's novel *Prey*, that phrase on your card will support you through a fairly extended part of your introduction.

You must discover what works for you and then select those words that tend to jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary set of no more than five cards written on one side only, and practice with them. Revise and refine them as you would an outline.

The following is a hypothetical set of cards for the smart dust speech:

Card 1.

Introduction: 2002, *Prey*, swarm nanomachines feed on living tissue.

Kahn, Katz, and Pister, U C Berkeley engineering and computer sci. profs. hyp.

Microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices could detect light, temp, or vib.

Thesis Statement: Researchers hyp that s.d. could track patients, warn of natural disaster, act as defense against bioterrorism.

Prev.: What smart dust is and how it works, military aps, nonmilitary aps.

Transition: To help understand, first, what smart dust is.

Card 2.

I. Dr. Kris Pister, prof robotics lab UC Berkeley conceived the idea in 1998 in a proj. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. 2001 article by Bret Warneke et al titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" publ. in *Computer*, Pister wanted sensors, comm. devices, and computer in a cubic millimeter package.
2. Doug Steel of CT Bauer College of Bus at Houston noted grain of rice = 5 cm.
    1. Each mote could interact w/ others.
    2. (see extended quotation, next card)

Card 3.

Quotation: Steve Lohr, NYT Jan 30 2005, "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There." Smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

Card 4.

II. Orig conceptualized under DARPA, military uses theor. and examined.

1. Smart Dust website, battlefield surveill., treaty monitor., transp. monitor., + scud hunting.
    1. benefit, surveill.
        1. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.

2. could also defeat comm. jamming equipt by communicating among itself and w/ civilians in combat zones.

2. 2010 article Jessica Griggs *New Scientist*, early defense, storms and debris.

Transition: Switch gears to daily lives.

Card 5.

III. s.d. project website: s.d. could become common in daily life.

1. Pasting particles for virtual computer keyboard to inventory control poss.
    1. Steve Lohr, 2010, NYT, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."
2. Medically, accdng to SD project website, help disabled.
    1. interface w/ computers
    2. injected, cd. relay info to docs and detect body changes instantly
        1. cancer cells, bacteria or virus, speed up treatment, and so on.

Transition: We expl. What SD is, how SD cd be used military, and how SD cd impact our lives.

Card 6.

Conclusion: Transf fiction to fact, experts agree potential 2025. Michael Crichton's Prey isn't reality, but in developing SD as fact, there are ethical considerations. Pister: privacy.

Dr. Kris Pister: "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

Using a set of cards similar to this could help you get through an impressive set of specialized information. But what if you lose your place during a speech? With a set of cards, it will take less time to refind it than with a full-sentence outline. You will not be rustling sheets of paper, and because your cards are written on one side only, you can keep them in order without flipping them back and forth to check both sides.

What if you go blank? Take a few seconds to recall what you've said and how it leads to your next points. There may be several seconds of silence in the middle of your speech, and it may seem like minutes to you, but you can regain your footing most easily with a small set of well-prepared cards.

Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading a sequence of words to your audience instead of telling them your message.

Key Takeaways

- Working outlines help you with speech logic, development, and planning.
- The full-sentence outline develops the full detail of the message.
- The speaking outline helps you stay organized in front of the audience without reading to them.
- Using notecards for your speaking outline helps with delivery and makes it easier to find information if you lose your place or draw a blank.

Exercises

1. With respect to your speech topic, what words need to be defined?
2. Define what you mean by the terms you will use.
3. How does your definition compare with those of experts?

7.1.3: Using Outlining for Success

Learning Objective

1. Understand five basic principles of outline creation.

Figure 7.1.3.1: Tom706 – parallelism – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

As with any part of the speech process, there are some pretty commonly agreed upon principles for creating an outline. Now that we've examined the basics of outline creation, there are some important factors to consider when creating a logical and coherent outline: singularity, consistency, adequacy, uniformity, and parallelism.

Singularity

For the sake of clarity, make sure your thesis statement expresses one idea only. Only in this way will it be optimally useful to you as you build your outline. If you have narrowed your topic skillfully, you can readily focus the thesis statement as one central point. For instance, if you have a thesis statement that says the Second Amendment protects gun ownership rights but most people are unaware of the responsibility involved, you have a thesis statement focusing on two different issues. Which focus will you follow? It's crucial to choose just one, saving the other perhaps for a different speech.

The same holds true for your three main points: they should each express one clear idea. For the sake of your audience, maintain clarity. If many different ideas are required in order to build a complete message, you can handle them in separate sentences with the use of such transitions as "at the same time," "alternately," "in response to that event," or some other transition that clarifies the relationship between two separate ideas.

Consistency

The entire point of framing a thesis with one clear focus is to help you maintain consistency throughout your speech. Beyond the grammatical requirements of subject-verb agreement, you will want to maintain a consistent approach. For instance, unless your speech has a chronological structure that begins in the past and ends in the future, you should choose a tense, past or present, to use throughout the speech. Similarly, you should choose language and use it consistently. For instance, use humanity instead of mankind or humans, and use that term throughout.

Similarly, define your terms and use those terms only to designate the meanings in your definition. To do otherwise could result in equivocation and confusion. For instance, if you use the word "right" in two or three different senses, you should change your language. The word "right" can be applicable to your *right* to a good education; the ethical difference between *right* and wrong; and the status of a statement as *right*, or accurate and correct. By the same token, in a health care setting, saying that a medical test had a positive outcome can be confusing. Does the patient test positive for the presence of disease, or does the test reveal some good news? If you find yourself using the same word to mean different things, you will need to spend extra time in your speech explaining these meanings very clearly—or avoid the problem by making other word choices.

Adequacy

To make sure your audience will understand your speech, you must set aside the assumption that what is obvious to you is also obvious to your audience. Therefore, pay attention to adequacy in two ways: definitions of terms and support for your main points.

You should use concrete language as much as you can. For instance, if you use the word “community,” you’re using an abstract term that can mean many things. You might be referring to a suburban neighborhood; to a cultural group, such as the Jewish community; to an institutional setting that includes an academic community; or to a general sense of overarching mainstream community standards for what materials should or should not be broadcast on television, for instance. You may not find any definition of “community” that conveys your meaning. Therefore, you will need to define for your audience what *you* mean by “community.”

Adequacy is also a concern when you use evidence to support your main points. Evidence of the right kind and the right weight are needed. For instance, if you make a substantial claim, such as a claim that all printed news sources will be obsolete within ten years, you need expert sources. This means you need at least two well-known experts from the institutions that provide news (newspapers, television news, or news radio). They should be credible sources, not sources with extreme views whose contact with reality is questioned. This will give you the right kind of evidence, and a large enough amount of evidence.

Uniformity

A full-sentence outline readily shows whether you are giving “equal time” to each of your three main points. For example, are you providing three pieces of evidence to support each main point? It should also show whether each main point is directly related to the thesis statement.

Parallelism

Parallelism refers to the idea that the three main points follow the same structure or make use of the same kind of language. For instance, in the sample outline we used previously, you see that each of the main points emphasizes the topic, smart dust.

Parallelism also allows you to check for inconsistencies and self-contradictory statements. For instance, does anything within main point two contradict anything in main point one? Examining your text for this purpose can strengthen the clarity of your message. For instance, if in main point one you claim that computer crime leaves an electronic trail, but in main point two you claim that hackers often get away with their crimes, you have some explaining to do. If an electronic trail can readily lead to the discovery of the electronic felon, how or why do they get away with it? The answer might be that cybercrime does not fall within the jurisdiction of any law enforcement agency or that the law lags behind technology. Perhaps there are other reasons as well, and you must make sure you don’t leave your audience confused. If you confuse them, you will sound confused, and you will lose credibility. There is no doubt that a full-sentence outline provides the most useful opportunity to examine your message for the details that either clarify or undermine your message.

Finally, your conclusion should do two things. First, it should come “full circle” in order to show the audience that you have covered all the territory you laid out in your preview. Second, it should provide satisfying, decisive, psychological closure. In other words, your audience should know when your speech is over. You should not trail off. You should not have to say, “That’s it.” Your audience should not have to wait to see whether you’re going to say anything else. At the right time, they should feel certain that the speech is over and that they can clap.

Key Takeaways

- For an outline to be useful, it’s important to follow five basic principles: singularity, consistency, adequacy, uniformity, and parallelism.

Exercises

1. Look at an outline you’ve created for your public speaking course. Did you follow the five basic rules of outlining? How could you have changed your outline to follow those five basic principles?
2. Write an outline for your next speech in your course, paying special attention to the structure of the outline to ensure that none of the principles of outlining are violated.

7.1.4: Chapter Exercises

Speaking Ethically

George needs to turn in an outline for the speech he is assigned to deliver. The speech itself is two weeks away, but the outline is due today. George has already written the entire speech, and he does not see why he should spend time deleting parts of it to transform it into an outline. He knows exactly what he's going to say when he gives the speech. Then he discovers that the word-processing program in his computer can create an outline version of a document. Aha! Technology to the rescue! George happily turns in the computer-generated outline, feeling confident that never again will he have to hassle with writing an outline himself.

1. Do you think George's use of a computer-generated outline fulfills the purpose of creating an outline for a speech? Why or why not?
2. Do you think George's professor will be able to tell that the outline was created by a word-processing program?

End-of-Chapter Assessment

1. Joe is beginning to prepare his speech and has constructed a brief outline that sketches out his thesis and main points but does not yet have a fully developed conclusion or transitions. Which type of outline has Joe constructed?
    1. speaking outline
    2. full-sentence outline
    3. opening outline
    4. working outline
    5. transitory outline
2. Brenda has prepared her speaking outline on a set of six notecards, so she believes she is finished preparing for her speech. You tell her that simply preparing the speaking outline is not enough; she needs to practice using her notecards as well. Why is this the case?
    1. She should get used to how the notecards feel in her hand.
    2. She needs to make sure the information on the cards will work as a memory cue for her.
    3. She needs to know whether her audience prefers white or colored notecards.
    4. You think she needs to add more notecards.
    5. She needs to memorize all the quotations she is using.

Answer Key

1. d
2. b

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Persuasive Speaking

8.1: Organizing Persuasive Speeches

Learning Objectives

1. Understand three common organizational patterns for persuasive speeches.
2. Explain the steps utilized in Monroe's motivated sequence.
3. Explain the parts of a problem-cause-solution speech.
4. Explain the process utilized in a comparative advantage persuasive speech.

Figure 8.1.1: Steven Lilley – Engaged – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Previously in this text we discussed general guidelines for organizing speeches. In this section, we are going to look at three organizational patterns ideally suited for persuasive speeches: Monroe's motivated sequence, problem-cause-solution, and comparative advantages.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

One of the most commonly cited and discussed organizational patterns for persuasive speeches is Alan H. Monroe's motivated sequence. The purpose of Monroe's motivated sequence is to help speakers "sequence supporting materials and motivational appeals to form a useful organizational pattern for speeches as a whole" (German et al., 2010).

While Monroe's motivated sequence is commonly discussed in most public speaking textbooks, we do want to provide one minor caution. Thus far, almost no research has been conducted that has demonstrated that Monroe's motivated sequence is any more persuasive than other structural patterns. In the only study conducted experimentally examining Monroe's motivated sequence, the researchers did not find the method more persuasive, but did note that audience members found the pattern more organized than other methods (Micciche, Pryor, & Butler, 2000). We wanted to add this sidenote because we don't want you to think that Monroe's motivated sequence is a kind of magic persuasive bullet; the research simply doesn't support this notion. At the same time, research does support that organized messages are perceived as more persuasive as a whole, so using Monroe's motivated sequence to think through one's persuasive argument could still be very beneficial.

Table 8.1.1 "Monroe's Motivated Sequence" lists the basic steps of Monroe's motivated sequence and the subsequent reaction a speaker desires from his or her audience.

Table 8.1.1 Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Steps	Audience Response
Attention—Getting Attention	I want to listen to the speaker.
Need—Showing the Need, Describing the Problem	Something needs to be done about the problem.
Satisfaction—Satisfying the Need, Presenting the Solution	In order to satisfy the need or fix the problem this is what I need to do.
Visualization—Visualizing the Results	I can see myself enjoying the benefits of taking action.
Action—Requesting Audience Action or Approval	I will act in a specific way or approve a decision or behavior.

Attention

The first step in Monroe's motivated sequence is the **attention step**, in which a speaker attempts to get the audience's attention. To gain an audience's attention, we recommend that you think through three specific parts of the attention step. First, you need to have a strong attention-getting device. As previously discussed in Chapter 6.1 "Introductions Matter: How to Begin a Speech Effectively", a strong attention getter at the beginning of your speech is very important. Second, you need to make sure you introduce your topic clearly. If your audience doesn't know what your topic is quickly, they are more likely to stop listening. Lastly, you need to explain to your audience why they should care about your topic.

Needs

In the **need step** of Monroe's motivated sequence, the speaker establishes that there is a specific need or problem. In Monroe's conceptualization of need, he talks about four specific parts of the need: statement, illustration, ramification, and pointing. First, a speaker needs to give a clear and concise statement of the problem. This part of a speech should be crystal clear for an audience. Second, the speaker needs to provide one or more examples to illustrate the need. The illustration is an attempt to make the problem concrete for the audience. Next, a speaker needs to provide some kind of evidence (e.g., statistics, examples, testimony) that shows the ramifications or consequences of the problem. Lastly, a speaker needs to point to the audience and show exactly how the problem relates to them personally.

Satisfaction

In the third step of Monroe's motivated sequence, the **satisfaction step**, the speaker sets out to satisfy the need or solve the problem. Within this step, Monroe (1935) proposed a five-step plan for satisfying a need:

1. Statement
2. Explanation
3. Theoretical demonstration
4. Reference to practical experience
5. Meeting objections

First, you need to clearly state the attitude, value, belief, or action you want your audience to accept. The purpose of this statement is to clearly tell your audience what your ultimate goal is.

Second, you want to make sure that you clearly explain to your audience why they should accept the attitude, value, belief, or action you proposed. Just telling your audience they should do something isn't strong enough to actually get them to change. Instead, you really need to provide a solid argument for why they should accept your proposed solution.

Third, you need to show how the solution you have proposed meets the need or problem. Monroe calls this link between your solution and the need a theoretical demonstration because you cannot prove that your solution will work. Instead, you theorize based on research and good judgment that your solution will meet the need or solve the problem.

Fourth, to help with this theoretical demonstration, you need to reference practical experience, which should include examples demonstrating that your proposal has worked elsewhere. Research, statistics, and expert testimony are all great ways of referencing practical experience.

Lastly, Monroe recommends that a speaker respond to possible objections. As a persuasive speaker, one of your jobs is to think through your speech and see what counterarguments could be made against your speech and then rebut those arguments within your speech. When you offer rebuttals for arguments against your speech, it shows your audience that you've done your homework and educated yourself about multiple sides of the issue.

Visualization

The next step of Monroe's motivated sequence is the **visualization step**, in which you ask the audience to visualize a future where the need has been met or the problem solved. In essence, the visualization stage is where a speaker can show the audience why accepting a specific attitude, value, belief, or behavior can positively affect the future. When helping people to picture the future, the more concrete your visualization is, the easier it will be for your audience to see the possible future and be persuaded by it. You also need to make sure that you clearly show how accepting your solution will directly benefit your audience.

According to Monroe, visualization can be conducted in one of three ways: positive, negative, or contrast (Monroe, 1935). The positive method of visualization is where a speaker shows how adopting a proposal leads to a better future (e.g., recycle, and we'll

have a cleaner and safer planet). Conversely, the negative method of visualization is where a speaker shows how not adopting the proposal will lead to a worse future (e.g., don't recycle, and our world will become polluted and uninhabitable). Monroe also acknowledged that visualization can include a combination of both positive and negative visualization. In essence, you show your audience both possible outcomes and have them decide which one they would rather have.

Action

The final step in Monroe's motivated sequence is the **action step**, in which a speaker asks an audience to approve the speaker's proposal. For understanding purposes, we break action into two distinct parts: audience action and approval. Audience action refers to direct physical behaviors a speaker wants from an audience (e.g., flossing their teeth twice a day, signing a petition, wearing seat belts). Approval, on the other hand, involves an audience's consent or agreement with a speaker's proposed attitude, value, or belief.

When preparing an action step, it is important to make sure that the action, whether audience action or approval, is realistic for your audience. Asking your peers in a college classroom to donate one thousand dollars to charity isn't realistic. Asking your peers to donate one dollar is considerably more realistic. In a persuasive speech based on Monroe's motivated sequence, the action step will end with the speech's concluding device. As discussed elsewhere in this text, you need to make sure that you conclude in a vivid way so that the speech ends on a high point and the audience has a sense of energy as well as a sense of closure.

Now that we've walked through Monroe's motivated sequence, let's look at how you could use Monroe's motivated sequence to outline a persuasive speech:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my classroom peers that the United States should have stronger laws governing the use of for-profit medical experiments.

Main Points:

- **Attention:** Want to make nine thousand dollars for just three weeks of work lying around and not doing much? Then be a human guinea pig. Admittedly, you'll have to have a tube down your throat most of those three weeks, but you'll earn three thousand dollars a week.
- **Need:** Every day many uneducated and lower socioeconomic-status citizens are preyed on by medical and pharmaceutical companies for use in for-profit medical and drug experiments. Do you want one of your family members to fall prey to this evil scheme?
- **Satisfaction:** The United States should have stronger laws governing the use of for-profit medical experiments to ensure that uneducated and lower-socioeconomic-status citizens are protected.
- **Visualization:** If we enact tougher experiment oversight, we can ensure that medical and pharmaceutical research is conducted in a way that adheres to basic values of American decency. If we do not enact tougher experiment oversight, we could find ourselves in a world where the lines between research subject, guinea pig, and patient become increasingly blurred.
- **Action:** In order to prevent the atrocities associated with for-profit medical and pharmaceutical experiments, please sign this petition asking the US Department of Health and Human Services to pass stricter regulations on this preying industry that is out of control.

This example shows how you can take a basic speech topic and use Monroe's motivated sequence to clearly and easily outline your speech efficiently and effectively.

Table 8.1.2 "Monroe's Motivated Sequence Checklist" also contains a simple checklist to help you make sure you hit all the important components of Monroe's motivated sequence.

Table 8.1.2 Monroe's Motivated Sequence Checklist

Step in the Sequence	Yes	No
Attention Step		
Gained audience's attention	☐	☐
Introduced the topic clearly	☐	☐

Step in the Sequence	Yes	No
Showed the importance of the topic to the audience	☐	☐
Need Step		
Need is summarized in a clear statement	☐	☐
Need is adequately illustrated	☐	☐
Need has clear ramifications	☐	☐
Need clearly points the audience	☐	☐
Satisfaction Step		
Plan is clearly stated	☐	☐
Plan is plainly explained	☐	☐
Plan and solution are theoretically demonstrated	☐	☐
Plan has clear reference to practical experience	☐	☐
Plan can meet possible objections	☐	☐
Visualization Step		
Practicality of plan shown	☐	☐
Benefits of plan are tangible	☐	☐
Benefits of plan relate to the audience	☐	☐
Specific type of visualization chosen (positive method, negative method, method of contrast)	☐	☐
Action Step		
Call of specific action by the audience	☐	☐
Action is realistic for the audience	☐	☐
Concluding device is vivid	☐	☐

Problem-Cause-Solution

Another format for organizing a persuasive speech is the problem-cause-solution format. In this specific format, you discuss what a problem is, what you believe is causing the problem, and then what the solution should be to correct the problem.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my classroom peers that our campus should adopt a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech.

Main Points:

1. Demonstrate that there is distrust among different groups on campus that has led to unnecessary confrontations and violence.
2. Show that the confrontations and violence are a result of hate speech that occurred prior to the events.
3. Explain how instituting a campus-wide zero-tolerance policy against hate speech could stop the unnecessary confrontations and violence.

In this speech, you want to persuade people to support a new campus-wide policy calling for zero-tolerance of hate speech. Once you have shown the problem, you then explain to your audience that the cause of the unnecessary confrontations and violence is prior incidents of hate speech. Lastly, you argue that a campus-wide zero-tolerance policy could help prevent future unnecessary confrontations and violence. Again, this method of organizing a speech is as simple as its name: problem-cause-solution.

Comparative Advantages

The final method for organizing a persuasive speech is called the comparative advantages speech format. The goal of this speech is to compare items side-by-side and show why one of them is more advantageous than the other. For example, let's say that you're giving a speech on which e-book reader is better: Amazon.com's Kindle or Barnes and Nobles' Nook. Here's how you could organize this speech:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the Nook is more advantageous than the Kindle.

Main Points:

1. The Nook allows owners to trade and loan books to other owners or people who have downloaded the Nook software, while the Kindle does not.
2. The Nook has a color-touch screen, while the Kindle's screen is black and grey and noninteractive.
3. The Nook's memory can be expanded through microSD, while the Kindle's memory cannot be upgraded.

As you can see from this speech's organization, the simple goal of this speech is to show why one thing has more positives than something else. Obviously, when you are demonstrating comparative advantages, the items you are comparing need to be functional equivalents—or, as the saying goes, you cannot compare apples to oranges.

Key Takeaways

- There are three common patterns that persuaders can utilize to help organize their speeches effectively: Monroe's motivated sequence, problem-cause-solution, and comparative advantage. Each of these patterns can effectively help a speaker think through his or her thoughts and organize them in a manner that will be more likely to persuade an audience.
- Alan H. Monroe's (1935) motivated sequence is a commonly used speech format that is used by many people to effectively organize persuasive messages. The pattern consists of five basic stages: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action. In the first stage, a speaker gets an audience's attention. In the second stage, the speaker shows an audience that a need exists. In the third stage, the speaker shows how his or her persuasive proposal could satisfy the need. The fourth stage shows how the future could be if the persuasive proposal is or is not adopted. Lastly, the speaker urges the audience to take some kind of action to help enact the speaker's persuasive proposal.
- The problem-cause-solution proposal is a three-pronged speech pattern. The speaker starts by explaining the problem the speaker sees. The speaker then explains what he or she sees as the underlying causes of the problem. Lastly, the speaker proposes a solution to the problem that corrects the underlying causes.
- The comparative advantages speech format is utilized when a speaker is comparing two or more things or ideas and shows why one of the things or ideas has more advantages than the other(s).

Exercises

1. Create a speech using Monroe's motivated sequence to persuade people to recycle.
2. Create a speech using the problem-cause-solution method for a problem you see on your college or university campus.
3. Create a comparative advantages speech comparing two brands of toothpaste.

References

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8.2: Persuasive Strategies

ethos

In addition to understanding how your audience feels about the topic you are addressing, you will need to take steps to help them see you as credible and interesting. The audience's perception of you as a speaker is influential in determining whether or not they will choose to accept your proposition. Aristotle called this element of the speech **ethos**, "a Greek word that is closely related to our termsethical and ethnic" (Campbell & Huxman, 2009, p. 232). He taught speakers to establish credibility with the audience by appearing to have good moral character, common sense, and concern for the audience's well-being (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Campbell & Huxman (2009) explain that ethos is not about conveying that you, as an individual, are a good person. It is about "mirror[ing] the characteristics idealized by [the] culture or group" (ethnic) (p.232), and demonstrating that you make good moral choices with regard to your relationship within the group (ethics).

While there are many things speakers can do to build their ethos throughout the speech, "assessments of ethos often reflect superficial first impressions," and these first impressions linger long after the speech has concluded (Zarefsky, 2005, p.14). This means that what you wear and how you behave, even before opening your mouth, can go far in shaping your ethos. Be sure to dress appropriately for the occasion and setting in which you speak. Also work to appear confident, but not arrogant, and be sure to maintain enthusiasm about your topic throughout the speech. Give great attention to the crafting of your opening sentences because they will set the tone for what your audience should expect of your personality as you proceed.

> *I covered two presidents, LBJ and Nixon, who could no longer convince, persuade, or govern, once people had decided they had no credibility; but we seem to be more tolerant now of what I think we should not tolerate. ~ Helen Thomas*

logos

Another way to enhance your ethos, and your chances of persuading the audience, is to use sound arguments. In a persuasive speech, the **argument** will focus on the reasons for supporting your specific purpose statement. This argumentative approach is what Aristotle referred to as **logos**, or the logical means of proving an argument (Braet, 1992).

When offering an argument you begin by making an assertion that requires a logical leap based on the available evidence (Campbell & Huxman, 2009). One of the most popular ways of understanding how this process works was developed by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin (Herrick, 2011). Toulmin explained that basic arguments tend to share three common elements: claim, data, and warrant. The **claim** is an assertion that you want the audience to accept. **Data** refers to the preliminary evidence on which the claim is based. For example, if I saw large gray clouds in the sky, I might make the claim that "it is going to rain today." The gray clouds (data) are linked to rain (claim) by the **warrant**, an often unstated general connection, that large gray clouds tend to produce rain. The warrant is a connector that, if stated, would likely begin with "since" or "because." In our rain example, if we explicitly stated all three elements, the argument would go something like this: There are large gray clouds in the sky today (data).

Since large gray clouds tend to produce rain (warrant), it is going to rain today (claim). However, in our regular encounters with argumentation, we tend to only offer the claim and (occasionally) the warrant.

To strengthen the basic argument, you will need **backing** for the claim. Backing provides foundational support for the claim (Herrick, 2011) by offering examples, statistics, testimony, or other information which further substantiates the argument. To substantiate the rain argument we have

just considered, you could explain that the color of a cloud is determined by how much light the water in the cloud is reflecting. A thin cloud has tiny drops of water and ice crystals which scatter light, making it appear white. Clouds appear gray when they are filled with large water droplets which are less able to reflect light (Brill, 2003).

> *Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end. ~ Leonard Nimoy*

Table 8.2.1 The Toulmin Model Basic Argument

Basic Argument	
data I had a hard time finding a place to park on campus today.	claim The school needs more parking spaces.
warrant If I can't find a place to park, there must be a shortage of spaces.	
Argument With Backing	
data Obesity is a serious problem in the U.S.	claim U.S. citizens should be encouraged to eat less processed foods.
warrant Processed foods contribute to obesity more than natural, or unprocessed, foods.	
backing "As a rule processed foods are more 'energy dense' than freshfoods: they contain less water and fiber but more added fat and sugar, which makes them both less filling and more fattening"(Pollan, 2007).	

The elements that Toulmin identified (see Table 16.1) may be arranged in a variety of ways to make the most logical argument. As you reason through your argument you may proceed inductively, deductively, or causally, toward your claim. **Inductive reasoning** moves from specific examples to a more general claim. For example, if you read online reviews of a restaurant chain called Walt's Wine & Dine and you noticed that someone reported feeling sick after eating at a Walt's, and another person reported that the Walt's they visited was understaffed, and another commented that the tables in the Walt's they ate at had crumbs left on them, you might conclude (or claim) that the restaurant chain is unsanitary. To test the validity of a general claim, Beebe and Beebe (2003) encourage speakers to consider whether there are "enough specific instances to support the conclusion," whether the specific instances are typical, and whether the instances are recent (p.384).

The opposite of inductive reasoning is deductive reasoning, moving from a general principle to a claim regarding a specific instance. In order to move from general to specific we tend to usesyllogisms. A syllogism begins with a major (or general) premise, then moves to a minor premise, then concludes with a specific claim. For example, if you know that all dogs bark (major premise),

and your neighbor has a dog (minor premise), you could then conclude that your neighbor's dog barks (specific claim). To verify the accuracy of your specific claim, you must verify the truth and applicability of the major premise. What evidence do you have that all dogs bark? Is it possible that only most dogs bark? Next, you must also verify the accuracy of the minor premise. If the major premise is truly generalizable, and both premises are accurate, your specific claim should also be accurate.

Your reasoning may also proceed causally. **Causal reasoning** examines related events to determine which one caused the other. You may begin with a cause and attempt to determine its effect. For example, when the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, scientists explained that because many animals in the Gulf were nesting and reproducing at the time, the spill could wipe out "an entire generation of hundreds of species" (Donovan, 2010, para. 2). Their argument reasoned that the spill (cause) would result in species loss (effect). Two years later, the causal reasoning might be reversed. If we were seeing species loss in the Gulf (effect), we could reason that it was a result of the oil spill (cause). Both of these claims rely on the evidence available at the time. To make the first claim, scientists not only offered evidence that animals were nesting and reproducing, but they also looked at the effects of an oil spill that occurred 21 years earlier in Alaska (Donovan, 2010). To make the second claim, scientists could examine dead animals washing up on the coast to determine whether their deaths were caused by oil.

pathos

While we have focused heavily on logical reasoning, we must also recognize the strong role that emotions play in the persuasive process. Aristotle called this element of the speech **pathos**. Pathos draws on the emotions, sympathies, and prejudices of the audience to appeal to their non-rational side (Beebe & Beebe 2003; Reike, Sillars, & Peterson, 2009). Human beings are constantly in some emotional state, which means that tapping into an audience's emotions can be vital to persuading them to accept your proposition (Dillard & Meijnders, 2002).

One of the most helpful strategies in appealing to your audience's emotions is to use clear examples that illustrate your point. Illustrations can be crafted verbally, nonverbally, or visually. To offer a verbal illustration, you could tell a compelling story. For example, when fundraising for breast cancer research, Nancy Brinker, creator of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, has plenty of compelling statistics and examples to offer. Yet, she regularly talks about her sister, explaining:

Susan G. Komen fought breast cancer with her heart, body and soul. Throughout her diagnosis, treatments, and endless days in the hospital, she spent her time thinking of ways to make life better for other women battling breast cancer instead of worrying about her own situation. That concern for others continued even as Susan neared the end of her fight (Komen National, n.d.).

Brinker promised her sister that she would continue her fight against breast cancer. This story compels donors to join her fight.

Speakers can also tap into emotions using nonverbal behaviors to model the desired emotion for their audience. In the summer of 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives debated holding the Attorney General in contempt for refusing to release documents concerning a controversial gun-tracking operation. Arguing for a contempt vote, South Carolina Representative Trey Gowdy did not simply state his claim, instead he raised his voice, slowed his pace, and used hand motions to convey anger with what he perceived as deception on the part of the Attorney General (Gowdy, 2012). His use of volume, tone, pace, and hand gestures enhanced the message and built anger in his audience.

> *Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

In addition to verbal and nonverbal illustrations, visual imagery can enhance the emotional appeal of a message. For example, we have all heard about the dangers of drugs, and there are multiple campaigns that attempt to prevent people from even trying them. However, many young adults experiment with drugs under the assumption that they are immune from the negative effects if they only use the drug recreationally. To counter this assumption regarding methamphe- tamines, the Montana Meth project combines controversial statements with graphic images on billboards to evoke fear of the drug (see www.methproject. org /ads/print/ for some disturbing examples). Young adults may have heard repeated warnings that meth is addictive and that it has the potential to cause sores, rotten teeth, and extreme weight loss, but Montana Meth Project's visual display is more compelling because it turns the audience's stomach, making the message memorable. This image, combined with the slogan, "not even once," conveys the persuasive point without the need for other forms of evidence and rational argument.

Appeals to fear, like those in the Montana Meth Project ads, have proven effective in motivating people to change a variety of behaviors. However, speakers must be careful with their use of this emotion. Fear appeals tend to be more effective when they appeal to a high-level fear, such as death, and they are more effective when offered by speakers with a high level of perceived credibility (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Fear appeals are also more persuasive when the speaker can convince the audience they have the ability to avert the threat. If audiences doubt their ability to avoid or minimize the threat, the appeal may backfire (Witte & Allen, 2000).

> *I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone. ~ Dwight D. Eisenhower*

David Brooks (2011) argues that, "emotions are not separate from reason, but they are the foundation of reason because they tell us what to value" (para. 2). Those values are at the core of fostering a credible ethos. All of Aristotle's strategies, ethos, logos, and pathos, are interdependent. The most persuasive speakers will combine these strategies to varying degrees based on their specific purpose and audience.

In addition to considering their topic and persuasive strategy, speakers must take care to ensure that their message is ethical. Persuasion is often confused with another kind of communication that has similar ends, but different methods—coercion. Like persuasion, **coercion** is a process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered. But in coercive acts, deceptive or harmful methods propel the intended changes, not reason. Strong and Cook (1992) contrasted the two: "persuasion uses argument to compel power to give way to reason while coercion uses force to compel reason to give way to power" (p. 7). The "force" that Strong and Cook mention frequently manifests as promises for reward or punishment, but sometimes it arises as physical or emotional harm. Think of almost any international crime film you have seen, and you are likely to remember a scene where someone was compelled to out their compatriots by way of force. Jack Bauer, the protagonist in the American television series 24, became an infamous character by doing whatever it took to get captured criminals to talk. Although dramatic as an example, those scenes where someone is tortured in an effort to produce evidence offer a familiar reference when thinking about coercion. To avoid coercing an audience, speakers should use logical and emotional appeals responsibly.

> *The pendulum of the mind alternates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong. ~ Carl Jung*

Persuasive speakers must be careful to avoid using **fallacies** in their reasoning. Fallacies are errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument. There are a wide variety of fallacies, and it is not possible to list them all here. However,

speakers should watch for four common categories of fallacies: “fallacies of faulty assumption,” which occur when the speaker reasons based on a problematic assumption; “fallacies directed to the person,” which occur when the speaker focuses on the attributes of an individual opponent rather than the relevant arguments; “fallacies of case presentation,” which occur when the speaker mischaracterizes the issue; and “fallacies of suggestion,” which occur when the speaker implies or suggests an argument without fully developing it (Herrick, 2011, p. 256). See the Table 16.2 on the following page for examples of each of these types of fallacies. To learn more about fallacies, see Chapter 6 by Russ (Critical Thinking and Reasoning), or see the supplemental handout found on the Persuasive Speaking chapter homepage (www.publicspeaking project.org/persuasive.html)

There are some positive steps you can take to avoid these pitfalls of persuasive speaking and ensure that you are presenting your message in the most ethical manner. We have already discussed some of these, such as offering credible evidence for your arguments and showing concern for the audience’s well being. However, you should also offer a transparent goal for your speech. Even with a hostile audience, where you may wait until later in the speech to provide the specific purpose statement, you should be forthcoming about your specific purpose. In fact, be truthful with your audience throughout the speech.

Table 8.2.2 Examples of Fallacies Fallacies of Faulty Assumption

Causal Fallacy	It is cloudy outside, and I feel sick. Cloudy days make me sick. The school board voted to buy new picnic tables for the lunch room. Many students were out sick the following day. The students must be upset about the picnic tables.
Bandwagon Fallacy	Everyone takes out a loan to buy a car, so you should too. None of the cool kids wear helmets when they ride bikes. You should take yours off.
Begging the Question	Lion King is an excellent film because it has excellent animation. Marijuana is good for you because it is natural.
Fallacies Directed to the Person	
Ad Hominem	We should reject President Obama’s health care legislation because it is socialism. We should ignore Donald Trump’s opposition to tax hikes because he’s just rich andselfish.
Poisoning the Well	Before the defense makes their closing statement, keep in mind that their client has not said one truthful word throughout the trial. My opponent is going to try to manipulate you into thinking her plan is better for the city.
Appeal to Flattery	First, I wanted to tell you that this is my favorite class. I tell all my friends how much I love it. I just think I deserve a better grade on my exam. You are such a generous person, I know you’ll want to donate to this cause.
Fallacies of Case Presentation	
Non Sequitur	I don’t plan to vote today because I am moving next week. You should clean your room because I am going to do the laundry.
Red Herring	I should not be fined for parking in a red zone when there are so many people out there committing real crimes like robbery and murder. War is wrong, but in times of crisis we should support the president.

Table 8.2.2 Examples of Fallacies Fallacies of Faulty Assumption	
Appeal to Misplaced Authority	This diet is the best one for people with my health condition, Oprah said so. I want to visit the Museum of Modern Art. My English professor says they have the best collection anywhere!
Fallacies of Suggestion	
Paralepsis	I'm not saying he cheated; he just did uncharacteristically well on that exam. If she wants to work for a crook, that's her business.
Either-Or	Either you're with us or against us. Love it or leave it.
Arrangement	I have so much to do today. I have to get my car fixed, finish a paper, take a nap, and pick my mom up from the airport. So many highly respected musicians will be there: Paul McCartney, Elton John, LMFAO, Billy Joel . . .

It is appropriate to use fictional scenarios to demonstrate your point, but tell the audience that is what you are doing. You can accomplish this by introducing fictional examples with the phrase, "hypothetically," or "imagine," to signal that you are making it up (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Additionally, be sure to offer a mix of logical and emotional appeals. Blending these strategies insures that you have evidence to back up emotional claims, and that you are sensitive to the audiences' emotional reactions to your logical claims. Attending to both aspects will help you be more ethical and more persuasive.

> *The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity. ~ Zig Ziglar*

8.3: Good Arguments

A historical example

An important example of excellent reasoning can be found in the case of the medical advances of the Nineteenth Century physician, Ignaz Semmelweis. Semmelweis was an obstetrician at the Vienna General Hospital. Built on the foundation of a poor house, and opened in 1784, the General Hospital is still operating today. Semmelweis, during his tenure as assistant to the head of one of two maternity clinics, noticed something very disturbing. The hospital had two clinics, separated only by a shared anteroom, known as the First and the Second Clinics. The mortality rate for mothers delivering babies in the First Clinic, however, was nearly three times as bad as the mortality for mothers in the Second Clinic (9.9 % average versus 3.4% average). The same was true for the babies born in the clinics: the mortality rate in the First Clinic was 6.1% versus 2.1% at the Second Clinic. In nearly all these cases, the deaths were caused by what appeared to be the same illness, commonly called "childbed fever". Worse, these numbers actually understated the mortality rate of the First Clinic, because sometimes very ill patients were transferred to the general treatment portion of the hospital, and when they died, their death was counted as part of the mortality rate of the general hospital, not of the First Clinic.

Semmelweis set about trying to determine why the First Clinic had the higher mortality rate. He considered a number of hypotheses, many of which were suggested by or believed by other doctors.

One hypothesis was that cosmic-atmospheric-terrestrial influences caused childbed fever. The idea here was that some kind of feature of the atmosphere would cause the disease. But, Semmelweis observed, the First and Second Clinics were very close to each other, had similar ventilation, and shared a common anteroom. So, they had similar atmospheric conditions. He reasoned: If childbed fever is caused by cosmic-atmospheric-terrestrial influences, then the mortality rate would be similar in the First and Second Clinics. But the mortality rate was not similar in the First and Second Clinics. So, the childbed fever was not caused by cosmic-atmospheric-terrestrial influences.

Another hypothesis was that overcrowding caused the childbed fever. But, if overcrowding caused the childbed fever, then the more crowded of the two clinics should have the higher mortality rate. But, the Second Clinic was more crowded (in part because, aware of its lower mortality rate, mothers fought desperately to be put there instead of in the First Clinic). It did not have a higher mortality rate. So, the childbed fever was not caused by overcrowding.

Another hypothesis was that fear caused the childbed fever. In the Second Clinic, the priest delivering last rites could walk directly to a dying patient's room. For reasons of the layout of the rooms, the priest delivering last rites in the First Clinic walked by all the rooms, ringing a bell announcing his approach. This frightened patients; they could not tell if the priest was coming for them. Semmelweis arranged a different route for the priest and asked him to silence his bell. He reasoned: if the higher rate of childbed fever was caused by fear of death resulting from the priest's approach, then the rate of childbed fever should decline if people could not tell when the priest was coming to the Clinic. But it was not the case that the rate of childbed fever declined when people could not tell if the priest was coming to the First Clinic. So, the higher rate of childbed fever in the First Clinic was not caused by fear of death resulting from the priest's approach.

In the First Clinic, male doctors were trained; this was not true in the Second Clinic. These male doctors performed autopsies across the hall from the clinic, before delivering babies. Semmelweis knew of a doctor who cut himself while performing an autopsy, and who then died a terrible death not unlike that of the mothers who died of childbed fever. Semmelweis formed a hypothesis. The childbed fever was caused by something on the hands of the doctors, something that they picked up from corpses during autopsies, but that infected the women and infants. He reasoned that: if the fever was caused by cadaveric matter on the hands of the doctors, then the mortality rate would drop when doctors washed their hands with chlorinated water before delivering babies. He forced the doctors to do this. The result was that the mortality rate dropped to a rate below that even of the Second Clinic.

Semmelweis concluded that the best explanation of the higher mortality rate was this "cadaveric matter" on the hands of doctors. He was the first person to see that washing of hands with sterilizing cleaners would save thousands of lives. It is hard to overstate how important this contribution is to human well being. Semmelweis's fine reasoning deserves our endless respect and gratitude.

But how can we be sure his reasoning was good? Semmelweis was essentially considering a series of arguments. Let us turn to the question: how shall we evaluate arguments?

8.4: Attitudes and Persuasion

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define attitude
- Describe how people's attitudes are internally changed through cognitive dissonance
- Explain how people's attitudes are externally changed through persuasion
- Describe the peripheral and central routes to persuasion

Social psychologists have documented how the power of the situation can influence our behaviors. Now we turn to how the power of the situation can influence our attitudes and beliefs. **Attitude** is our evaluation of a person, an idea, or an object. We have attitudes for many things ranging from products that we might pick up in the supermarket to people around the world to political policies. Typically, attitudes are favorable or unfavorable: positive or negative (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). And, they have three components: an affective component (feelings), a behavioral component (the effect of the attitude on behavior), and a cognitive component (belief and knowledge) (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960).

For example, you may hold a positive attitude toward recycling. This attitude should result in positive feelings toward recycling (such as "It makes me feel good to recycle" or "I enjoy knowing that I make a small difference in reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfills"). Certainly, this attitude should be reflected in our behavior: You actually recycle as often as you can. Finally, this attitude will be reflected in favorable thoughts (for example, "Recycling is good for the environment" or "Recycling is the responsible thing to do").

Our attitudes and beliefs are not only influenced by external forces, but also by internal influences that we control. Like our behavior, our attitudes and thoughts are not always changed by situational pressures, but they can be consciously changed by our own free will. In this section we discuss the conditions under which we would want to change our own attitudes and beliefs.

What is Cognitive Dissonance?

Social psychologists have documented that feeling good about ourselves and maintaining positive self-esteem is a powerful motivator of human behavior (Tavris & Aronson, 2008). In the United States, members of the predominant culture typically think very highly of themselves and view themselves as good people who are above average on many desirable traits (Ehrlinger, Gilovich, & Ross, 2005). Often, our behavior, attitudes, and beliefs are affected when we experience a threat to our self-esteem or positive self-image. Psychologist Leon Festinger (1957) defined **cognitive dissonance** as psychological discomfort arising from holding two or more inconsistent attitudes, behaviors, or cognitions (thoughts, beliefs, or opinions). Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance states that when we experience a conflict in our behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs that runs counter to our positive self-perceptions, we experience psychological discomfort (dissonance). For example, if you believe smoking is bad for your health but you continue to smoke, you experience conflict between your belief and behavior.

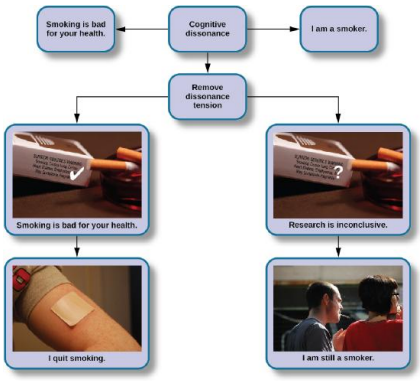

Figure 8.4.1: Cognitive dissonance is aroused by inconsistent beliefs and behaviors. Believing cigarettes are bad for your health, but smoking cigarettes anyway, can cause cognitive dissonance. To reduce cognitive dissonance, individuals can change their behavior, as in quitting smoking, or change their belief, such as discounting the evidence that smoking is harmful. (credit "cigarettes": modification of work by CDC/Debora Cartagena; "patch": modification of "RegBarc"/Wikimedia Commons; "smoking": modification of work by Tim Parkinson)

Later research documented that only conflicting cognitions that threaten individuals' positive self-image cause dissonance (Greenwald & Ronis, 1978). Additional research found that dissonance is not only psychologically uncomfortable but also can cause physiological arousal (Croyle & Cooper, 1983) and activate regions of the brain important in emotions and cognitive functioning (van Veen, Krug, Schooler, & Carter, 2009). When we experience cognitive dissonance, we are motivated to decrease it because it is psychologically, physically, and mentally uncomfortable. We can reduce cognitive dissonance by bringing our cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors in line—that is, making them harmonious. This can be done in different ways, such as:

- changing our discrepant behavior (e.g., stop smoking),
- changing our cognitions through rationalization or denial (e.g., telling ourselves that health risks can be reduced by smoking filtered cigarettes),
- adding a new cognition (e.g., "Smoking suppresses my appetite so I don't become overweight, which is good for my health.").

A classic example of cognitive dissonance is Joaquin, a 20-year-old who enlists in the military. During boot camp he is awakened at 5:00 a.m., is chronically sleep deprived, yelled at, covered in sand flea bites, physically bruised and battered, and mentally exhausted. It gets worse. Recruits that make it to week 11 of boot camp have to do 54 hours of continuous training.

Figure 8.4.2: A person who has chosen a difficult path must deal with cognitive dissonance in addition to many other discomforts. (credit: Tyler J. Bolken)

Not surprisingly, Joaquin is miserable. No one likes to be miserable. In this type of situation, people can change their beliefs, their attitudes, or their behaviors. The last option, a change of behaviors, is not available to Joaquin. He has signed on to the military for four years, and he cannot legally leave.

If Joaquin keeps thinking about how miserable he is, it is going to be a very long four years. He will be in a constant state of cognitive dissonance. As an alternative to this misery, Joaquin can change his beliefs or attitudes. He can tell himself, "I am becoming stronger, healthier, and sharper. I am learning discipline and how to defend myself and my country. What I am doing is really important." If this is his belief, he will realize that he is becoming stronger through his challenges. He then will feel better and not experience cognitive dissonance, which is an uncomfortable state.

The Effect of Initiation

The military example demonstrates the observation that a difficult initiation into a group influences us to like the group more. Another social psychology concept, **justification of effort**, suggests that we value goals and achievements that we put a lot of effort into. According to this theory, if something is difficult for us to achieve, we believe it is more worthwhile. For example, if you move to an apartment and spend hours assembling a dresser you bought from Ikea, you will value that more than a fancier dresser your parents bought you. We do not want to have wasted time and effort to join a group that we eventually leave. A classic experiment by Aronson and Mills (1959) demonstrated this justification of effort effect. College students volunteered to join a campus group that would meet regularly to discuss the psychology of sex. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: no initiation, an easy initiation, and a difficult initiation into the group. After participating in the first discussion, which was deliberately made very boring, participants rated how much they liked the group. Participants who underwent a difficult initiation process to join the group rated the group more favorably than did participants with an easy initiation or no initiation.

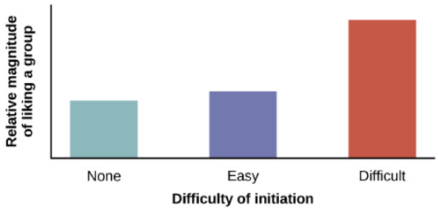

Figure 8.4.3: Justification of effort has a distinct effect on a person liking a group. Students in the difficult initiation condition liked the group more than students in other conditions due to the justification of effort.

Similar effects can be seen in a more recent study of how student effort affects course evaluations. Heckert, Latier, Ringwald-Burton, and Drazen (2006) surveyed 463 undergraduates enrolled in courses at a midwestern university about the amount of effort that their courses required of them. In addition, the students were also asked to evaluate various aspects of the course. Given what you've just read, it will come as no surprise that those courses that were associated with the highest level of effort were evaluated as being more valuable than those that did not. Furthermore, students indicated that they learned more in courses that required more effort, regardless of the grades that they received in those courses (Heckert et al., 2006).

Besides the classic military example and group initiation, can you think of other examples of cognitive dissonance? Here is one: Maria and Marco live in Fairfield County, Connecticut, which is one of the wealthiest areas in the United States and has a very high cost of living. Maria telecommutes from home and Marco does not work outside of the home. They rent a very small house for more than $3000 a month. Marco shops at consignment stores for clothes and economizes when possible. They complain that they never have any money and that they cannot buy anything new. When asked why they do not move to a less expensive location, since Maria telecommutes, they respond that Fairfield County is beautiful, they love the beaches, and they feel comfortable there. How does the theory of cognitive dissonance apply to Maria and Marco's choices?

Persuasion

In the previous section we discussed that the motivation to reduce cognitive dissonance leads us to change our attitudes, behaviors, and/or cognitions to make them consonant. **Persuasion** is the process of changing our attitude toward something based on some kind of communication. Much of the persuasion we experience comes from outside forces. How do people convince others to change their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors? What communications do you receive that attempt to persuade you to change your attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors?

Figure 8.4.4: We encounter attempts at persuasion attempts everywhere. Persuasion is not limited to formal advertising; we are confronted with it throughout our everyday world. (credit: Robert Couse-Baker)

A subfield of social psychology studies persuasion and social influence, providing us with a plethora of information on how humans can be persuaded by others.

Yale Attitude Change Approach

The topic of persuasion has been one of the most extensively researched areas in social psychology (Fiske et al., 2010). During the Second World War, Carl Hovland extensively researched persuasion for the U.S. Army. After the war, Hovland continued his exploration of persuasion at Yale University. Out of this work came a model called the Yale attitude change approach, which describes the conditions under which people tend to change their attitudes. Hovland demonstrated that certain features of the source of a persuasive message, the content of the message, and the characteristics of the audience will influence the persuasiveness of a message (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953).

Features of the source of the persuasive message include the credibility of the speaker (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) and the physical attractiveness of the speaker (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975; Petty, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 1997). Thus, speakers who are credible, or have expertise on the topic, and who are deemed as trustworthy are more persuasive than less credible speakers. Similarly, more attractive speakers are more persuasive than less attractive speakers. The use of famous actors and athletes to advertise products on television and in print relies on this principle. The immediate and long term impact of the persuasion also depends, however, on the credibility of the messenger (Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004).

Features of the message itself that affect persuasion include subtlety (the quality of being important, but not obvious) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Walster & Festinger, 1962); sidedness (that is, having more than one side) (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Igou & Bless, 2003; Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953); timing (Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994; Miller & Campbell, 1959), and whether both sides are presented. Messages that are more subtle are more persuasive than direct messages. Arguments that occur first, such as in a debate, are more influential if messages are given back-to-back. However, if there is a delay after the first message, and before the audience needs to make a decision, the last message presented will tend to be more persuasive (Miller & Campbell, 1959).

Features of the audience that affect persuasion are attention (Albarracín & Wyer, 2001; Festinger & Maccoby, 1964), intelligence, self-esteem (Rhodes & Wood, 1992), and age (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989). In order to be persuaded, audience members must be paying attention. People with lower intelligence are more easily persuaded than people with higher intelligence; whereas people with moderate self-esteem are more easily persuaded than people with higher or lower self-esteem (Rhodes & Wood, 1992). Finally, younger adults aged 18–25 are more persuadable than older adults.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

An especially popular model that describes the dynamics of persuasion is the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The elaboration likelihood model considers the variables of the attitude change approach—that is, features of the source of the persuasive message, contents of the message, and characteristics of the audience are used to determine when attitude change will occur. According to the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion, there are two main routes that play a role in delivering a persuasive message: central and peripheral.

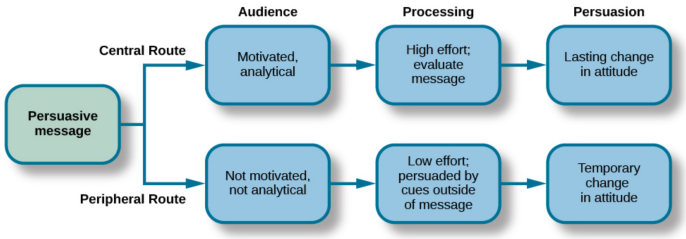

Figure 8.4.5: Persuasion can take one of two paths, and the durability of the end result depends on the path.

The **central route** is logic driven and uses data and facts to convince people of an argument's worthiness. For example, a car company seeking to persuade you to purchase their model will emphasize the car's safety features and fuel economy. This is a direct route to persuasion that focuses on the quality of the information. In order for the central route of persuasion to be effective in changing attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors, the argument must be strong and, if successful, will result in lasting attitude change.

The central route to persuasion works best when the target of persuasion, or the audience, is analytical and willing to engage in processing of the information. From an advertiser's perspective, what products would be best sold using the central route to persuasion? What audience would most likely be influenced to buy the product? One example is buying a computer. It is likely, for example, that small business owners might be especially influenced by the focus on the computer's quality and features such as processing speed and memory capacity.

The **peripheral route** is an indirect route that uses peripheral cues to associate positivity with the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Instead of focusing on the facts and a product's quality, the peripheral route relies on association with positive characteristics such as positive emotions and celebrity endorsement. For example, having a popular athlete advertise athletic shoes is a common method used to encourage young adults to purchase the shoes. This route to attitude change does not require much effort or information processing. This method of persuasion may promote positivity toward the message or product, but it typically results in less permanent attitude or behavior change. The audience does not need to be analytical or motivated to process the message. In fact, a peripheral route to persuasion may not even be noticed by the audience, for example in the strategy of product placement. Product placement refers to putting a product with a clear brand name or brand identity in a TV show or movie to

promote the product (Gupta & Lord, 1998). For example, one season of the reality series *American Idol* prominently showed the panel of judges drinking out of cups that displayed the Coca-Cola logo. What other products would be best sold using the peripheral route to persuasion? Another example is clothing: A retailer may focus on celebrities that are wearing the same style of clothing.

Foot-in-the-door Technique

Researchers have tested many persuasion strategies that are effective in selling products and changing people's attitude, ideas, and behaviors. One effective strategy is the foot-in-the-door technique (Cialdini, 2001; Pliner, Hart, Kohl, & Saari, 1974). Using the **foot-in-the-door technique**, the persuader gets a person to agree to bestow a small favor or to buy a small item, only to later request a larger favor or purchase of a bigger item. The foot-in-the-door technique was demonstrated in a study by Freedman and Fraser (1966) in which participants who agreed to a post small sign in their yard or sign a petition were more likely to agree to put a large sign in their yard than people who declined the first request. Research on this technique also illustrates the principle of consistency (Cialdini, 2001): Our past behavior often directs our future behavior, and we have a desire to maintain consistency once we have committed to a behavior.

(a) (b)

Figure 8.4.6: With the foot-in-the-door technique, getting someone to agree to a small request such as (a) wearing a campaign button can make them more likely to agree to a larger request, such as (b) putting campaigns signs in your yard. (credit a: modification of work by Joe Crawford; credit b: modification of work by "shutterblog"/Flickr)

A common application of foot-in-the-door is when teens ask their parents for a small permission (for example, extending curfew by a half hour) and then asking them for something larger. Having granted the smaller request increases the likelihood that parents will acquiesce with the later, larger request.

How would a store owner use the foot-in-the-door technique to sell you an expensive product? For example, say that you are buying the latest model smartphone, and the salesperson suggests you purchase the best data plan. You agree to this. The salesperson then suggests a bigger purchase—the three-year extended warranty. After agreeing to the smaller request, you are more likely to also agree to the larger request. You may have encountered this if you have bought a car. When salespeople realize that a buyer intends to purchase a certain model, they might try to get the customer to pay for many or most available options on the car. Another example of the foot-in-the-door technique would be applied to an individual in the market for a used car who decides to buy a fully loaded new car. Why? Because the salesperson convinced the buyer that they need a car that has all of the safety features that were not available in the used car.

8.5: Appendix F- Research with Library Resources

While Chapter 5 gave you some basic information about conducting library research, this appendix was written specifically for Dalton State students to provide additional details about using Roberts Library. Equivalent information can be found at most college library web sites. The Roberts Library home page can be found at daltonstate.edu/library.

"GIL-Find," the Library Catalog

GIL-Find is the name of Roberts Library's catalog, and it provides a searchable listing of all the books, e-books, and resources like audiovisual media and government documents owned by the library. Access to the library catalog is available from the library's home page.

You can search the library catalog using keywords about your topic. The search results pages will show materials in all formats, and if you would like items only in a particular format, you may narrow the search using the facets on the left side of the screen. This "Refine my results" section also lets users narrow their search by date, author, subject, and more.

Each item listed on the results page gives you the information you need to access these sources. For items physically available in the library, "Get it" lets you know the location, call number, and item status. If you are trying to view an e-book or streaming media, "View it" provides links to full access. The library's catalog has a variety of helpful features, including an integrated option to order books from other schools if the Dalton State copy is checked out.

Users can log in to GIL-Find using their MyDaltonState credentials to save searches and items for future reference, and see their checkout history, as well as renew items online.

GALILEO

GALILEO, also accessible from the library's website, is a portal to hundreds of databases, each containing hundreds of journals, each journal consisting of hundreds of articles, which means that there are millions of possible sources in GALILEO. What you need is probably there; it's just a matter of finding it. GALILEO takes a little more time and effort than using an Internet search engine, but it will provide you much more reliable information.

GALILEO OPTIONS

- Browse by subject shows all databases in specific subject areas
- Browse by type lets you see resources based on format (maps, images, statistics, etc.)
- Databases A-Z shows all 300+ databases, sorted alphabetically
- Journals A-Z lets you look up items starting with a citation

Most of the content in GALILEO is articles from periodicals. Although GALILEO does index newspapers and popular magazines, for college-level research, it is best used for accessing academic journals.

Many students like to use Google Scholar to find journal articles, and it is a good source for finding the publication information, but often users can not actually access the full article because a subscription fee must be paid. You will not have that problem in GALILEO.

If you are on campus, you will go directly to the GALILEO page; if you are off-campus, you will have to sign in with your username and password for MyDaltonState. You might also be prompted to type in a specific password for GALILEO, but that password changes each semester, so you will have to consult your instructor or the library to obtain it.

From the GALILEO page, you will have several options (see the box in margin). The large search box featured prominently on the page can be a good place to start, but does not include all the content and features of many valuable databases, which is especially helpful for in-depth subject re-search, such as that done in upper-level classes. The search box defaults to a basic search, but "Advanced Search" will allow you to select your preferences before you start.

Interlibrary Loan

If you are unable to access the full text of an article, and would like to order a copy, the library's Interlibrary Loan service can help you, usually for free! Email ill@ daltonstate.edu with the details about the article you would like, and you will receive an electronic copy of it to read. Like GIL Express, be sure to allow yourself a few extra days for this service.

Interlibrary loans are offered by almost all college libraries

From the results page, you can read the articles by clicking the “Full Text” option at the bottom of the record. Some search results do not show any full text options. This means you will have to click the blue “Find It” button to check for access. If none is available, don’t worry—the library can order a copy using Interlibrary Loan (see box in margin).

When you click on the title of an article, you will be redirected to a screen with more information that also offers helpful tools on the right hand side of the page. The “Cite” tool shown there is popular, because it will generate a pre-formatted entry for your Works Cited (MLA) or References (APA) page, which you can cut and paste into your paper. You can also read the abstract to see if it is what you are really looking for. Additionally, you can email the article to yourself and perform a number of other functions.

Not only can you find articles from multiple databases at once by using the GALILEO search box, you can access articles by searching individual databases, some of which catalog articles from journals in specific disciplines, such as psychology, education, medicine, or literature.

One database that many public speaking instructors like to recommend to their students is Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center (OVRC). This database covers hundreds of topics, the listing of which you can browse through to figure out which topic you’d like to research. Even better, OVRC will provide articles from a variety of periodicals (magazines, newspapers, and academic journals) that explore both sides—pro and con—of current issues. For example, if you want to research the subject of raising the minimum wage, OVRC will provide articles on why it should be raised and why it should not be raised from moral, economic, practical, and political viewpoints. One of the values of OVRC is that when you are preparing your persuasive speech you will need to know the arguments of the “other side” so that you can bring them up in your speech and refute them.

To access Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center, use the “Databases A-Z” option on the main GALILEO page, then click on “O” and find it in the list.

Once in the database, you can browse the subject categories, or search by keyword. Note that many of the tools offered in GALILEO, such as email, print, and cite, are available in this database as well.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, librarians are a valuable resource for researchers. Luckily, Dalton State College has friendly librarians who are happy to help!

Citation Resources

In addition to the Purdue OWL mentioned in Chapter 5, Roberts Library has a helpful library guide about citing sources, with tabs about the different citation styles. There is also an appendix in this text about APA.

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Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

Detailed Licensing

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