**UMW Speaking Center Presents**



Brief Guide to Constructing a Speech

You can use this checklist to make sure you have a solid, organized presentation.

**INTRODUCTION**

\_\_\_ Include a clear attention-getting device

        *Make sure the audience is paying attention right from the start.*

    \_\_\_ Establish your credibility as a speaker

        *Let the audience know you are a trustworthy and believable source.*

    \_\_\_ Address the relevance to the audience or give them a reason to listen

        *If you don’t relate to your audience in some way, they may not pay attention.*

    \_\_\_ State your central idea or thesis

        *Let the audience know exactly what you are going to discuss.*

    \_\_\_ Give a clear preview of your main points

         *A framework for the presentation will help it flow and let the audience follow along.*

    \_\_\_ Be brief: take up no more than 10-15% of your total presentation time

        *The introduction is a warm-up. Most of your presentation should have more substance.*

**BODY**

\_\_\_ Have a clear organizational structure--follow the order laid out in the preview

        *Having a definite structure will be easier on you and the audience.*

    \_\_\_ Clearly state each main point

        *Don’t assume the audience knows every time you transition to a new point.*

    \_\_\_ Provide necessary elaboration of each main point

        *Fully explain your points. If it’s complex, simplify or restate it in a manageable way.*

   \_\_\_ Present sufficient supporting evidence to back up each main point

        *Solid evidence will give strength and substance to your argument.*

    \_\_\_ Cite your sources verbally

        *Show that you and your evidence are credible.*

    \_\_\_ Use signposts to introduce new points (transitions, previews, summaries)

        *This reinforces your structure and makes the presentation flow smoothly.*

**CONCLUSION**

\_\_\_ Summarize your presentation

        *What should the audience get out of your presentation? What should they remember?*

    \_\_\_ Reiterate your main idea in a memorable way

        *Remind the audience what you were trying to convey in the first place.*

    \_\_\_ Avoid introducing new material

        *The conclusion is for wrapping things up. Don’t give the audience anything surprising.*

    \_\_\_ Signal the end of the presentation

        *This should happen naturally by restating content and in the tone of your voice.*

    \_\_\_ Be brief: take up no more than 5-10% of your total presentation time

        *Remember, the substance of the presentation is in the body.*

If you want more information, check out the following UMW Speaking Center Handouts:

Speech Opening and Closing

The Speech Body