

## How to Prepare an Oral Presentation (Example of a Speech Outline\*)

**Introduction:** (*Hook* the audience with a question or shocking fact. Give your *thesis* and main points.)

**Example:**

According to The Book of Lists, what is the greatest human fear in North America? (*hook*)

- Speaking before a group

Some anxiety is good because . . . But too much anxiety causes problems . . .

To control anxiety and give a good talk, do two things (*thesis*)

- Prepare your material (preview)
- Practice your delivery

**Prepare your Material:** (*body of talk*)

Select a topic and a clear purpose - Here's how . . .

- Brainstorm a list of topics that you know and care about.
- Choose a topic from the list. If topic is too broad, narrow it down. Brainstorm questions your audience might have.
- Determine purpose: to inform/teach or persuade/convince. Write it down as a purpose statement and make it specific: *I want to teach my audience how to make a very good oral presentation by breaking the process down into easy steps.*

Analyze the audience - keep their needs in mind as you design your talk.

- Find out who they are
- Determine their attitude to the topic and to you (positive/negative?)
- Estimate their knowledge about the topic (novice/expert?)

Gather ideas on topic to meet audience's needs and your purpose.

Organize ideas in chunks of information (main points)

- Categorize and label ideas
- Develop a few main points relating to purpose (3-5)
- Map or outline ideas in a hierarchy (tree)

Prepare your talk and speech outline\*

- Develop points orally or in point form on paper
- Write out introduction and conclusion. Intro should create interest, reveal topic, and preview main points. Conclusion sums up by repeating main points and suggesting implications or action for the audience
- Prepare a speech outline similar to this model
  - -Write main points clearly with lots of space in between
  - -Consider breaking up talk on numbered file cards
  - -Highlight important points and add instructions for delivery

**Practice your delivery:**

Rehearse your talk using your cue cards

- Practice your talk out loud until you really know it (but don't memorize it!)
- Practice it before friends or family

**Conclusion:** (sum up and give implications)

Good preparation makes you confident and results in a good talk. It also reduces your anxiety!

- choose a topic and get started early
- determine a clear purpose and plan to fulfill it
- know your audience and keep them in mind as you gather ideas and organize them
- rehearse your talk often using a speech outline (DON'T READ IT)

\*This **speech outline** could be used to deliver a talk on "How to Prepare an Oral Presentation."