

WRITING AN OUTLINE

Workshop by The Speaking, Reading, and Writing Center

This Workshop is Designed with Multiple Purposes in Mind:

- To explain what an outline is, and why an outline is not only needed in a speech class, can also be beneficial in your future.
- To show the different parts of an outline and what goes into them.
- To help you through the format of an outline.
- To give additional tips on how using your outline will guide the process of practicing for your speech.

What is an outline?

An **outline** is a general plan of the material that is to be presented in a speech or paper.



The **outline** shows the order of various topics, the relative importance of each, and the relationship between the various parts.

An **outline** is your best friend in a speech class.

Name:
Section#:

TITLE

Introduction

I. Your first sentence goes here.

A. The second sentence becomes an A

B. The third sentence

II. Reveal the Topic and make it relevant to your audience (Answer the "so what" question.)

III. Establish credibility (ETHOS)

IV. Preview your main points (Central Idea/Thesis Statement)

Body

I. Write out your first main point in a complete sentence.

A. This sub-point explains your first main point.

1. This sub-sub point further supports your sub-point.

2. Remember, you will need further elaboration for each main point and sub-point; therefore, each sentence is its own letter or number.

B. This sub-point elaborates further on first main point.

1. Elaboration is key to the success of your speech.

2. If you have a source, be sure to give your source proper credit.

TRANSITION:

II. Write out your second main point in a complete sentence.

A. This sub point explains your second main point.

1. Remember the rule: only one complete sentence per main, sub, sub-sub, etc. point.

a. Another rule: If you have an "A", you need at least a "B".

Name:
Section#:

b. If you have a "1", you need at least a "2" and so forth.

2. Also, don't forget to double space your entire speech outline.

3. Remember, you will need two or more transitions within the body of your speech outline.

B. Elaborate on each main point.

1. Elaboration is key to the success of your speech.

2. If you have a source, be sure to give your source proper credit.

TRANSITION:

III. Write out your next main point in a complete sentence.

A. This sub-point explains your main point.

1. This sub-sub point further supports your sub-point.

2. Remember, you will need further elaboration for each main point and sub-point; therefore, each sentence is its own letter or number.

B. This sub-point elaborates further on first main point.

1. Elaboration is key to the success of your speech.

2. If you have a source, be sure to give your source proper credit.

Conclusion

I. Signal the end of your speech and summarize your main points.

II. Briefly review your specific purpose statement and tie your conclusion to your introduction.

III. Thank your audience.

Title of Speech

Introduction

- I. Attention gainer: This doesn't have to be a "script" of the opening but a quick synopsis of what it is.
- II. Reveal Topic: This is where you reveal the topic/point of your speech, it doesn't have to be an obvious statement of the topic but can be more of a revelation just by discussing it.
- III. Motivate your audience to listen/Relevance:
 - A. Give them some reason(s) as to why they should listen to you, connect to them somehow
 - B. You can establish some credibility at this point as well
 - C. This is where you make let the audience why they should pay attention to you.
- IV. Preview your points: This is where you give a very brief, simple overview of your main points; the sub-points here should read almost exactly like your main points in the body, you should have an equal number of preview points as you do main points—Think "tell 'em what you are going to say"
 - A. This correlates with the body, main point number one
 - B. This correlates with the body, main point number two
 - C. This correlates with the body, main point number three.

Body

- I. Main Point: This is a complete sentence, broad in nature; Think "say it")
 - A. Sub-point: This is a complete sentence, more specific but directly related to the Roman Numeral Main Point above; cited information does not belong on this level.
 1. Support: This is where you further support the sub-point directly above; it is very specific and addresses a specific argument related to the sub-point above—this information is cited.
 2. Support: This is where you further support the sub-point directly above; it is very specific and addresses a specific argument related to the sub-point above—this information is cited.
 - B. Sub-point: This is a complete sentence, more specific but directly related to the Roman Numeral Main Point above; cited information does not belong on this level.
 1. Support: This is where you further support the sub-point directly above; it is very specific and addresses a specific argument related to the sub-point above—this information is cited.
 2. Support: This is where you further support the sub-point directly above; it is very specific and addresses a specific argument related to the sub-point above—this information is cited.

(Transition: This is where you remind them where you've been and inform them where you are going next; notice it is centered on the page and in parenthesis.)

- II. Main Point: This is a complete sentence, broad in nature; Think "say it")
 - A. Sub-point: This is a complete sentence, more specific but directly related to the Roman Numeral Main Point above; cited information does not belong on this level.
 1. Support: This is where you further support the sub-point directly above; it is very specific and addresses a specific argument related to the sub-point above—this information is cited.
 2. Support: This is where you further support the sub-point directly above; it is very specific and addresses a specific argument related to the sub-point above—this information is cited.
 - B. Sub-point: This is a complete sentence, more specific but directly related to the Roman Numeral Main Point above; cited information does not belong on this level.
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(Transition: This is where you remind them where you've been and inform them where you are going next; notice it is centered on the page and in parenthesis.)

- III. Main Point: This is a complete sentence, broad in nature; Think "say it")
 - A. Sub-point: This is a complete sentence, more specific but directly related to the Roman Numeral Main Point above; cited information does not belong on this level.
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Conclusion

- I. Signal close: This signals to the audience you are in the conclusion; this seems redundant but be creative in how you signpost from the body to the conclusion and how you signal your close.
- II. Summarize: Review your main points above; this is where you give a very brief, simple recap of your main points; the sub-points here should read almost exactly like your main points in the body, you should have an equal number of preview points as you do main points—Think "tell 'em what you just said"
 - A. This correlates with the body, main point number one
 - B. This correlates with the body, main point number two
 - C. This correlates with the body, main point number three.
- III. Reiterate purpose: This is where you re-emphasize the specific purpose statement
 - A. It can refer back to the relevance element in the introduction.
 - B. It can also tie into the motivation element in the introduction
- IV. Close with impact: Motivate your audience to respond.
 - A. If an informative speech, simple reminding them of why they should think about your information can be a motivation element.
 - B. A persuasive speech has two ways to motivate the audience to respond.
 1. You can be the catalyst for changing their opinions, thoughts, values, or beliefs about a given subject.
 2. You can motivate them to change their behavior, cause them to take a particular action concerning a given subject.

Place cursor in front of word 'References' below; hold the CTRL button while pressing ENTER. This will make a hard page break and move the Reference page to the top of its own, separate page.

References

Author last name, first/second initial (year) Title, etc. provided here. Notice how the author's last name and year correlates with the citation at the end of the support sentence in the outline itself. This is how to quickly reference the citation in the outline to the reference page—because the name correlates, is in alphabetical order on the reference page, and is followed by the year to provide clarification in instances of same last names of authors being used.

How is an Outline going to help with my speech?

Would you give an impromptu speech without any references if it cost you your life? Your job? What about your grade?

An outline is a
GUIDE



NOT A WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Knowing now, that an outline is a GUIDE for your speech, the hardest thing to remember while working on your outline, is that it is just that. A guide.

An outline is NOT A WRITING ASSIGNMENT. Do not get caught up on the individual pieces of an outline before completely deciding on what you want to say in your speech.

An outline is there to help you, not hurt you.

PARTS OF AN OUTLINE

COVER PAGE

[Dependent on Professor]

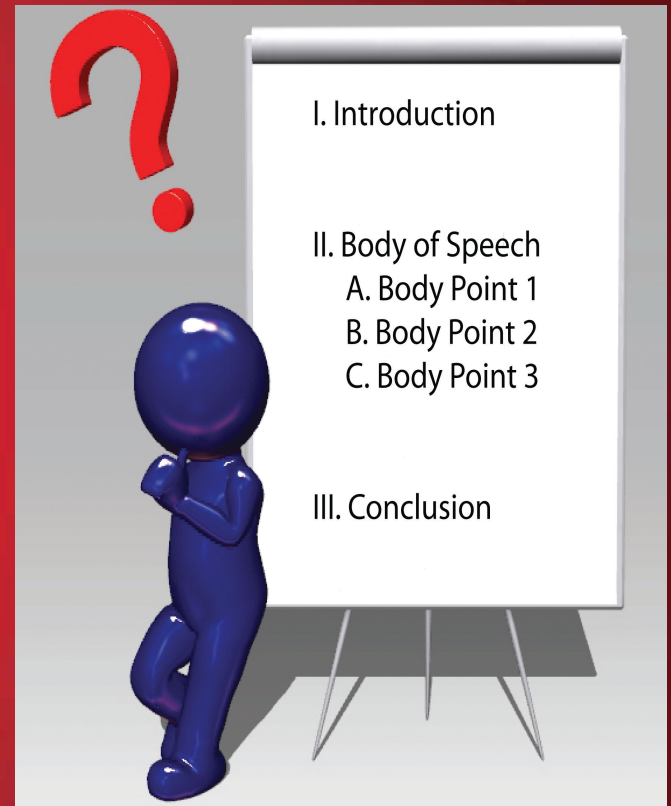
INTRODUCTION

BODY

CONCLUSION

TRANSITIONS

REFERENCES/ WORK CITED





Parts of an Outline

INTRODUCTION

“Tell them what you are going to say”

Establish your topic and core message

This is also where you establish credibility

List supporting points

Introduction

- I. Your first sentence goes here.
 - A. The second sentence becomes an A
 - B. The third sentence
- II. Reveal the Topic and make it relevant to your audience (Answer the “so what” question.)
- III. Establish credibility (ETHOS)
- IV. Preview your main points (Central Idea/Thesis Statement)

TELL THEM WHAT YOU
ARE GOING TO SAY

Introduction

- I. Attention gainer: This doesn't have to be a “script” of the opening but a quick synopsis of what it is.
- II. Reveal Topic: This is where you reveal the topic point of your speech, it doesn't have to be an obvious statement of the topic but can be more of a revelation just by discussing it.
- III. Motivate your audience to listen/Relevance:
 - A. Give them some reason(s) as to why they should listen to you, connect to them somehow
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 - A. This correlates with the body, main point number one
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 - C. This correlates with the body, main point number three.





Parts of an Outline

BODY

“Tell them”

1. Supporting point one
2. Supporting point two
3. Supporting point three

Body

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(Transition: This is where you remind them where you've been and inform them where you are going next; notice it is centered on the page and in parenthesis.)

- II. Main Point: This is a complete sentence, broad in nature; Think "say it")
- A. Sub-point: This is a complete sentence, more specific but directly related to the Roman Numeral Main Point above; cited information does not belong on this level.
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2. Remember, you will need further elaboration for each main point and sub-point; therefore, each sentence is its own letter or number.

- B. This sub-point elaborates further on first main point.

1. Elaboration is key to the success of your speech.
2. If you have a source, be sure to give your source proper credit.

TELL THEM

- II. Write out your second main point in a complete sentence.

- A. This sub-point explains your second main point.

1. Remember the rule: only one complete sentence per main, sub, sub-sub, etc. point.

a. Another rule: If you have an "A", you need at least a "B".

b. If you have a "1", you need at least a "2" and so forth.

2. Also, don't forget to double space your entire speech outline.

3. Remember, you will need two or more transitions within the body of your speech outline.

- B. Elaborate on each main point.

1. Elaboration is key to the success of your speech.
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(TRANSITION:)

Parts of an Outline

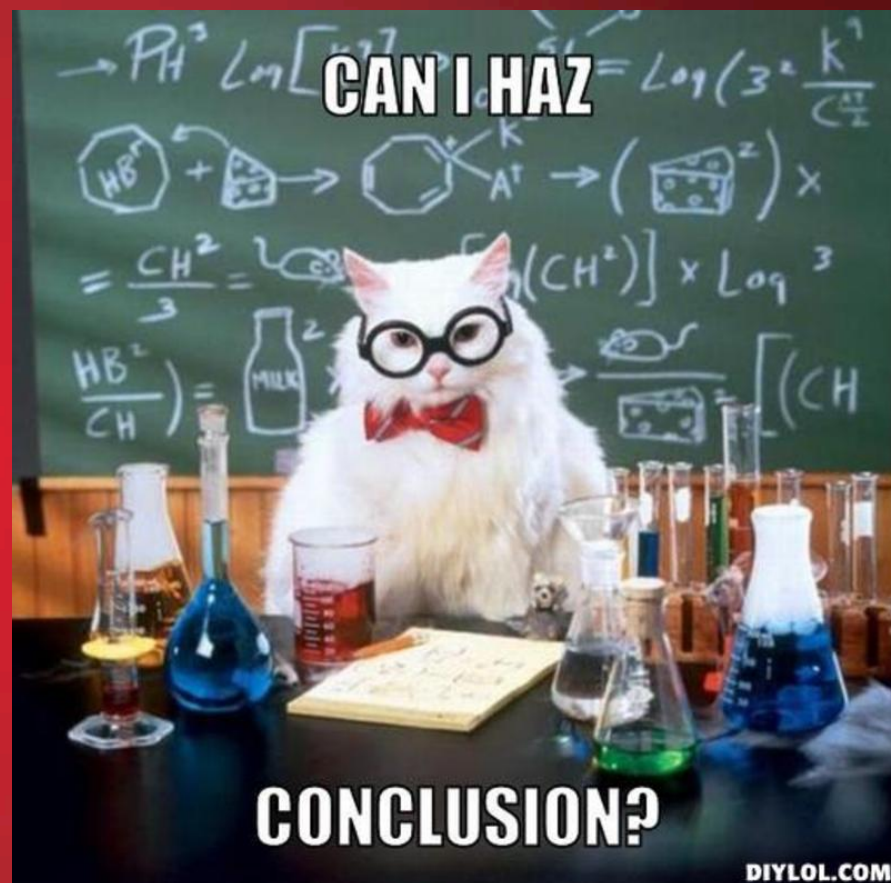
CONCLUSION

“Tell them what you have said”

Recap main points

Summarize core message

Call to Action (Persuasion)



Conclusion

- I. Signal the end of your speech and summarize your main points.
- II. Briefly review your specific purpose statement and tie your conclusion to your introduction.
- III. Thank your audience.

Conclusion

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TELL THEM WHAT
YOU TOLD THEM

Transitions

Transitions let your audience know that you are leaving one main point and moving to another.

(Now that you have seen the transition slide, I am going to show you a slide about Work Cited/References.)



Work Cited / Reference Page



References

Author last name, first/second initial (year) Title, etc. provided here. Notice how the author's last name and year correlates with the citation at the end of the support sentence in the outline itself. This is how to quickly reference the citation in the outline to the reference page—because the name correlates, is in alphabetical order on the reference page, and is followed by the year to provide clarification in instances of same last names of authors being used.

The reference/work cited page is always on its own page.
Any article, book, website ex., you include on this page.
ALWAYS give credit where it belongs or you could be accused of plagiarism.
Check with your professor about formatting.

Formatting Your Outline

- ALWAYS Three parts of an outline+ Work Cited/Reference Page
- CONSISTENCY



Instructor's preference*

- How much is too much?
- Spacing
- Cover page



Always get an assignment and/or instruction sheet from your instructor!

How is an outline going to help with my speech?

- Remember, your outline is a GUIDE for your speech.
- Never read your outline during a speech, you should already know the material at this point.
- Pick and choose parts for your notecards
- Remember the flow, not the exact words





- Lastly, remember that you now KNOW this!
- You have been working on this speech/outline/researching for weeks, and have become at least semi-familiar with your topic.

Help Needed!

With enough time, there is always help available to you.



- Professors want you to succeed. Ask them if you have any questions on a speech or assignment.
- There are also many labs available on campus.
- Here at the SRWC, we have speech instructors that can help guide you in the right direction.



IN REVIEW

- We explained what an outline was, and why an outline is not only needed in a speech class, but it can also be beneficial in your future.
- We showed the different parts of an outline.
- We gave examples of the outline format.
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