

FAU  
FLORIDA ATLANTIC  
UNIVERSITY

# THE SPEAKING CENTER

## Introductions in Public Speaking

*(Adapted from A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking, 6th edition)*

### Reasons to prepare a good introduction:

- #1 It's an important part of your grade.
- #2 It's the first thing your audience will hear.
- #3 It establishes your credibility and likability as a speaker
- #4 It gains the attention and interest of the audience.
- #5 It establishes your goodwill—establishes trust between you and the audience

### Duration of a good introduction:

This is not an absolute rule but a guideline: An introduction is 5% to 15% of a speech. So in a 5 minute speech (300 seconds), the introduction should be between 15 and 45 seconds.

### Elements of a good introduction:

- #1 Very brief greeting, attention grabber
  - #2 Statement or illustration of why the topic is important to your audience.
- If the audience does not see why your speech matters to them, they will never pay attention to what you are saying.

#### Following are some ideas on how to get their attention:

- **Illustration:** You can say to the audience "Remember when..." and provide a picture, or paint a scene by telling the audience to imagine a scene when X occurred.
- **Short story:** In journalism, this is called "telling the story through someone"—it is what many reporters do to make a news topic relevant to their audience. A short personal story or story about someone else can really grip people, but the key is to make it short and not drag on. Also, you can use the story in your conclusion. You can introduce a character and the problem that was confronted. In the conclusion, you can show how the person or group within the story worked out the issue, hopefully by doing what you suggest in the speech.

- **Statistic or surprising fact:** A really good statistic can get people thinking and challenge their perspective. Cite where you got the statistic to show it's credible.
- **Aphorism:** An aphorism is a common phrase or saying, such as "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." Add a twist to the aphorism for added effect ("an apple a day keeps the doctor away... except if you're sitting with an apple computer for 8 hours a day.")
- **Analogy or metaphor:** Saying an analogy ("User interface is like peeling an onion" or) can really break down complex terms into more simpler ones, making it more digestible for your audience.
- **Question:** This is usually an acceptable introduction but in an online presentation you cannot get a response so the question will leave people uncomfortable by not allowing them to answer. Starting with an engaging question can add a great amount of audience engagement, or even asking a rhetorical question can get them thinking out-of-the-box.
- **Quote:** A great way to start your online presentation is with a quote—but it should be related to your presentation and from a credible source. Make sure your quote is understandable. Maybe include the quote in a slide in your PowerPoint. Some quotes, even well worded ones, are hard to follow. Make sure the quote is relevant and tasteful.

#3 Preview three main points.

This is a thesis statement. As in: "Today I will persuade you that media literacy education is necessary for all ages because it stops us from being fooled by fake news, it helps us know when a source is credible and it helps us understand what the media is using to influence us besides just words."

## Conclusions

*(Adapted from A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking, 6th edition)*

### Reasons to prepare a good conclusion:

- #1 Like introductions, it's an important part of your grade.
- #2 It's the last thing your audience (and your instructor) will hear and your last chance to make a positive impression.
- #3 It reminds the audience that your topic is important.
- #4 It reminds the audience of the specific thing you want them to know/do.

### Duration of a good conclusion:

This is not an absolute rule but a guideline: An introduction is 5% to 15% of a speech. So in a 5 minute speech (300 seconds), the introduction should be between 15 and 45 seconds. (yes, this is the same as the introduction)

### **Purposes of a good conclusion:**

#1 Reminds the audience why your speech was important

#2 Reminds the audience of your main points, what you shared and what you want them to remember.

#3 Tells the audience the specific thing you want them to remember or do.

- In a persuasive speech you must be very specific with what thing you want them to do.
- And you must tell the audience HOW to do the specific thing you want them to do.
- If you are not specific on HOW to do what you suggest, your audience will not make the effort to find out.

### **Things to NEVER do in a conclusion:**

Never....

#1 Say "That's all I got..." "I'm done." "I'm glad this is over!"

#4 Say anything that takes away any credibility you have established during your speech. Whether you feel confident or not, NEVER let the audience know you doubt yourself.

### **Elements of a good conclusion:**

#1 Review of main points

#2 A final call to action, a clincher that gives perspective.

#3 Reminder or introduction of specific things you want the audience to do.

And finally, if you want to, your conclusion can finish with a simple statement such as:

"Thank you for your time."

"I trust you will consider this issue."

"Thank you."

## **Transitions**

*(Adapted from A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking, 6th edition & University of Mississippi Speaking Center)*

### **Purpose of transitions:**

#1: Let the listener know you have completed one point and are going to the next point.

#2 Let the listener know how the previous point is logically related to the point you will discuss next.

#3 Let the audience know you are going from:

Introduction to body of speech

From main point to main point

From sub-point to sub-point, when and if needed for such transitions  
From body of the speech to the conclusion

**Definition of a transition:** (also known as “connectives”)

#1 Words, phrases or sentences that tie elements of the speech together and show how the point you just concluded is logically related to the next point you are going to discuss.

#2 An element or series of elements your instructor and audience is looking for. It will help your grade to include them and help your audience follow your speech.

**Examples of transitions:**

I. Today I'll explore the steps you can take to create a greener campus...

(transition: so how do you go green?)

Body

A. Get informed - understand what is physically happening to your planet

(transition: Understanding the issues is only part of going green, however. Perhaps most important...)

B. Recognize that change starts here, on campus, with you...

**Transitional Words and Phrases:**

**To show comparison:** Similarly; In the same way; Likewise; Just as

**To contrast ideas:** On the other hand; And yet; At the same time; In spite of; However;

**To illustration cause and effect:** As a result; Hence; Because; Thus; Consequently

**To illustration sequence of time or event:** First, second, third...; Following this; Later; Earlier; At present; In the past

**To indicate explanation:** For example; To illustrate; In other words; To simplify;

**To indicate additional examples:** Not only; In addition to; Let's look at

**To emphasize significance:** Most important; Above all; Remember; Keep in mind

**To summarize:** In conclusion; In summary; Finally; Let me conclude by saying