

## Preparing a Speech

### APSU Writing Center Handout

Public speaking can feel intimidating, but remember, you are capable! The biggest difference between giving a speech and writing an essay is the audience. A presentation lets your audience experience your points directly through your voice, tone, and presence.

### Professor Requirements

Always follow your professor's specific speech guidelines for structure, timing, and content.

This is your first step before planning.

### Planning Your Speech

Start with an outline, just like an essay. Ask yourself:

What kind of speech is this? → Informative, persuasive, or demonstrative?

What's my topic? → What are my main points and supporting evidence?

Why am I giving this speech? → What's my goal or purpose?

How long should it be? → Check the assignment guidelines (5–10 minutes).

Who is my audience? → Why should they care about this topic?

### Choosing an Organizational Pattern

Choose the pattern that best fits your topic, assignment sheet, and audience.

**Sequential:** Steps in a process or timeline order.

**Chronological:** Historical events or predictions for the future.

**Categorical:** Dividing a topic into natural categories.

**Cause & Effect:** Shows how one condition generates or is generated by another.

**Compare & Contrast:** Highlight similarities and differences between topics.

**Problem & Solution:** Present a problem, then offer a solution.

## **Introduction**

Your introduction sets the tone and grabs attention.

Start your speech with a surprising fact, a question, a quote, or a bold statement.

State your thesis, this gives your audience an intro into what they will learn or take away.

Give a brief overview of your main points.

## **Body**

Each main point should be its own section, like a paragraph in an essay.

Introduce the main point.

Explain why it matters by supporting it with data, stories, or quotes.

Summarize the idea before moving on.

Create a smooth transition to guide into the next point.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion summarizes your points and leaves a lasting impression.

Summarize key points.

Restate your thesis in a new way.

Connect back to the thesis.

End with one of the following:

Call to action

Invitation for questions

Memorable closing statement

### **Delivery and Practice Tips**

Once your speech is planned and organized, focus on how to deliver it confidently.

### **Practice Speaking**

Practice your main points out loud, either in front of a mirror or a peer.

Avoid memorizing word-for-word from slides or note cards.

Add reminders on your cards, such as “pause here” or “speak slowly.”

### **Speak Clearly and Loudly**

Speak at a volume everyone can hear.

Pause between main points to let ideas sink in.

Use hand gestures or move around the room to appear natural and engaging.

### **Connect with the Audience**

Make eye contact with your listeners.

Use personal pronouns like we, us, and our to build connection.

## References

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