



# 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 to capture the audience's attention immediately with a fact, a quote, a question, etc.*

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

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

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

*Know your audience. Try to relate in some way or else 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 the main points you will be discussing

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

\_\_\_ Be brief with this intro: 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

\_\_\_ Clear organizational structure, follow order laid out in the preview

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

\_\_\_ Clearly state each main point and clearly transition between them

*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, but don't overcomplicate them. 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.*

\_\_\_ Signposts (transitions, previews, summaries) introduce new points

*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 just for wrapping things up.*

### **\_\_\_ 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.*

\*Parts adapted from the UNCG Speaking Center with permission, 2020.

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

**[Speech Opening and Closing](#)**

# The Speech Body