

introductions & conclusions

chapter 9

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introduction

First impressions count. Carlin Flora (2004), writing in *Psychology Today*, recounts an experiment in which people with no special training were shown 20-to 32-second video clips of job applicants in the initial stages of a job interview. After watching the short clips, the viewers were asked to rate the applicants on characteristics including self-assurance and likeability—important considerations in a job interview. These ratings were then compared with the findings from the trained interviewers who spent 20 minutes or more with the job applicants. The result: The 20-to 32-second ratings were basically the same as the ratings from the trained interviewers.

When we stand in front of an audience, we have very little time to set the stage for a successful speech. As seen from the example above, audience members begin evaluating us immediately. What we sometimes forget since we are so focused on the words we have to say is that we are being evaluated even before we open our mouths.

*He has the deed half done
who has made a beginning.*
~ Horace

functions of introductions

Speech introductions are an essential element of an effective public speech. Introductions have four specific functions that need to be met in a very short period of time. Introductions must gain the audience's attention and their goodwill, they must state the

chapter objectives:

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. List and describe the four functions of an introduction
2. List and describe the common types of attention getters
3. Describe and implement strategies for preparing introductions
4. List and describe the four functions of a conclusion
5. List and describe common types of conclusions
6. Describe and implement strategies for preparing conclusions
7. Apply chapter concepts in review questions and activities

purpose of the speech and they must preview the main points.

These first two functions of the introduction, gaining the attention of the audience and the good will of the audience, have most to do with getting the audience to *want to listen to you*. The other two functions of the introduction, stating the purpose of the speech and previewing the structure of the speech, have to do with *helping the audience understand you*.

gain attention and interest

The first function of the introduction is to get the attention AND the

chapter outline:

- **Introduction**
- **Functions of Introductions**
 - Gain Attention and Interest
 - Gain Goodwill
 - Clearly State the Purpose
 - Preview and Structure the Speech
- **Attention-Getting Strategies**
 - Tell a Story
 - Refer to the Occasion
 - Refer to Recent or Historical Events
 - Refer to Previous Speeches
 - Refer to Personal Interest
 - Use Startling Statistics
 - Use an Analogy
 - Use a Quotation
 - Ask a Question
 - Use Humor
- **Preparing the Introduction**
 - Construct the Introduction Last
 - Make it Relevant
 - Be Succinct
 - Write it Out Word for Word
- **Functions of Conclusions**
 - Prepare the Audience for the end of the speech
 - Present Any Final Appeals
 - Summarize and Close
 - End with a Clincher
 - Appeals and Challenges
- **Composing the Conclusion**
 - Prepare the Conclusion
 - Do Not Include any New Information
 - Follow the Structure
- **Conclusion**
- **Review Questions and Activities**
- **Glossary**
- **References**

*The secret of successful speakers? Passion and compassion
with a purpose.*

~ Lily Walters



interest of the audience. The “and” here is important. Anyone can walk into a room full of people sitting quietly, and YELL AT THE TOP OF THEIR LUNGS. That will get attention. However, it will probably not garner much interest—at least not much positive interest.

Gaining attention and interest is essential if you want the audience to listen to what you have to say, and audiences will decide fairly quickly if they want to pay attention. Standing in front of an audience, slouched, hands in pockets, cap pulled low over your head, and mumbling, “my name is... and I am going to tell you about...” is an effective method of NOT getting attention and interest. Before you even open your mouth, your attire, stance and physical presence are all sending out loud signals that you have no interest in the speech, so why should the audience.

gain the goodwill of the audience

Over 2000 years ago, probably the pre-eminent speech teacher of all time, Aristotle (1982), noted the importance of gaining the goodwill of the audience:

...it is not only necessary to consider how to make the speech itself demonstrative and convincing, but also that the speaker should show himself to be of a certain character...and that his hearers should think that he is disposed in a certain way toward them; and further, that they themselves should be disposed in a certain way towards him (p. 169).

When an audience has decided to listen to you—when you have gained

their attention and interest—you still need them to think favorably of you. The most effective way of doing this is by establishing your credibility to speak. Credibility is your believability. You are credible when the audience thinks you know what you are talking about. There are a number of methods for developing credibility, and you will use them throughout the speech. In the introduction, however, since you have comparatively little time to develop this credibility, your options are a bit more limited.

To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful.
~ Hellmut Walters

Essentially, credibility has two elements: external credibility and internal credibility. **External credibility** is the type of credibility you as a speaker gain by association: use of sources that the audience finds credible, for example. In an introduction, you may be able to develop external credibility by this means, as we will see later in this section.

More importantly, given the immediate nature of an introduction, is **internal credibility**. You develop internal credibility as the speaker through specific actions. First, be appropriately attired for a public presentation. Second, make eye contact with the audience *before* you speak. Third, speak clearly, fluently and confidently.



You can also demonstrate internal credibility by demonstrating personal experience with or knowledge of the topic of your speech. Audiences are more positively disposed toward a speaker who has had experience with the topic of his or her speech. You can also demonstrate credibility and goodwill by showing a connection to your audience, demonstrating shared experiences or shared values.

A student giving a speech to a class about a month before spring break, right in the middle of an extended cold spell of a long Midwestern winter, offered this introduction as a way to show shared values and experiences:

I need everyone to close his or her eyes. All right, now I need everyone to picture how he or she got to school today. Did you bundle up with a hat, some mittens, boots, and two jackets because it's so cold outside before you left for class? While walking to class, was it cold? Did your ears burn from the icy wind blowing through the air? Were your hands cold and chapped? Now I want you all to think about the sun beating down on your body. Picture yourself lying on the beach with sand between your toes and the sound of the ocean in the background. Or picture yourself poolside, with a Pina Coloda perhaps, with tropical music playing in the background. Picture yourself in Mazatlan, Mexico (Townsend, 2007).



When speakers can identify with the audience and can show how the audience and the speaker share experiences, then the audience is more receptive to what the speaker has to say. The speaker is both more credible and more attractive to the audience.

*The secret of success is
constancy of purpose.
~ Benjamin Disraeli*

clearly state the purpose

This seems like such a basic step, yet it is one too often missed; and without this step, it is difficult for the audience to follow, much less evaluate and comprehend, a speech. In both basic composition classes and basic public speaking classes, this function is much the same: State the **thesis** of your speech. In all speeches, there should be that one sentence, that one statement that succinctly and accurately lets the audience know what the speech will be about and what the speaker plans to accomplish in the speech. Speakers, especially novice speakers but also experienced ones, are so concerned with the content of the speech that they forget to let us know about the purpose. A good thesis statement clearly announces the topic and purpose of the speech.

For example, a standard problem-solution speech should have a thesis statement that clearly states the problem and the need for a solution.

*So right now let's see how
dependence on fossil fuels costs
you money and how use of ethanol
as a supplement will save you
money and save the world from
energy dependence.*

We know the topic and we know what the speaker will be attempting to prove. Once a thesis statement is clearly announced, the final function of the introduction is ready.

preview and structure the speech

The thesis statement lets the audience know what the speech is about and what you as speaker want to accomplish. The **preview** statement lets the audience know HOW you will develop the speech. A preview can be understood as a roadmap—a direction for the speech that leads to a successful conclusion. A preview lets the audience know what will come first, what comes



next, and so on, to the end of the speech.

The preview is essentially an outline—an oral outline—of the basic organizational pattern of the speech. Previews help the audience follow the content because they already know the structure. Remember, though, that the basic structure of a speech is not linear, it is circular. Organizational patterns for speeches have a conclusion which, as we will see later, brings the audience back to the beginning.

Taking as an example the thesis statement from above, a sample preview for that speech could appear as the following:

*To see how we can end our
dependence on fossil fuels, we will
first take a look at why we as a
society are so dependent upon
fossil fuels; secondly, find out what
continues to cause this
dependence; and finally, see how
ethanol as a fuel supplement will
help end this dependence and make
the world a better place for all of
us.*

attention-getting strategies

Now that we have discussed the four basic functions of the introduction, let's look at ten potential attention-getting strategies. This is not an exhaustive list, and many of these attention getters can be combined or adapted to fit the

needs of the speaker, the occasion and the audience. Regardless of the specific strategy used for the introduction, all introductions still need to meet the four basic functions of an introduction.

*You will get good attention
and people will be more
inclined to listen to you if you
can make a statement
whereby their response is...
"No kidding!"*

~ Gael Boardman

tell a story

Human beings love stories. In all cultures, stories are used to communicate and share values, traditions and knowledge. Rhetorician Walter Fisher (1987) argues that human beings are best understood as *homo narrans*, as people who tell stories. As an introductory device, stories (and anecdotes and illustrations) are very effective attention getters.

First, stories have a built-in structure that everyone recognizes and expects. Stories have a beginning, middle and end, and this built-in structure allows the audience and the speaker to immediately share this experience.

Secondly, because this built-in structure, stories as attention getters lend themselves readily to a well-structured speech. You as speaker can

start the story, get right to the climax, and then stop. You have the attention of the audience; you have shared experiences with them; and now you also have the conclusion of the speech all set to go—the end of the story.

Speakers who talk about what life has taught them never fail to keep the attention of their listeners.

~ Dale Carnegie

refer to the occasion

You are presenting this speech for a reason. The audience is present at this speech for a reason. These reasons can provide you with an effective attention getter. Referring to the occasion is often used as an introduction to tribute speeches, toasts, dedication ceremonies and historical events. Speech scholar Lloyd Bitzer (1968) argues that all speeches are made at least in part in response to specific occasions, so referring to the occasion seems a good idea.

Bono (2006), lead singer of the rock group U2 and an activist for a number of humanitarian issues, addressed the 54th annual National Prayer Breakfast, and started his speech with these words:

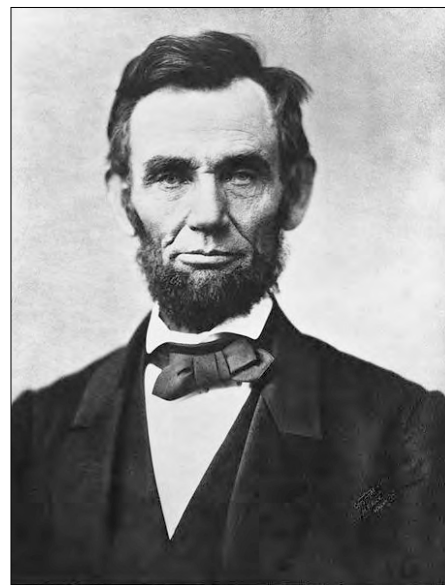
Well, thank you. Thank you Mr. President, First Lady, King Abdullah of Jordan, Norm [Coleman], distinguished guests. Please join me in praying that I don't say something we'll all regret.

refer to recent or historical events

In addition to referring to the occasion, another effective attention-getting device is to refer to current events or to historical events. This style of reference again helps to create a shared experience for the speaker and the audience, as the speaker reminds all present that they have these events in common. Additionally, referring to current or historical events can also help establish goodwill and personal credibility by demonstrating that the speaker is aware of the relationship between this particular speech and what is going on in the world at that time, or what has occurred in the past.

Abraham Lincoln (1863), in one of the most well-known speeches in American history, refers both to historical events and current events in the beginning of the *Gettysburg Address*:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the



proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.

~ Maya Angelou

refer to previous speeches

Most of you reading this material are doing so because you are in a public speaking or introductory communication class of some kind. And that means that most of you will be presenting your speeches right after someone else has presented his or her speech. Even if you are not in a classroom situation, many other speaking situations (such as presenting at a city council or other government meeting, or taking part in a forum or lecture series) result in speakers presenting right after another person has spoken.

In these situations, speakers before you may have already addressed some of the information you were planning to discuss, or perhaps have given a speech





on the same topic you are now planning to address. By referring to the previous speeches, you enhance your credibility by showing your knowledge of the previous speech, and you have the opportunity to either compare or contrast your speech to the previous speeches.

Edward Kennedy, at the 1980 Democratic National Convention, began his speech with a short tribute and acknowledgement to the previous speaker, member of Congress Barbara Mikulski:

Thanks very much, Barbara Mikulski, for your very eloquent, your eloquent introduction. Distinguished legislator, great spokeswoman for economic democracy and social justice in this country, I thank you for your eloquent introduction.

refer to personal interest

One of the key considerations in choosing an appropriate topic for your speech is that you have a personal interest in that topic. An effective attention getter then, can be your description of that personal interest. By noting your personal interest, you will demonstrate your credibility by showing your knowledge and experience with this topic, and because you have a personal interest, you are more likely to present this information

in a lively and clear manner—again, enhancing your credibility. Referring to your personal interest in this topic in the introduction also helps you set the stage for additional anecdotes or examples from your personal experience later in the speech.

In speaking at the 1992 Democratic National Convention, Elizabeth Glaser began her speech by acknowledging her very personal interest in the topic:

I'm Elizabeth Glaser. Eleven years ago, while giving birth to my first child, I hemorrhaged and was transfused with seven pints of blood. Four years later, I found out that I had been infected with the AIDS virus and had unknowingly passed it to my daughter, Ariel, through my breast milk, and my son, Jake, in utero (Glaser, 1992).



use startling statistics

Startling statistics startle an audience and catch its attention, and encourage that audience to listen further as you present the context of the surprising statistic. Long-time radio announcer Paul Harvey is well known for the catch phrase “And now, the rest of the story.” The same function should be at work here. When you startle the audience, you set them up to want to hear the “rest of the story.”

Be careful, though. Use of startling statistics requires that you do a number of things. First, make sure the statistic is accurate. Second, make sure the statistic is relevant to the topic of the speech. Startling an audience with an irrelevant statistic diminishes the speech and decreases your credibility. Third, make sure you then present “the

rest of the story.” You need to place this startling statistic in the context of your speech so that everything fits together.

One speaker used an effective startling statistic to help introduce a speech on the dangers of heart disease:

According to the Center for Disease Control, in the United States 26.6 million adults have heart disease. This would be about 12% of adults, or three people in this room.

use an analogy

Analogies compare something that your audience knows and understands with something new and different. For your speech, then, you can use an **analogy** to show a connection between your speech topic (something new and different for the audience) and something that is known by your audience.

Analogies can be effective because they use ideas, information and values of the audience to draw a connection to your speech topic—and to you as a speaker. Analogies create connections between you and the audience.

One very common (and often misquoted) analogy comes from the 1919 Supreme Court case of *Schenck v United States*. Justice Oliver Wendell



Holmes used this analogy to support his reasoning that some forms of expression can be suppressed because they present a “clear and present danger.” Holmes noted that “[t]he most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic” (Schenck vs. United States).

One good analogy is worth three hours discussion.

~ Dudley Field Malone

use a quotation

Using a quotation from a well-known figure, or using a quotation from a lesser-known figure if the quotation is particularly suitable for your speech topic, is a common attention-getting technique. When you quote that well-known figure, you are in a sense, borrowing some of that person’s credibility for your speech, enhancing your credibility with the audience. Even when you use a less than well-known figure, the quotation can be effective if it nicely sets up your speech topic and is something to which your audience can relate.

Be careful with quotations, however. First, just using the quotation is not sufficient. You need to place the quotation in the context of your speech (as well as meet the other required functions of an introduction, of course). Second, it is easy to fall into a bad (and somewhat lazy) habit of simply finding a quotation and using it to start every speech. Third, simply using a quotation is no guarantee that your audience will find that quotation interesting or apt for the speech, and may also find the author of the quotation to be lacking in credibility—or your audience may simply not like the author of the quotation. Finally, beware of overly-long quotations (three or more sentences): Remember, this is just part of the introduction, not a main point of the speech.

In his farewell address, former President Ronald Reagan (1989)



utilized a very short quotation to emphasize his feelings upon leaving office.

People ask how I feel about leaving. And the fact is, "parting is such sweet sorrow." The sweet part is California and the ranch and freedom. The sorrow -- the goodbyes, of course, and leaving this beautiful place.

Using rhetorical questions in speeches is a great way to keep the audience involved. Don't you think those kinds of questions would keep your attention?

~ Bo Bennett

ask a question

The use of questions can be a very effective way to get attention, whether those questions are rhetorical in nature, and are only meant to be considered and pondered by the audience, or are meant to be answered by the audience (generally a good technique to get audience involvement and interest).

Rhetorical questions are designed to allow you as speaker to get the audience to think about your topic without actually speaking the answer to the question. Rhetorical questions allow you as speaker to maintain the most control over a speech situation, and allow you to guard against an inappropriate or even offensive response.

Using questions that ask for real responses, however, has additional

benefits, if a speaker feels comfortable with his or her audience, and is able to handle some impromptu situations. Getting the audience to physically and verbally involve themselves in your topic guarantees that they’re paying attention. Using questions that lead to positive answers can also enhance your connection to and credibility with the audience.

Starting a speech with a question whether rhetorical or actual does require thought and practice on your part. You need to carefully consider the question and possible answers. Remember—even if you think the question is rhetorical, your audience may not know this and may answer the question. You also need to carefully deliver the question. Too often, speakers will use a question as an introduction—but then give the audience no time to either think about the answer or answer the question. You need to *use timing* and *pause* when starting with a question. You also need to be careful to use eye contact in asking questions, since you are above all asking for audience involvement, and your eye contact requests that involvement.

It is not enough for me to ask questions; I want to know how to answer the one question that seems to encompass everything I face: What am I here for?

~ Abraham Joshua Heschel

In 1992, Ross Perot selected a little-known retired military figure, Admiral James Stockdale, as his Vice Presidential running mate. In the fall debates, Stockdale began his opening statement with two questions: “Who am I? Why am I here?” (Stockdale, 1992). The questions received applause and also laughter, though the later reaction to these questions was mixed at best. Some saw this as confusion on the part of Stockdale



(Lehrer, 1999). Stockdale considered these two questions to illustrate his difference from the other two “mainstream” candidates, Al Gore and then Vice President Dan Quayle. Traditional politicians, Gore and Quayle were readily recognized as compared to Stockdale.

Humor is the affectionate communication of insight.

~ Leo Rosten

use humor

The use of humor in an introduction can be one of the most effective types of introductions—if done well. Humor can create a connection between the speaker and audience, can get an audience relaxed and in a receptive frame of mind, and can allow an audience to perceive the speaker (and the topic) in a positive light.

Humor done badly can destroy the speech and ruin a speaker’s credibility.

So first, a word of warning: None of us (those reading this, those teaching this class, and those writing this) are as funny as we think we are. If we were that funny, we would be making our living that way. Humor is hard. Humor can backfire. Humor is to a

large extent situation-bound. Most likely, there will be a number of members of your audience who do not use English as a first language (there are plenty of people reading this who are English as a Second Language learners). Much humor requires a native understanding of English. Most likely, there will be a number of people in your audience who do not share your cultural upbringing—and humor is often culture-bound. Be careful with humor.



In general, there is basically only one safe and suitable style of humor: light and subtle self-deprecation. In other words, you as speaker are the only really safe subject for humor.

Using humor to tell stories about other people, other groups, and even other situations, may work—but it is just as likely to offend those people, members of those groups, and people in that situation. Using self-deprecating humor will not offend others, but unless you can do this with a light and subtle touch, you may be harming your credibility rather than creating a connection between yourself and the audience.

Now, with all these warnings, you may want to stay far away from humor as an introduction. Humor can work, however.

Ann Richards, at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, used humor in the introduction to her Keynote Address. Knowing the audience, Richards was able to use partisan humor to establish a connection to the audience and score points against the political opposition.

I'm delighted to be here with you this evening, because after listening to George Bush all these years, I figured you needed to know what a real Texas accent sounds like.

preparing the Introduction

construct the introduction last

While this may seem both counter-intuitive and somewhat strange, you really do want to leave the development of the introduction for the last part of your speech preparation. Think of it this way: You can’t introduce the ideas in your speech until you have determined these ideas.

The introduction is prepared last because you want to make sure that the body of the speech drives the introduction, not the other way around. The body of the speech contains most of your content, your arguments, your

evidence, and your source material: The introduction sets up the body, but it should not overwhelm the body of the speech, nor should it dictate the content or structure of the speech.

Once you have the body of the speech complete, then you consider the introduction. With the body of the speech complete, it is relatively simple to complete two of the four functions of the introduction. You already know the purpose of the speech, so now you need to put it in a one-sentence statement. And you already know the structure and main points of the speech, so you can put that structure into the preview.

With the structural functions of the introduction complete, you can carefully choose and craft the type of introduction you wish to use, and concentrate on making sure that the introduction also fulfills the other two necessary functions: gaining the attention and interest of the audience, and gaining the goodwill of the audience.

make it relevant

Another reason why your introduction should be the last part of your speech you prepare is so that the introduction can relate to the speech. If you prepare the introduction before you prepare the body of the speech, your introduction may be wonderful—but completely disconnected from the rest of the speech.

When you consider the type of introduction you wish to use, you might note that many of the types could easily



lend themselves to disconnection from the speech. A startling statistic may shock and get an audience's attention—but if it is not relevant to the speech itself, the introduction is at best wasted and more likely distracting to the audience. A quotation may be both profound and catchy—but if the quotation has little to do with the speech itself, the introduction is once again wasted or distracting.

Now, because your introduction will contain the thesis statement and preview, at least part of the introduction will be relevant to the rest of the speech. However, the entire introduction needs to be relevant. If your audience hears an introduction that they perceive to lack connection to the rest of the speech, they will have difficulty following your main ideas, any attention and interest you may have gained will be more than off-set by the loss of goodwill and personal credibility, and your speech will not make the positive impression you desire.

*The wise ones fashioned
speech with their thought,
sifting it as grain is sifted
through a sieve.*

~ Buddha

be succinct

In most classroom speeches, and in most speech situations outside the classroom, the speaker will be on a time limit. Even if you are giving a speech in a setting where there is no stated time limit, most people will simply not pay attention to a speech that goes on and on and on.

Since you are on a time limit, and since, as noted above, the body of the speech is the heart of your speech, the introduction of your speech needs to be concise and succinct. There is no magic formula for the length of an introduction, and you do need to meet all four functions in your introduction. Many authors suggest that the introduction be no more than 10-15% of the total speaking time.



Most audiences expect you to introduce your speech and then move quickly into the body of the speech. While the expectations vary from culture to culture, most of the speaking situations in which you will find yourself will involve audiences that have been taught to listen for an introduction with a main thesis statement of some type. This is the standard speech format with which the majority of your audience will be familiar and comfortable. Failing to meet that expectation of your audience is in a sense a violation, and communication scholars Burgoon and Hale (1988) have shown that **expectancy violations** create difficulties in communication situations.

write it out word for word

In another chapter, you may have read and studied speech delivery techniques, and in your class, you may be encouraged to use an extemporaneous style of delivery for your speeches. That is good advice. However, introductions are best written out word for word and then delivered as memorized.

Introductions are succinct (as we learned above), and introductions have to do a lot of work in a short period of time. Because of this, you as a speaker need to carefully consider every word of your introduction. The best method for doing so is to write your introduction out word for word. Then you can more easily see if you have met all four functions, and can also have a very good idea just how long the

introduction will be. Just as importantly, memorizing and then delivering the introduction word for word gives you the most control over this important (yet short) part of your speech.

Finally, in conclusion, let me say just this.

~ Peter Sellers

functions of conclusions

So: You are at the end of your speech, and you can't wait to sit down and be done! You start speeding up your rate of delivery, but your volume goes down a bit because you are rushing and running out of breath. You finish the last main point of your speech and race off to your seat: That is not the best way to conclude a speech.

Just as with introductions, conclusions have specific functions to fulfill within a speech. And just as with introductions, there are a number of types of conclusions. In this section of this chapter, we will look at these functions, discuss the relationship between introductions and conclusions, and offer some strategies for preparing and delivering an effective conclusion.

The basic structure of a speech is not linear but circular. Speeches should not take you on a straight line from A to Z. Speeches should take you in a circle from A to Z. Speeches start at the top of the circle with the introduction, work



their way all around the circle, and end up back at the top with the conclusion. All the parts fit together and flow together in this circle, and the conclusion takes you right back to the introduction—with an enhanced understanding of the topic.

prepare the audience for the end of the speech

A speech does not just stop—or, to be more precise, a speech should not just stop. A speech, effectively structured and delivered, should move smoothly from point to point and then to the conclusion. One of the most important functions of the conclusion is to prepare the audience for the end of the speech.

Throughout the speech, you have been providing the audience with verbal and nonverbal cues to where you are going in the speech. As you move to the conclusion, you need to continue to provide these cues. You can use language cues (“now that we have seen that we can solve this problem effectively, we can review the entire situation”), movement cues (physically moving back to the center of the room where you began the speech), and paralinguistic cues (slow the rate of the speech, use more pauses) to help prepare your audience for the end of the speech.

When you prepare the audience for the end of the speech, you let them know that they need to be ready for any final comments or appeals from you, and that they should be prepared to acknowledge you as a speaker.

present any final appeals

Depending on the type of speech you are presenting, you will be asking the audience for something. You may be asking them to act in a certain way, or to change their attitude toward a certain person or topic. You may be asking them to simply understand what you have had to say in your presentation. Regardless, one of the tasks of the conclusion is to leave the audience motivated positively toward you and the topic you have been presenting.

Psychologists and sociologists (as well as communication scholars) know that there is both a **primacy** and **recency** effect in presenting information (Garlick, 1993). Essentially, people tend to better remember information presented first or last—they remember what they hear at the beginning of the speech or at the end. In presenting your appeals to the audience, you can take advantage of the recency effect to increase the likelihood of your audience acting on your appeals.

Former President Lyndon Johnson (1964), in a speech announcing a major policy initiative known as the Great Society, concluded his speech with a series of challenges and appeals to his audience.



For better or for worse, your generation has been appointed by history to deal with those problems and to lead America toward a new age. You have the chance never before afforded to any people in any age. You can help build a



society where the demands of moralit, and the needs of the spirit, can be realized in the life of the Nation.

So, will you join in the battle to give every citizen the full equality which God enjoins and the law requires, whatever his belief, or race, or the color of his skin?

Will you join in the battle to give every citizen an escape from the crushing weight of poverty?

Will you join in the battle to make it possible for all nations to live in enduring peace -- as neighbors and not as mortal enemies?

Will you join in the battle to build the Great Society, to prove that our material progress is only the foundation on which we will build a richer life of mind and spirit?

There are those timid souls that say this battle cannot be won; that we are condemned to a soulless wealth. I do not agree. We have the power to shape the civilization that we want. But we need your will and your labor and your hearts, if we are to build that kind of society.

The appeals were significant in that the speech was delivered as a

commencement address at the University of Michigan, at a time in American society when college and university students were protesting many government actions.

When Demosthenes was asked what were the three most important aspects of oratory, he answered, Action, Action, Action.

~ Plutarch

summarize and close

A conclusion is structural in function. Just as the introduction must include a statement of the purpose of the speech, as well as a preview of the main ideas of the speech, the conclusion must include a restatement of the thesis and a review of the main ideas of the speech. The review and restatement are mirror images of the preview statement in the introduction. Structurally, the restatement and review bring the speech back to the top of the circle and remind the audience where we started. Functionally, they help cue the audience that the end of the speech is coming up.

Let's go back to the thesis and preview example on page 9-3. The example was from a speech on ethanol, and the sample thesis was "So right now let's see how dependence on fossil fuels costs you money and how use of ethanol as a supplement will save you money and save the world from energy obsolescence."

In the conclusion of this speech, one effective method to summarize and wrap-up is to simply restate the thesis and preview—but in the past tense, since we have now heard the speech.

Today we have seen how dependence on fossil fuels costs you money and how use of ethanol as a supplement will save you money and save the world from energy obsolescence. We learned first why we as a society are so dependent upon fossil fuels in the

first place, and then secondly we found out what causes this dependence, and third, we saw how ethanol as a fuel supplement will help end this dependence, and finally we discovered how simple it is to implement this solution and make the world a better place for all of us.

By restating the thesis and reviewing the main ideas, you once again take advantage of both the primacy and recency effect, and you create a complete and coherent structure to your speech.



end with a clincher

With conclusions, however, there are some additional forms you may wish to use, and there are some variations and adaptations of the introductions that you will want to use as you prepare your conclusions.

Earlier in this section when we discussed introductions, it was argued that stories are quite possibly the most effective form of introduction: Stories appear to be almost "hard-wired" into our individual and cultural make-up; and stories have a built-in structure. Stories, then, also make excellent conclusions, and can be used as conclusions in at least two ways. First, you can complete the story that you started in the introduction. Remember: You stopped right before the climax or denouement, and now, you can finish the story. Alternatively, you can retell the story, and this time the story will reflect what the audience has learned from your speech. Either method

provides coherence and closure to the story and the speech.

Humor also remains an effective type of conclusion, but the same dangers with the use of humor discussed in the section on introductions applies to the conclusion. Still, effective use of humor leaves the audience in a receptive frame of mind, and, so long as the humor is relevant to the speech, provides a positive reminder to the audience of the main purpose of the speech.

Because of the functions of conclusions, there are two additional types of conclusions you may wish to consider: Appeals and Challenges.

I appeal to you, my friends, as mothers: are you willing to enslave your children? You stare back with horror and indignation at such questions. But why, if slavery is not wrong to those upon whom it is imposed?

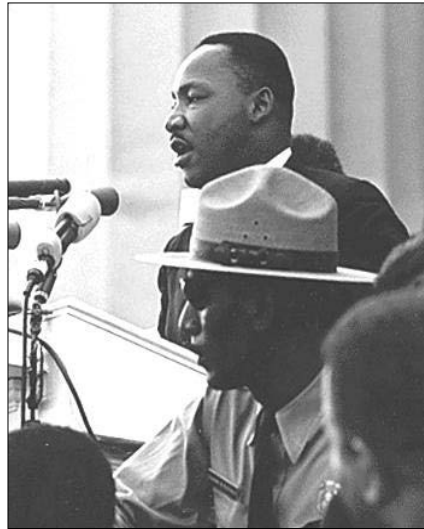
~ Angelina Grimke

appeals and challenges

Since the conclusion comes at the end of the speech, it is appropriate to leave the audience with an appeal or a challenge (or a combination of the two). Similar in nature, appeals and challenges primarily divide by tone. Appeals are generally phrased more as requests, while challenges can take on a more forceful tone, almost ordering or daring audiences to engage in thought or action.

One of the most historically memorable and effective conclusions that utilized appeal and challenge was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech (1963).

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the



heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring. And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

composing the conclusion

Just as with introductions, there are two important points to remember from the start. First, regardless of the form of conclusion, all summary remarks must meet certain required functions. Second, most conclusions will be a combination of two or more forms. There is a third point to remember about conclusions as well: Conclusions need to provide a match to the introduction, so that there is symmetry

and completeness to the speech structure. Because of this, very often, the conclusion will be of the same form as the introduction. At the very least, the conclusion must refer to the introduction so there is a sense of completeness. Naturally enough, the forms of conclusions you can use and develop are similar to the forms of introductions you can use and develop.

Eloquent speech is not from lip to ear, but rather from heart to heart.

~ William Jennings Bryan

prepare the conclusion

The conclusion is the last part of the speech to prepare.

What is common writing practice for the introduction is also true of the conclusion. As previously discussed, introductions and conclusions are similar in nature, they provide mirror images of one another, and they are often of the same type. So you complete the introduction and conclusion at the same time. You do so to make sure that both elements work together.

As you prepare the conclusion, make sure as well that there are no false conclusions. You need to prepare the audience for the end of the speech—but you can only prepare them one time, and there can be only one end to the speech. By the same token, you need to make sure that the conclusion is not so abrupt or sudden that no one in the



audience is aware you have completed your speech. Keep in mind as well that conclusions should comprise no more than 10% of the total speaking time.

Just as with the introduction, write out the conclusion word for word. This is your last chance to impress your audience and to make sure that they understand what you have said. Do not leave the conclusion to chance: write it out.

Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.
~ Confucius

do not include any new information

While it is important to present your appeal and any call to action in the conclusion, it is also important to NOT present new information in your conclusion. Remember: one of the functions of the conclusion is to prepare the audience for the end of the speech. If all of the sudden you present a new argument, new information, or a new point, you will confuse your audience.

If you present new information in the conclusion, you will also lose the

ability to integrate this information with the rest of the speech. Remember that all elements of the speech need to flow together. New ideas at the very end of the speech will not enhance the flow of the speech. Additionally, because you are just now bringing in this information at the end of the speech, you will have no or very little time to develop these ideas, or to provide supporting information and documentation for these ideas.

follow the structure

The approach of using the built-in structure of the specific introduction/conclusion technique is as equally effective with quotations, questions and startling statistics as it is with stories.

You can use the same quotation at the end as at the beginning, but because of what we have learned in the speech, the quotation has a new and more developed meaning. You can also use a new quotation that draws a comparison and contrast to the beginning quotation, and also highlights what we have learned in the speech.

You can use the same question at the conclusion as you did at the beginning, and regardless of whether you ask for a response or pose it as a rhetorical

question (and allow the audience to consider the answer), the answer will be different because of your speech. The audience will be able to see what you have accomplished in the speech. You can also pose a new question, one that again points out what the audience has learned from your speech.

Startling statistics, as quotations and questions, now take on new meaning because of all that you have told the audience in your speech. Reminding the audience of startling statistics should provide them with a key reminder of the main point of your speech.

summary

This chapter first shows how to structure and develop introductions and conclusions. Second, it argues that introductions function to gain audience attention and goodwill, and that introductions help structure the speech with a thesis statement and preview. Third, the chapter explains that conclusions help audiences remember the key ideas of a speech. Finally, the chapter reveals that there are a variety of different techniques for introductions and conclusions, and that many of the techniques for introductions apply to conclusions as well.

Introductions set the stage for the speech that is to come; conclusions make sure that the audience goes away changed in a positive manner. Short in time, they require careful thought and precise language to be effective. Done well, introductions prepare an audience to learn, and conclusions help to insure that an audience has understood the purpose of the speech.

When you can do the common things of life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.
~ George Washington Carver



chapter review questions and activities

review questions

1. What are the four basic functions of introductions, and why are these functions important?
2. List and give one original example of each of the ten attention-getting devices.
3. What are three reasons why stories are effective as introductions?
4. Why is humor both useful and dangerous at the same time?
5. What is a preview statement, and why is it important as part of an introduction?
6. What are the four basic functions of conclusions, and why are these functions important?
7. Compare and contrast an appeal and a challenge. When would you use each technique?
8. What does it mean to “follow the structure” in a conclusion?
9. Why are introductions and conclusions prepared last?

activities

1. Review the following speech and then write a brief (150-200 words) analysis on how the speaker used (or did not use) effective introduction and conclusion techniques.
<http://msustr0.campus.mnsu.edu:8080/cah/gorgias/333/CollieSampPersSpeech.wmv>
2. Read Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (<http://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gettysburgaddress.htm>) and then rewrite the introduction to use:
 - a. Humor
 - b. Rhetorical Question
 - c. A story
 Each introduction should be relevant to the topic and no more than 100 words in length.
3. Working with a partner, create at least five analogies that could be used as part of an effective introduction for any of the topics listed below

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonalities of the world’s major religions • Dealing with gaming addiction • Selecting a college • Why the penny should be eliminated • My worst first date • Protecting your identity online and offline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the perfect lasagna • The three most important factors in choosing an automobile • The dangers of radon • Traveling through Europe on a budget
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4. Locate an informative or a persuasive speech on Youtube. Watch the speech once in its entirety, and then watching it a second time, answer these questions.
 - a. What attention-getting technique was used? Was it effective?
 - b. Did the speaker establish his / her credibility effectively?
 - c. Was the thesis or purpose of the speech clear?
 - d. Did the speaker preview the main points of the speech.
 - e. Did the main points of the speech correspond with the preview?
 - f. Did the speaker prepare the audience for the end of the speech?
 - g. Did the speaker present any final appeals? Was this effective?
 - h. What type of clincher (closing technique) was used? Was it effective?

glossary

Analogy

A figure of speech that essentially compares something that your audience knows and understands with something new and different.

Preview

Sometimes called a road map, a preview is a brief oral outline in which the speaker clearly and concisely states the main points of the speech.

Internal Credibility

This is a form of credibility based on attributes that are largely controlled by a speaker, such as appearance, confidence, charisma, trustworthiness, and speaking ability.

Expectancy Violation

Expectancy violations occur when people engage in behavior that is unexpected or inappropriate for the situation.

External Credibility

This is a form of credibility based on attributes that a speaker can “borrow,” such as using credible sources and referring to credible and popular people and events.

Primacy Effect

According to this principle, audiences are likely to remember what they hear or read first.

Recency Effect

According to this principle, audiences are likely to remember what they hear or read last.

Rhetorical Question

When a speaker asks a question that is not meant to be answered outloud, or a question for which the audience already knows the answer. This is often used as a way to get an audience to think about the topic.

Thesis

One sentence or statement that succinctly and accurately lets the audience know what the speech will be about and what the speaker plans to accomplish in the speech.

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