Organizing Your Informative Speech

Organizing Your Speech to Inform Will Include:

1. Preparing an Attention-Getting Introduction
2. Preparing a Preview of What You Are Going to Talk About
3. Preparing the Main Body of Your Speech
4. Preparing a Summary of What You Spoke About
5. Preparing a Memorable Conclusion

1. PREPARING AN ATTENTION-GETTING INTRODUCTION

The opening of your speech is very important. You must have your audience's immediate attention and get them interested in your speech at the very beginning. You must make them want to listen to your speech. If this sounds like a difficult task, it is! But—it's not impossible! We will now teach you different ways to prepare an interesting, attention-getting introduction.

1. *Make your audience curious.* Ask your audience a question. They will immediately be interested in knowing the answer. For example, one of our students started her speech with this series of questions:

   What can cost ten dollars or a thousand dollars?
   What can be every color of the rainbow?
   What can you wear on your arm, your cheek, your leg, or even your back?
   What do famous movie stars and authors have?

Are you curious? We are sure that you would like to hear more of the speech. This student made her informative speech about "Tattoos."

2. *Begin your speech with a story.* People like to listen to a story. They want to find out what it is all about. For example, a boy from Colombia started his speech with this story:

> *A guard took me to a square room with no lights. The room was so black I couldn't even see my own feet. All of a sudden a hidden electric wall slid closed behind me. There was no way out. I thought I was in a tomb. All of a sudden bright lights came on. I was surrounded by gold on all four sides!*

Did this story make you interested in hearing this speech? Of course it did! This student made his speech about "The Gold Museum" in Bogotá, Colombia.

3. *Begin your speech with a well-known quotation.* One of our students began her speech about "The Disadvantages of Borrowing" with the famous quotation from *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare:

> *Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend.*

4. *Begin your speech with a startling or shocking fact.* Example:

> *You can get almost anything you want without cash! And you can begin today!*

This statement got your attention, didn't it? A student of ours used this striking statement to begin his speech "The Billion Dollar Business of Bartering." (He talked about ways to use your skills or services to get almost anything you want without cash.)

2. PREPARING A PREVIEW OF WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT

After your terrific attention-getting opener, you must provide your audience with a preview of what you are going to talk about. The best way to do this is to tell your listeners exactly what you are going to say.

EXAMPLE 1: In a speech entitled "Surviving a Hurricane" you could use the following preview:

My purpose today is to tell you what to do in the event of a hurricane. I will talk about:

A. How to prepare for a hurricane

B. Safety measures to take during the hurricane

and C. What to do after the storm is over

EXAMPLE 2: In a speech about "Left-Handed People" you could use the following preview:

In discussing left-handed people, I will:

A. Explain the causes

B. Talk about problems that left-handed people have

and C. Tell you about some world-famous "lefties"

3. PREPARING THE MAIN BODY OF YOUR SPEECH

Now that your listeners know exactly what you are going to talk about, it is time to present your information. Be sure to present the main parts of your speech just the way you said you would.

EXAMPLE 1: If you said that you were going to talk about the three most dangerous effects (wind, water, and pressure build-up) of a hurricane, you must keep your promise! The main body of your speech must contain the following sections:

I. The Winds of a Hurricane

II. The Rain of a Hurricane

III. The Pressure Build-Up Inside Buildings

EXAMPLE 2: If you said in your preview that you were going to talk about the past, present, and future of the Olympics, you cannot change your mind! The main body of your speech should have the corresponding sections:

I. The History of the Olympics

II. The Olympics Today

III. The Future of the Olympic Games

4. PREPARING A SUMMARY OF WHAT YOU SPOKE ABOUT

Although you have finished presenting all your information in the main body of your speech, you are not ready to sit down. Every good speech should have a summary of the information presented. The best way to summarize your information is to remind your audience about what you said. Help your listeners remember what you spoke about by repeating the main points covered in the main body of your speech.

EXAMPLE 1: In the speech about "Surviving a Hurricane" you could use the following summary:

Well, I've given you some very important information today. You now know:

A. How to prepare if a hurricane is coming

B. Various safety measures to take during the storm

C. What to do after the hurricane is over

EXAMPLE 2: In the speech about "The Olympics" you might use a summary like this:

As you can see, the Olympic Games are very important to people all over the world. I hope you learned some interesting information about:

A. The history of the Olympics

B. The Olympics today

C. The future of the Olympic Games

✓5. PREPARING A MEMORABLE CONCLUSION

You still aren't ready to sit down! You must do one more thing before your speech is finished. You must end your speech effectively. Never end your speech with "That's all I have to say. . . ." The final words of your speech are the ones your audience will remember. It's important to conclude with a statement that will leave your audience thinking about what you said. The techniques for concluding speeches are the same as those for beginning speeches. Refer back to "Preparing an Attention-Getting Introduction" on page 83. These suggestions will also help you when preparing your memorable concluding remarks.

EXAMPLE: In the speech about "Surviving a Hurricane," a memorable and effective conclusion could be the following:

For 12 hours in the black of night, it was like a nightmare. In the morning we saw crushed cars and roofless houses. But we survived, because we knew what to do!

LET'S REVIEW HOW A TYPICAL INFORMATIVE SPEECH SHOULD BE ORGANIZED

Introduction

Gets the audience's attention

Preview Statement

Tells the audience what you are going to talk about

Main Body of the Speech

Contains your main ideas presented in a logical order

Summary Statements

Helps your listeners remember what you spoke about

Memorable Conclusion

Ends your speech gracefully

SAMPLE OUTLINE

The following is a sample outline of an informative speech. You can see that this speech has all the important parts that have been described in this chapter.

Stage Fright

Attention-Getting Introduction

Can you guess what famous dancers, singers, actors, politicians, and executives have in common with us—students in a speech class? I'll tell you. It's called *stage fright*!

Preview of What You Are Going to Talk About

This is something we all have in common. Today we will be learning four major points about stage fright.

First: **Some different symptoms of stage fright**

Second: **The causes of stage fright**

Third: **Famous people who have had stage fright**

Fourth: **What can be done about it**

Transition to Main Body: **Stage fright affects everyone differently.**

Main Body of Speech

I. Symptoms of stage fright
   A. Some people say their heart pounds faster than normal.
   B. Others tell how their hands begin to shake.
   C. Some people complain that they perspire a lot.
   D. Other people claim that their legs feel week.

Transition: **Although the symptoms of stage fright might vary for all of us, its causes are quite simple.**

II. Reasons for stage fright
   A. Many people worry that they'll forget what they want to say.
   B. Others are afraid that they'll look silly.
   C. Some people think the audience won't like them.
   D. International students might worry that their English isn't very good.

Transition: **You'll be pleased to know that if you get stage fright, you're in very good company.**

III. Famous people have admitted to stage fright
   A. Winston Churchill once said that he thought there was a block of ice in his stomach each time he made a speech.
   B. Julio Iglesias has revealed in interviews that he is nervous about his pronunciation when speaking English.
   C. Carol Burnett, the famous comedienne, has admitted to having stage fright before facing an audience.

Transition: **Although you might feel better knowing that even the rich and famous get stage fright, you're probably wondering what can be done about it.**

IV. What you can do about stage fright
   A. Be thoroughly prepared and practice many times before a presentation.
   B. Take your time before you start to speak.
      1. Take several deep breaths before beginning.
      2. Put your notes on the speaker's stand and establish eye contact with your audience before beginning.
   C. Remember that stage fright is normal.
   D. Remember that your listeners are your friends; they want you to do well.

Transition to Summary: **I hope you learned some new things about stage fright today.**

Summary of What You Spoke About

You should now understand four major points about stage fright: its symptoms, its causes, famous people who have had it, and what you can do about it.

Memorable Conclusion

The next time you feel nervous about making a speech, just tell yourself "To heck with stage fright, I know my stuff and I'll do great!"

GRADED INFORMATIVE SPEECH PRESENTATION

Now that you know how to prepare (page 73) and organize (page 83) an informative speech, it's time to make a presentation in front of the class. Be sure to consult with your teacher during the preparation of your speech.

Due Date: _____

Time Limits: 3–5 minutes (Practice and time yourself.)

GUIDELINES

Choose any topic that:

1. Interests *you.*
2. *You* know something about.
3. You can limit to be SPECIFIC and ACHIEVABLE.

EVERY SPEECH MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

Attention-Getting Opener: The first thing you say must get our attention and make us want to hear your speech.

Preview: After the opener, you must tell us exactly what you are going to speak about.

Main Body: This is where you describe and explain the information you know and researched. Organize your ideas into main points. Use visual aids when appropriate.

Summary: After you finish discussing your final main point, you must review with us all main points in your speech.

Memorable Conclusion: The last thing you say should provide a graceful finish to your speech. Never end abruptly or by saying, "That's all."

Use the following worksheet in the preparation of your speech. Refer to the sample outline for "Stage Fright" as necessary.

Informative Speech Preparation Worksheet

1. Decide on some possible topics that interest you. Write them here.

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain how you would narrow or limit your topics.

_____

_____

_____

Discuss the above with your teacher. Decide on one topic and get to work!

3. Divide your topic into two or three important points to discuss in the main body of your speech.

Point 1: _____

Point 2: _____

Point 3: _____

(If you are unsure about the main points you've decided to talk about, show the above to your teacher. She or he will help you make your final decision.)

4. Prepare your interesting attention-getting opener.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Prepare a preview of the main points you will talk about.

6. Prepare a summary of the main points in the body of your speech.

7. Prepare a memorable conclusion.

We expect that you will change the information on your worksheet several times. That's natural! After you are really pleased with it, you are ready to prepare your working outline. Use the format on the next page as your guide.

_____

(Speech Title)

Attention-Getting Opener:

Preview of What You Are Going to Say:

Main Body of Speech:

Point 1: _____

(Write your supporting information for Point 1 below)

Point 2: _____

(Write your supporting information for Point 2 below)

Point 3: _____

(Write your supporting information for Point 3 below)

✓**Summary of Main Points:**

✓**Memorable Conclusion:**