

## How to Build a Speech Outline

**Specific Purpose:** To enable you to prepare a formal speech outline in the proper format.

### INTRODUCTION

- I. **Open with Impact:** Imagine you are going to build a house.
  - A. Wouldn't you want a set of plans before you started construction?
  - B. A speech also requires planning.
  - C. That is why each speech should be outlined.
  
- II. **Thesis:** Correct speech outlining requires the mastery of a few simple principles.
  
- III. **Connect with Audience:** Outlining your speech presents several advantages to you:
  - A. It enables you to organize your ideas clearly.
  - B. It enables you to easily rehearse your presentation.
  - C. It enables you to easily revise and refine your speech.
  
- IV. **Preview:** Today I will tell you how to prepare a proper heading, how to use proper format, and how to follow basic outlining rules.

### BODY

I. **Main Point:** There are three requirements for the heading.

1. List your name, the class, and the instructor.
2. State the title of the speech.
3. State the specific purpose of the speech.

**(Signpost and transition: Now** that you know how to prepare the heading, let's learn how to use standard outlining format.)

II. **Main Point:** The format requires Roman numerals for main points.

- A. Subpoints are indicated by capital letters.
  1. Supporting points are indicated by Arabic numerals.
    - a) *Lowercase letters may be used for further subdivisions.*
    - b) *There should always be a "b" to match an "a."*
  2. There should always be a "2" to match a "1."
- B. There should always be a "B" to match an "A."
- C. The signposts between main points should be written in parenthesis as illustrated in this sample outline.

**(Signpost and transition: You must also understand the rules of outlining, which** brings me to my final point.)

- V. **Main Point:** Several rules should be followed in outlining.
- A. Divide your outline into the introduction, body, and conclusion.
1. Begin each section with Roman numeral "I."
  2. The introduction has four parts:
    - a) *It should open with impact.*
    - b) *It should have a thesis statement.*
    - c) *It should connect the audience.*
    - d) *It should preview the main points.*
  3. The body contains the main points and signpost and transition statements.
  4. The conclusion has two parts:
    - a) *It should summarize the main points.*
    - b) *It should close with impact.*
- B. Use complete sentences.
1. Use only one sentence per letter or number.
  2. Separate distinct ideas into different sentences.
  3. It is not necessary to use complete sentences in situations such as the following:
    - a) *Lists of tools, ingredients, etc.*
    - b) *Parts of a larger whole.*
    - c) *Places where complete sentences would be awkward or unnatural.*
- C. When citing sources, put the author's name and ate in parenthesis after the point (American Psychological Association, 2001).
1. If you are quoting directly, also include the page number (American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 69).

2. Include the full source citation in American Psychological Association (APA) format in your reference section.
- D. A formal outline is to be typed and not handwritten.

### **Conclusion**

- I. Summarize: In conclusion, correct speech outlining involves a few simple principles.
  - A. You must have a proper heading.
  - B. You must follow standard outlining format.
  - C. You must use complete sentences, develop two to three main points, and use proper source citation.
- II. Close with Impact: Good luck to you on your speaking assignments!

### **References**

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.